

News

from the

Winter 2003

Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board

GRRB Board Meeting

The Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board (GRRB) gathered in Aklavik on February 4th and 5th for its semi-annual meeting. GRRB members and staff, Renewable Councils representatives and agency staff discussed management and research issues related to renewable resources in the Gwich'in Settlement Area.

Each year, the GRRB allocates funding from its Wildlife Studies Fund to wildlife, fisheries, forestry, and environmental education projects.

The GRRB received a total of 24 project proposals for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. After much discussion, the GRRB allocated \$258,000 to 23 projects. The projects funded include:

Wildlife

- Lower Mackenzie River Project (Ducks Unlimited)
- Middle Mackenzie River Project (Ducks Unlimited)
- Bluenose Caribou-Recruitment (DRWED)
- Dall's Sheep Survey (DRWED)
- Boreal Woodland Caribou Winter Habitat Ecology Project (GRRB)
- Wolf Prey Selection (Dall's sheep) Project (GRRB)
- Wildlife Disease/Parasites Course (DRWED)
- Dall's Sheep Management Plan (DRWED and GRRB)
- Dall's Sheep Habitat Project (GRRB)

Fisheries

- TK Fish Population Study (Gwichya RRC)
- Arctic Red River Index Netting Study (DFO and GRRB)
- Rat River Charr Monitoring (DFO)
- Travaillant Lake Fish Study (GRRB)

Forestry

- Seismic Regrowth (DRWED and GRRB)
- Sustainable Forest Management Network Contribution (GRRB)

Culture and Education

- One Minute for the Environment (GRRB)
- Youth Work Experience (GRRB)
- Nature Day (GRRB)
- Full Circle (Heuer and Allison)
- Johnny D Charlie Memorial Ski-doo Trip (Wright)
- Elders Gathering: Conclusion of Three Rivers Journey (Tetlit RRC)
- Community-based Ecological Monitoring (Borderland Coop)
- Elders and Youth Gathering at Summit Lake (Tetlit RRC)

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For more information contact us!

Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board
P.O.Box 2240, Inuvik, NT, X0E 0T0
Phone: (867)-777-3429 • Fax (867)-777-4260
<http://www.grrb.nt.ca>



Gwich'in Harvest Study

Charlie Rose, GHS Coordinator, has just finished the 2000 GHS report and will have the 2001 report available soon.

The GRRB will move to a new way of conducting the Gwich'in Harvest Study (GHS):

- 1) Study will cover all harvest in the GSA, and
- 2) 1 or 2 interviews per year.



Shirley Alexie interviewing Denny Gordon for the GHS

New Positions

A new *Community Knowledge Coordinator* will start in April. This person will coordinate the consultation and collection of community knowledge (including Gwich'in Harvest Study) for renewable resource research and management in the GSA. The Community Knowledge Coordinator will work closely with the communities.

Peter Clarkson (GRRB Executive Director) will continue to reduce the time he spends with the GRRB. During his time at the office, he will assist Marie-Anick Elie (Communications Manager) and Jennifer Walker-Larsen (Fisheries/ Forestry Biologist) to take over his duties. The new Executive Director position will be advertised later this year.



Jim Edwards Sittichinli Scholarship

Congratulations to Elaine Alexie, Mabel Brown, Bobbie Jo Greenland and Catherine Jorstead. The GRRB awarded them with the 2003 Jim Edwards Sittichinli Scholarship. Each recipient will receive \$1,000 to help them pursue their education in renewable resources or religious studies.

More Funding for Forestry Work

The Board belongs to the Sustainable Forest Management Network. The Network provides us with funding for forestry research in the GSA. Through the Network, the University of Alberta and University of Manitoba will work with the GRRB and communities on 2 projects. The Driftwood Harvesting Project started in 2001. This project will try to predict the amount of driftwood available for use and look at potential driftwood products. Brenda Parlee will be working with elders on the second project. She will research how changes on the land affect Gwich'in harvesting of berries.



Nakal is the Gwich'in name for cloudberry

Forest Management Plan

A draft forest management plan has been prepared by the Forestry Working Group (DRWED, GTC, RRCs and GRRB). The draft will be given to each RRC to review this summer.

Seismic Regrowth

For the third year in a row, the GRRB and DRWED will work to determine forest regeneration and growth rates following fires and seismic line cutting.

Field crews will visit sites in burned areas and on old seismic lines to measure plant growth over the summer. Pippa Seccombe-Hett will coordinate the field work again this year.



Seismic lines in the GSA

Travaillant Lake Fish Study

In 2002, the GRRB and the Gwichya RRC initiated a fish movement study on Travaillant Lake. Traditional knowledge interviews were conducted. Whitefish, crookedback, and trout were tagged in July and again in September.

More fish will be tagged this summer. If you or a community member catch a tagged fish, please contact your local RRC or the GRRB for a reward.



Fishing under the ice for the Peel River Study

Peel River Fish Study

The 5 year Peel River Fish Study is almost finished. The GRRB would like to thank the community monitors for all their good work. Over the years, the monitors collected information about the fish they caught. We now have to analyse the information collected over the years. Melanie Toyne and Jen Walker-Larsen hope to finish the final report this year.

Arctic Red River Index Netting Program

The Index Netting Program was coordinated by DFO. Last year, nets were set on the Arctic Red River by Noel Andre, a community monitor. Unfortunately, few fish were caught. DFO will work in collaboration with Board staff and Tsigehtchic residents during the second year of the project.

Determining Wolf Prey Selection in the Richardson and Mackenzie Mountains

In the last two years, community members have expressed concern over an increase in the wolf population in the Richardson Mountains. Also, DRWED and the Department of the Environment, Dawson, Yukon recorded a decline in the Dall's sheep population in the



Richardson Mountains. The reason for the decline is not known; one possibility is an increase in wolf predation.

This study will look at what wolves eat. We will need the help of hunters and trappers to get samples (fat, muscle and organ) from wolves and animals that wolves may eat. No wolves will be harvested solely for the purpose of this study.



Divii is the Gwich'in name for Dall's sheep

Dall's Sheep Habitat Research and Monitoring the Richardson Mountains, GSA

GRRB, DRWED, Ehdiitat RRC and Tetlit RRC will collect baseline information on the Dall's sheep habitat, as well as develop a long term monitoring project to assist in understanding what impact future human activities may have on Dall's sheep.

The monitoring program includes: vegetation classification and collection of faecal samples for dietary analysis. Exclosures will also be set up and plants will be identified in and out of those exclosures. The exclosures will prevent sheep and other animals from grazing those areas.



Dall's Sheep Management Plan

Community consultation will be a key factor in the development of this plan. All affected communities will have an opportunity to provide information and suggestions for the management plan during consultations throughout this year. Information from government wildlife management agencies will also play a part in the development of the plan.

Wildlife Disease/Parasites Course

DRWED is organising a course on Wildlife Disease and Parasites in May 2003. The GRRB is sponsoring one member from each of the Gwich'in communities to participate in the course.

Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited is coming back this summer to continue and expand their research. The research will provide baseline information on the Gwich'in Settlement Area and will help us understand the reason for the decline of black ducks and scaup. Ducks Unlimited staff will be based out of the GRRB office during the field season.



Youth participating to Nature Day 20002

GRRB Environmental Education

The GRRB is committed to work with youth to encourage them to learn more about their environment and encourage students to pursue studies in renewable resources. We will run 3 educational projects this year: Nature Day, Youth Work Experience and One Minute for the Environment.