

Caribou Forever

Our Heritage, Our Responsibility

Environment and Natural Resources

Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board Public Hearing

August 5, 2010



Revised Tăichô /GNWT Caribou Management Proposal:

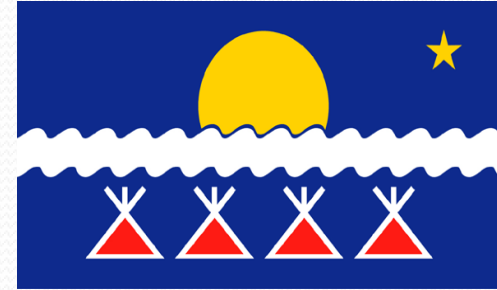
Key Points – Stabilize Herds by 2012

Revised joint proposal :

- Recommend actions to help caribou herds get bigger
- Support traditional relationship between Tăichô and Caribou
- Respect objectives of Tăichô Agreement

Management Actions

- Bathurst Herd
- Total Herd Harvest ~ 300 Caribou ($\geq 80\%$ Bulls)
 - (Half of Total Harvest for Wek'eezhii)
 - Close Resident/Commercial/Outfitter Harvest
 - Increase Wolf Harvest
 - Monitoring Part of Adaptive Management Cycle
 - Recognize People/Caribou Relationship
 - Re-build Respect for Caribou
 - Increase Tăichô capacity and involvement



Revised Tâichô /GNWT Caribou Management Proposal: Key Points – Stabilize Herds by 2012

Management Actions continued

Bluenose-East Herd - Precautionary Interim Approach:

Close Resident/Commercial/Outfitter Harvest

Assume Annual Decline Continued

Review 4% Harvest ($\geq 80\%$ Bulls) after 2010 survey

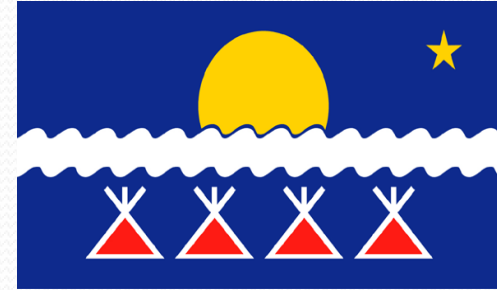
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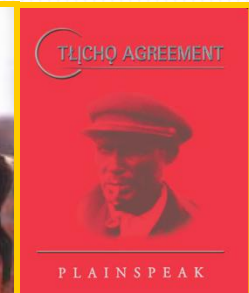
All Herds:

Develop Long-Term Management Plans



Predator Management

- Wolves main natural predator on caribou
- Target: increased wolf kill from 40 to 80-100 in N. Slave region
- Increased subsidies to hunters and trappers for wolf pelts and carcasses
- Increased access to target areas
- Trapper training



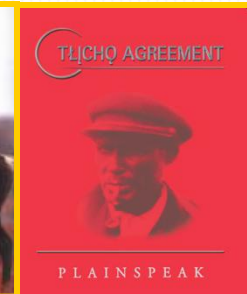
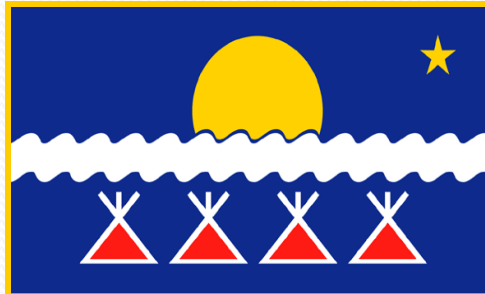
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Residents	900-1600 (bulls & cows)	<200 Bulls
Outfitters	300-700 Bulls	600-400-200 Bulls
Aboriginal Hunters	8,000-20,000 (53% Cows) (Tâichô Harvest Study)	3000-5000 Cows, 1000-2000 Bulls (Check-Stations, Interviews)
Totals	9,200-22,300	4,000-7,000
Herd Size	(1996) 350,000	(2009) 32,000
Harvest as % of herd	(1996) 2-4% of herd size	(2009) 13-22% of herd size

Bathurst Harvest Major Factor in Rapid Decline

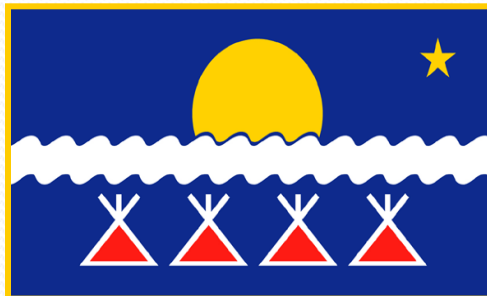
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- Harvest of 300 Bathurst Caribou to be shared inside and outside Wek'eezhii
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- Revival of Cultural Hunts



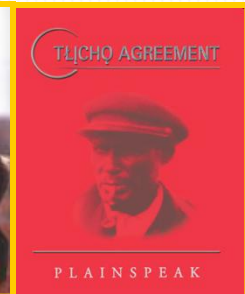
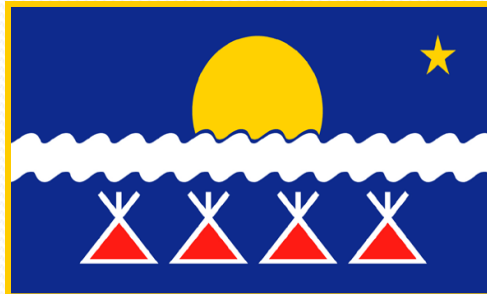
Options for Self Regulation

- Winter Road Corridor
- Hunt by traditional methods
 - Canoe Hunts
 - Transport caribou by skidoo
- Tags vs. No Tags
- Winter road check stations
- Community Allocation of Tags
- Increase use of other traditional foods
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Aboriginal Harvest: Bluenose-East herd

- Behchokö , Gamètì and Whatì: hunted mostly from this herd in recent years
- 09/10 total harvest 3500, >60% cows – need to reduce
- Possible interim harvest: aim at 4% with majority bulls
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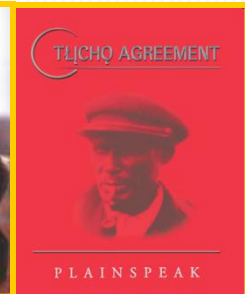
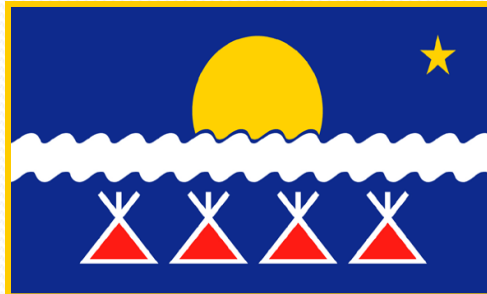


Adaptive Co-Management

Through Partnership - Listening and Respecting the Past,
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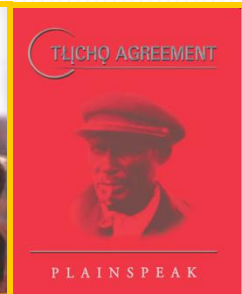
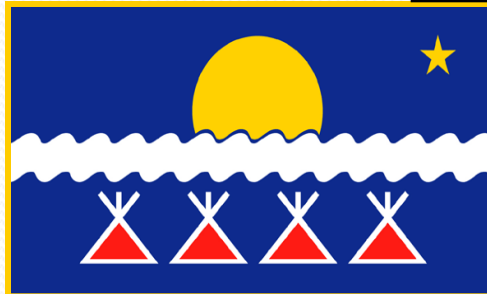
For the Sustainable Future of
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Habitat Management for Caribou

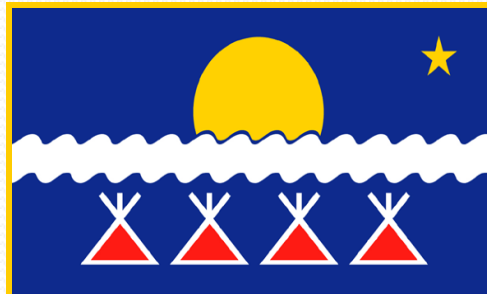


Development



Long Term Planning for Caribou

- Proposal is mostly for short-term (2 years)
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Bathurst, Bluenose-East, Ahiak
- Will be longer-term processes
- Harvest management part of larger plans
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Environment and Natural Resources
Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board Public Hearing
August 5, 2010



Good morning board members, chiefs, elders, intervenors and public – My name is Gary Bohnet and I am the Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

I will introduce the other GNWT staff at the table, Susan Fleck, Director, Wildlife Management, Fred Mandeville, Acting North Slave Superintendent, Jan Adamczewski, Wildlife Biologist (Caribou) and Karen Lajoie, Legal Counsel.

We have a short presentation this morning on the key points of the revised joint proposal submitted by Tlicho Government and ENR at the end of May.

The main objectives of the revised proposal are to take immediate actions to stop further decline of the herds over the next two years and co-operatively develop a longer term management plan by 2012 that allows input by all people who share these herds.

I also want to emphasize that the caribou numbers fluctuate naturally and many factors contributed to the decline we have been seeing across the NWT.

I'll now ask Susan to give the presentation.

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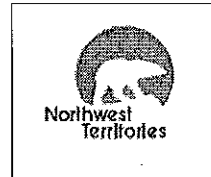
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Increase Tāichō capacity and involvement



August 5, 2010

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Thank you. I am Susan Fleck, Director of Wildlife. The Tlicho Government and Environment and Natural Resources requested an adjournment in March to seek agreement on the key issue of Aboriginal harvest of Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou and consider other related issues. In developing the revised joint proposal, it was critical to support the traditional relationship between Tlicho and caribou and respect the objectives of the Tlicho Agreement. This slide outlines the key points in the revised proposal to support recovery of the caribou herds in Wek'eezhii. First, I'll review proposed actions for the Bathurst herd, which usually winters east of the Tlicho winter roads. The most important action for recovery is to increase calf and cow survival. This means reducing harvest and predation. There had been previous agreement by both governments to recommend closing the resident, commercial and outfitter harvest. There is also now agreement on Aboriginal harvest. Although the best option for recovery is no harvest, there is limited risk of further decline with a small harvest that is mostly bulls. Both governments are proposing the total harvest of the Bathurst herd both within and outside of Wek'eezhii should be limited to around 300 caribou. This proposal does not preclude the right to harvest for other Aboriginal groups and it does not diminish the GNWT's requirement to consult with other Aboriginal groups. To reduce predation, the proposal recommends options to increase the harvest of wolves. We have also proposed that new information is looked at each year to assess if these actions are working. This is called adaptive management. To respect the Tlicho Agreement, we have proposed to increase Tlicho involvement in monitoring of caribou and to support traditional practices to re-build respect for caribou.

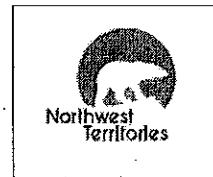
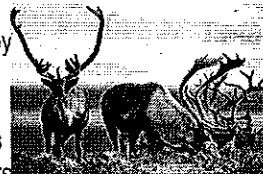
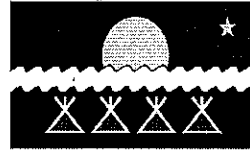
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All Herds: *Develop Long-Term Management Plans*



August 5, 2010

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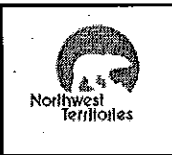
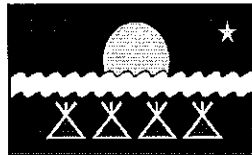
Next, for the Bluenose-East herd, a precautionary approach is proposed. This herd usually winters north of Whati and Gameti. This herd has also been declining but not as quickly or dramatically as the Bathurst herd. Resident, commercial and outfitter harvest was previously closed in the Sahtu region. Both government propose these actions also be implemented in Wek'eezhii. This herd is shared with Sahtu, Dehcho, Inuvialuit and Kitikmeot communities. The Sahtu Board previously proposed a voluntary maximum harvest of 4% of the herd size. Last winter the estimated harvest was about 3500 caribou, of which over half were cows. The revised proposal also supports a harvest target of about 4% of the herd size for the next two years, mostly bulls.

A small part of the Ahiak herd is sometimes found in Wek'eezhii during the winter east of Wek'weeti. Most of the Ahiak and Beverly caribou winter northeast and east of Great Slave Lake. This herd is traditionally hunted by Akaitcho, South Slave, Keewatin and Saskatchewan communities. As these caribou have also been decreasing in numbers, these communities did not want the GNWT to support increased numbers of hunters from other communities going there. The revised proposal suggests NWT communities should not replace harvest of Bathurst caribou by increased harvest of Ahiak and Beverly caribou. The proposal also recognizes the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board's recommendation to target mostly bulls.

Finally, the proposal recognizes the need for long term management plans to be completed for all the caribou herds in Wek'eezhii and these need to be prepared collaboratively with all those who also have responsibility to manage these herds.

Predator Management

- Wolves main natural predator on caribou
- Target: increased wolf kill from 40 to 80-100 in N. Slave region
- Increased subsidies to hunters and trappers for wolf pelts and carcasses
- Increased access to target areas
- Trapper training



The revised joint proposal includes plans to kill more wolves than have been taken in the Bathurst range in recent years. This would initially be by supporting trappers and hunters in the short term. This should increase survival of calves and adults in the Bathurst herd. We can use hunter observations to target particular areas in winter, and help trappers or hunters to get to those areas. ENR will work with Industry, Tourism and Investment to increase the advance for prime, well handled wolf pelts from \$200/pelt to \$400 . ENR will also increase the price for wolf carcasses from \$100 to \$200. These carcasses provide good information on sex and age of the harvest. The target is to increase the wolf kill from about 40 to at least double or higher in Bathurst range. We will also make available trapper training on how to snare wolves and prepare pelts for maximum value. After one year, we propose to review how successful this has been to increase harvest and then consider whether additional actions are needed.

Hunter Harvest – Bathurst Herd

	Estimated Annual Harvest (1990s)	Estimated Annual Harvest (late 2000s)
Residents	900-1600 (bulls & cows)	<200 Bulls
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Bathurst Harvest Major Factor in Rapid Decline

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I wanted to review quickly why it is important to reduce hunting of the Bathurst herd. I want to emphasize that we are not saying that all of the decline of the Bathurst herd was because of hunting; most of the decline was likely due to a natural cycle that has happened many times before. But, when caribou numbers are low, and we want them to increase, we must look at harvest.

This slide reviews the estimate harvest from the Bathurst Herd. In 1996, the Bathurst herd had about 350,000 caribou. The estimated harvest at that time was about 2-4% of the herd size.

But in 2009, when the herd was down to 32,000 caribou, the estimated harvest was a much larger as a proportion of the herd - 13-22% of the herd. This is too high for any caribou herd. A continued harvest at this level can only lead to further rapid decline.

The last time caribou numbers were low in the 1970's, there were not many winter roads or high powered skidoos. We believe that during previous times of caribou scarcity, herds at low numbers were still hard to get to, and hunter harvests likely were low enough to allow the herds to recover and grow. But now with winter roads, fast skidoos and airplanes, it is easy to find caribou to hunt.

Aboriginal Harvest: Bathurst Herd

- Harvest of 300 Bathurst Caribou to be shared inside and outside Wek'eezhii (All hunters, all regions)
- Achieved through use of Tâichô Rules and harmonization of laws with ENR
- Revival of Cultural Hunts



Because the Bathurst herd declined very rapidly from 2006 to 2009 and is down to 32,000, we need to be very careful with this herd. There is no guarantee that the herd will stop declining, even with no harvest. So the proposal recommends to keep the hunter harvest from this herd very low, so that the herd can stabilize and start to increase.

The revised joint proposal recommends a harvest of about 300 caribou per year from the entire Bathurst herd. To make sure more cows survive, the proposal suggest the harvest should be mostly bulls. Because the Bathurst herd travels both inside and outside Wek'eezhii, the proposal recognizes that this harvest will have to be shared with Yellowknives Dene, and possibly others.

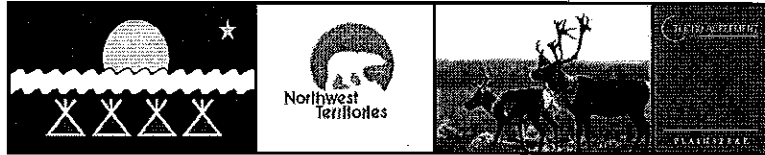
In Wek'eezhii, it will be up to Tliche Government and Tliche communities how they divide the harvest. If we can get the herd to stop declining, the next step would be to see what we can do to get it to increase. In the short-term we need to make some sacrifices so that future generations of hunters will have more caribou to hunt.

Both governments agree that implementing these changes must be done in ways that build on traditional Tliche rules about hunting, and through harmonization of Tliche laws with ENR's regulations. We must also build renewed respect for caribou.

Both governments recognize that other Aboriginal cultures also have long-standing cultural relationships with caribou herds.

Options for Self Regulation

- Winter Road Corridor
- Hunt by traditional methods
 - Canoe Hunts
 - Transport caribou by skidoo
- Tags vs. No Tags
- Winter road check stations
- Community Allocation of Tags
- Increase use of other traditional foods
- Increase access to wood bison

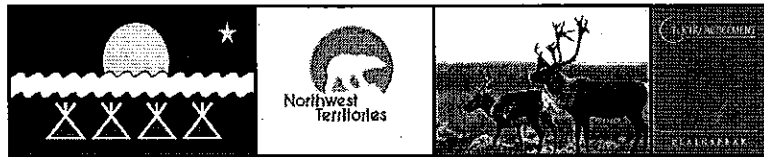


The revised joint proposal contains options for self regulation of harvest by Tlicho hunters. These include a no-hunting road corridor, using traditional hunting methods such as canoe to hunt caribou in fall, allowing transport of caribou only by skidoo (not trucks), the advantages of using or not using tags, winter road check-stations, community allocation of tags, increased use of other traditional foods, and increased access to wood bison.

To decide on the best options, further discussion by both governments with communities and hunters is needed to develop an implementation plan.

Aboriginal Harvest: Bluenose-East herd

- Behchokö , Gamètì and Whatì: hunted mostly from this herd in recent years
- 09/10 total harvest 3500, >60% cows – need to reduce
- Possible interim harvest: aim at 4% with majority bulls
- 2006 Sahtu Board recommendation – 4%
- Would have to be shared with Sahtu, Dehcho, Nunavut
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Earlier, I reviewed the proposed recommendations for the Bluenose-East herd.

Surveys were conducted this summer to obtain a new estimate for the size of this herd.

This new estimate will be released in September.

Adaptive Co-Management

Through Partnership - Listening and Respecting the Past,
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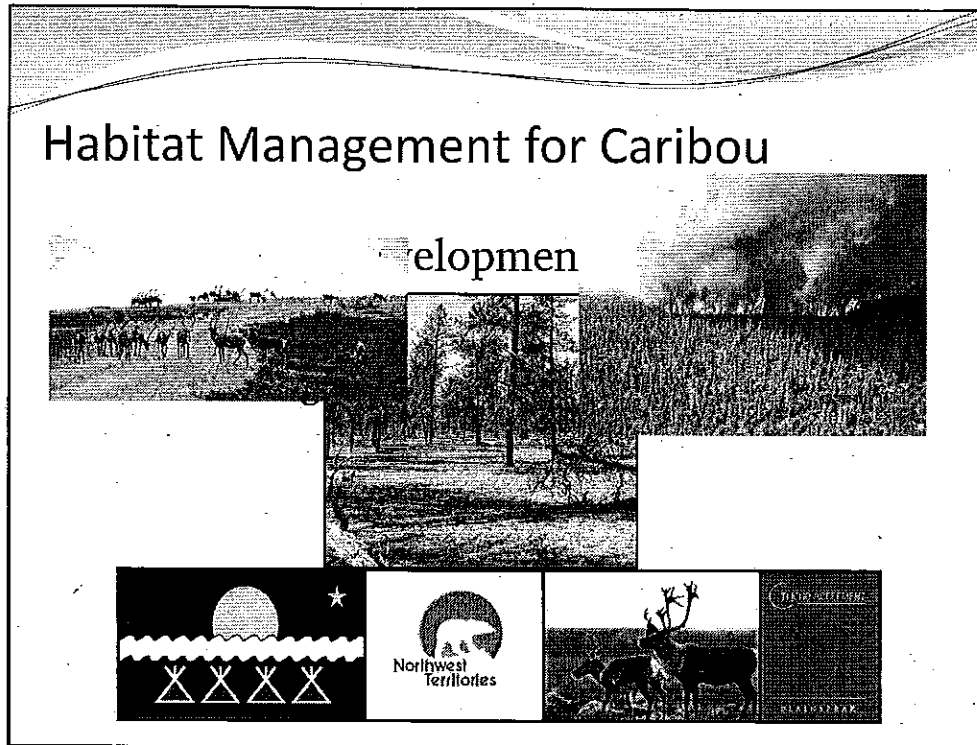
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The revised joint proposal suggests that new information is looked at each year to assess if these actions are working and if new actions are needed. This is called adaptive management.

The new information will include both traditional knowledge and scientific information from surveys.

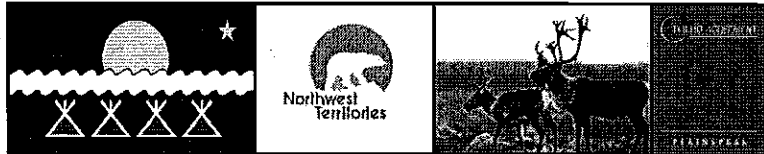
This will help insure that management actions are appropriate and effective to reach the objectives of stopping the decline and helping the herds to increase.



Although our main focus in the next 2 years and in this proposal is to manage the two things that most directly impact caribou death rates (wolves and hunters), we also know that habitat is very important to caribou. We need to take care of the land. So we want to make sure that longer-term planning considers industrial development, including mining. We need to make sure that caribou calving grounds are protected. And we need to make sure that key caribou winter ranges are protected.

Long Term Planning for Caribou

- Proposal is mostly for short-term (2 years)
- Need long-term planning for all 3 herds:
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- Will be longer-term processes
- Harvest management part of larger plans
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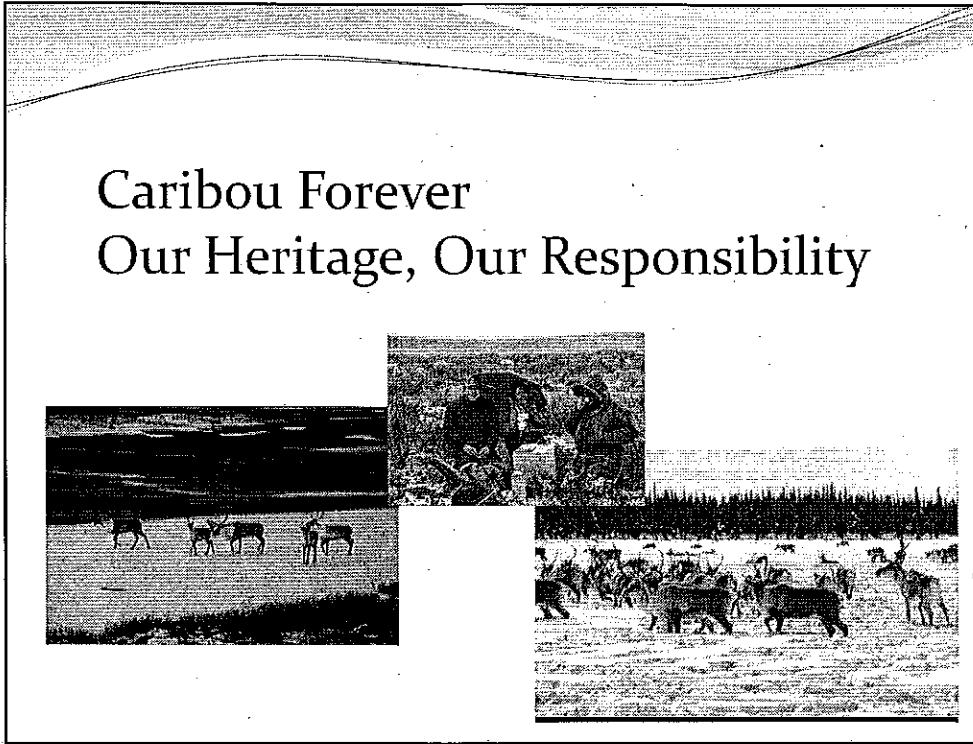


The joint proposal is primarily focused on the short-term (next 2 years) and what can be done to stop the caribou decline.

But we know that we also need to long-term management plans for each of the 3 caribou herds (Bathurst, Bluenose East and Ahiak), including harvest management planning.

Developing such plans takes longer and will involve multiple governments and other groups. All of these herds cover vast areas and they cross several political boundaries, so many communities, boards, councils, other users and governments need to be involved.

Caribou Forever Our Heritage, Our Responsibility



Both governments want to see large herds of caribou again. To make this happen, all people must work together. We can learn from traditional knowledge and past history.

Now, it is our responsibility to make difficult decisions and, in Wek'eezhii, we are guided by the Tlicho Agreement.

Outside of Wek'eezhii, ENR will continue to work with other Aboriginal organizations to develop management actions to help the caribou herds recover.

ENR looks forward to working collaboratively with the Tlicho Government to implement recommendations from the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board for management actions so we can have caribou forever.

Thank you.