

August 10, 2007

Address block

Dear ***:

Re Porcupine Caribou Harvest Management Strategy Workshop

As you are aware, the Porcupine Caribou Management Board (PCMB) has been working to initiate a Harvest Management Strategy. This Strategy is possibly our single most important step in ensuring the caribou are best protected in the face of the herd's declining population. We know that all the herd's user groups are concerned about the declining population of the herd, and there are many different ways to approach the problem. One method is to manage harvesting of the herd, and there are many ways to manage harvest. We also know that in the absence of the Strategy, the governments might opt to impose harvest management options on their own.

This Strategy is our attempt to bring the representatives of all interested groups together, face to face, so they can share their concerns and ideas. The community representatives then can work together to develop a comprehensive plan that will be presented to the governments. If all leaders sign the Harvest Management Plan, the Plan will have credibility and strength, so that the Ministers will have to take it very seriously. If the leaders can't agree on a unanimous Plan, there is a risk that the Ministers will step in and impose harvest restrictions that the parties don't want. As you know, the greatest risk is that the population of the herd will decline before any action is taken, to the point that there are too few caribou remaining to hunt.

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We are pleased to announce that all native user groups and the territorial governments have signed the Harvest Management Strategy Protocol. This document is an agreement by all the governments and native user groups with some authority over the harvest of the herd. The Protocol outlines the scope of the project and the participants' responsibilities. An unsigned version of the Protocol is attached for your reference. The one remaining signature will come from the Government of Canada, which has expressed its support in principle. Canada has also already contributed funding to further the Harvest Management Strategy. Given this strong commitment, we are in an excellent position to proceed with the Strategy.

For your information, the following organizations are signatories to the Harvest Management Strategy Protocol, and as such their representatives comprise the Harvest Management Strategy Working Group:

- Gwich'in Tribal Council;
- Inuvialuit Game Council;
- First Nation of Na'cho Ny'ak Dun;
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in;
- Vuntut Gwitch'in First Nation;
- Government of Canada;
- Government of Northwest Territories; and
- Government of Yukon

At this time, we would like to announce that the Harvest Management Workshop will take place as follows:

October 18, 19, 20 and 21
Midnight Sun Recreational Complex
Inuvik, NWT

We ask that you identify a representative and an alternate to speak for your organization throughout the Harvest Management Strategy Process. We request that you forward their contact information to us as soon as possible. Your representative should be able to commit to participate as required throughout this initiative. In addition, your representative should be well informed about the herd and be able to share the perspectives of your community members as well as the history of the issues from your community's perspective. To help clarify the scope and nature of this project, please refer to the Protocol. There will be limited funds available from the PCMB to assist organizations without adequate funding to participate in the upcoming workshop.

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We are also pleased to announce that Doug Urquhart has agreed to facilitate the Workshop. Doug brings many years of experience as a facilitator. He also served as Secretariat for the Porcupine Caribou Management Board from 1986 to 1996. He is well informed in the history of the issues affecting the herd, and over the years he has kept abreast of issues as they arise.

The Porcupine Caribou Management Board would like to thank you for your participation in this process. Harvest Management is such a critical issue that having face-to-face discussions is the only way to ensure that both native harvesting rights and the Herd are protected. I look forward to meeting with your representatives in Inuvik.

Sincerely,

Joe Tetlich
Chair

Encl. HMS Protocol