

NORTH SLAVE MÉTIS ALLIANCE

PO Box 2301 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7



May 13, 2016

Daniel Shewchuk
A/Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
BOX 1379
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0
P: (867) 975 – 7300
F: (867) 421 – 9832

Via Email

Dear Mr. Shewchuk:

RE: Written Response to the Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment's
Proposal to Establish Total Allowable Harvest of 340 Bluenose East Caribou

The North Slave Métis Alliance ("NSMA") is an Aboriginal organization that represents s.35 Aboriginal rights-bearing Métis people in the area north and east of Great Slave Lake, Northwest Territories.

The NSMA respectfully submits our Written Submission respecting the Total Allowable Harvest ("TAH") recommendation, by the Government of Nunavut to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board ("NWMB"). NSMA appreciates the opportunity to participate in this process.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Shin Shiga
Regulatory Analyst
North Slave Métis Alliance
shin.shiga@nsma.net
(867) 447-0684

The North Slave Métis Alliance Written Submission

Background

The North Slave Métis Alliance (“NSMA”) members have a good *prima facie* claim to the Aboriginal right to harvest caribou north of Great Slave Lake, NWT. The proposed BNE Caribou TAH (the “Proposal”) has potential adverse effects on the NSMA members’ ability to exercise their Aboriginal rights, now and into the future.

It is also NSMA’s mandate to exercise Métis responsibility to protect the environment, including wildlife.

The NSMA participates in this proceeding to ensure that the decision by NWMB does not adversely affect NSMA members.

Party Status

NSMA requests NWMB to grant a Party Status to the NSMA. NWMB will be considering the Proposal by the Government of Nunavut, to allocate the TAH of 340 male Bluenose East (“BNE”) Caribou to the people of Nunavut. In the context of rapid and sustained decline of the BNE Caribou population, and harvesting restrictions that are in effect in the NWT, the decision by the NWMB may cause adverse effects on NSMA members’ Aboriginal right to hunt caribou.

NSMA, as a representative body of traditional harvesters of BNE Caribou, participates regularly in collaborative initiatives that aim to protect BNE Caribou. .

Respecting management of Barren-ground Caribou, NSMA has participated, as an official intervenor, in regulatory processes on the basis of NSMA members’ Aboriginal rights. These include proceedings under the authorities of Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board, Nunavut Impact Review Board, and Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board.

In addition, NSMA is granted an Intervenor Status in Nunavut Planning Commission’s land use planning process.

Given the gravity of the circumstances, NSMA’s experience in collaborative management, and potential adverse effects on NSMA members’ Aboriginal rights, we believe that the NSMA should be heard, by the NWMB, as a Party to this proceeding.

Total Allowable Harvest

State of the BNE Caribou Herd

The NSMA understands that the BNE Caribou population is in a perilous state, for reasons not yet clearly known. Since 2010, estimated BNE Caribou population has declined from 123,000 to 38,500, or approximately 70% in five years.

Natural population fluctuation, habitat loss, climate change, predation, and harvest levels have all been named as potential drivers for this decline. Currently, there is no consensus on the relative impact of these potential drivers.

Current Initiatives

The Government of Northwest Territories and Tlicho Government have recently submitted a joint-proposal for community-led wolf management program, to the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board. The proposal also outlines various caribou and predator monitoring programs. NSMA supported this proposal as an intervenor.

Throughout various processes, NSMA has consistently been on the side of caution to provide the most protection for the BNE and other Barren-ground Caribou populations.

Harvest Restriction

In December 2015, the Government of Northwest Territories and Tlicho Government have submitted, to the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board, a joint-proposal to allocate the TAH of 950 (“nine hundreds and fifty”) BNE Caribou to traditional harvesters of the herd. As an affected Aboriginal organization, NSMA participated in the public hearing, and supported the allocation of TAH, conditioning that NSMA receives an equitable share of the allocation.

Recognizing that the cumulative effects on BNE Caribou is mounting, and that careful management of the herd is crucial, NSMA has supported fair and equitable harvest limitation of this herd in the NWT. Given the population trend, other initiatives already in place, and the responsibilities that the Aboriginal communities in the NWT are currently bound, the NSMA is in favor of the TAH of 340 male BNE Caribou in Nunavut.

NSMA recommends the NWMB, for the purpose of protecting the BNE Caribou population and future traditional harvesters of this herd, to put in place the 340 TAH of the BNE Caribou herd in Nunavut.

To avoid further decline of the herd, NSMA would like to express our strong support for expediently establishing a collaborative long-term management mechanism for BNE Caribou, which should include affected groups in NWT and NU.

Conclusion

NSMA recognizes that allocation of TAH is a difficult decision to many Aboriginal people who rely on the BNE Caribou for their physical and spiritual well-being. This is equally true to the

NSMA members. Despite the dire shortage of bush meat, NSMA has supported temporary harvest limitation of the BNE Caribou harvest, in order for the herd to recover in strength.

In order to facilitate the recovery of the herd, the NSMA would like to again emphasize that a collaborative platform to make long-term management decisions are critical, and we urge expedient establishment of such a mechanism.

DRAFT