

Nunavut Planning Commission

**Re: Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board Submission for the Technical Meeting on the draft NLUP**

The Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board (QWB) is responding to the invitation for submissions for the technical meeting on the Draft Nunavut Land Use Plan, held in Iqaluit from June 23 – 26, 2015.

QWB appreciates the invitation. QWB is 1 of 3 Regional Wildlife Board (RWO) in Nunavut. We are mandated under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement to work with and represent the priorities, viewpoints and needs to the 13 Hunter and Trapper Organizations of the Qikiqtaaluk Region.

As outlined in the notice for the technical meeting, QWB understands this meeting, and submission is an opportunity to:

- Raise technical concerns (definition, flow, information gaps & planning concepts) of the plan;
- Review the plan section by section (guided by the Options and Recommendations Document)
- Provide feedback on how to best to present this plan and issues for the public hearing process (issues/solutions, inconsistencies in the documents and the identification of issues that require additional consideration).

In understanding this, QWB staff reviewed the draft plan and the Options & Recommendation document. We will first speak to the Options & Recommendation document section by section, and then raise points on the draft plan as a whole. Our goal is to highlight areas for improvement, clarification and where there is a need for consistency. We bring these points forward in order to ensure the future stages of this discussion includes space for Qikiqtaaluk HTOs to engage, while also respecting their experience, knowledge and mandated responsibilities. Doing so will support a stronger Land Use Plan for Nunavut.

While QWB has not yet held a direct conversation with its members on this plan, the points raised here are based on years of conversations with our Executive, Board and Member HTOs, both board and managers. These discussions have occurred in multiple forums: in meetings, teleconferences, workshops, or individual discussions, around QWB business, HTO business, or discussions on specific species as they relate to management plans, surveys or allocations.

Options & Recommendations:

**Chapter 1:** Section 1.5 of the updated version outlines the considered information. It methodically outlines the role of law, government policy documents, participant feedback and community consultation. This reads as very government focused. QWB would like

NPC to clarify the role community feedback and consultation had on the plan overall.

## **Chapter 2: Protecting and Sustaining the Environment**

This section directly involves wildlife and their habitat. This is an important section for QWB and Qikiqtaaluk HTOs.

1. While this plan considers the multiple purposes of land, QWB is of the opinion that wildlife and land cannot be separated. As Inuit have followed animals, Inuit knowledge of the land comes from the movement of animals on the land. This chapter's preamble could be strengthened by outlining this connection, both as historical context and contemporary applicability.
2. The introduction of this chapter states it will "provide options for managing these key areas", and lists the various IPGs and their jurisdiction. This chapter does not make any direct reference to the wildlife management bodies mandated under the NLCA: NWMB, RWOs and HTOs. Again, in representing HTOs and their membership, one cannot talk about land without talking about wildlife.
3. In the section on Key Migratory Bird Habitat Sites, it references the Species at Risk Act (SARA), and to "non-binding designations." The distinction between "non-binding designation" and "binding designation" is not defined anywhere in the document. Such a distinction is necessary. QWB also wonders if other legislative processes within Nunavut, such as decisions of NWMB or RWO and HTO resolutions would be received. Would they be designated as non-binding designation, and therefore have less political weight?
4. QWB appreciates the volume of information that went into outlining the specific details of the sites (red and yellow). The information outlined includes site details, current human activities on site, potential consequence to bird populations, and recommended set backs. While this section cites CWS's role in outlining this information, there is limited reference to the role communities may have played in developing this work. This is a concern for the draft plan itself, there is no clear indication on how community experience shaped this plan.
5. Nowhere in this section is NWMB's own process identified, nor its jurisdiction over wildlife and habitat. Nor is the role of HTOs and RWOs included in this section. The plan should be updated to include this, and if not, then some justification is necessary.

### *Caribou Calving and Post Calving Grounds*

6. Qikiqtaaluk communities get caribou from 3 main populations.
  - 1.1. Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay hunt from Peary Caribou, which is shared with the Kitikmeot Region. The communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay have been very active in the development of management plan for this population, and have ensured that their community members respect the terms of this management.

This has included voluntary restrictions on harvesting.

1.2. 10 communities hunt from the Baffin Island Caribou populations.

In March, 2015, 10 Qikiqtaaluk communities participated in an NWMB public hearing on Baffin Island Caribou. This hearing was done in response to an moratorium that was put into place in January 2015. While many communities articulated the natural cycles of caribou populations, and stated that a limited hunt with restrictions are necessary when numbers are low, many did not agree with the moratorium.

In response to the moratorium, communities were proactive in identifying factors that influence caribou patterns, health and migration. A concern raised across communities was the impact development had on caribou population, including increased transportation, increased human presence and activity, etc. HTO and community representatives stated that when populations are at a low point, this impact is great, and it impacts their food security.

1.3. Hall Beach and Igloolik, and other communities as well, travel into the Kivalliq region to harvest Caribou. We would like the Commission to be aware that decisions on caribou in Kivalliq does impact the Qikiqtaaluk Region.

In considering the importance of caribou for Qikiqtaaluk communities, and due to the cumulative knowledge that development does impact caribou movement, migration and health, QWB argues that all Caribou Calving and Post-Calving grounds should be listed as Option 1, including those areas that overlap with high mineral potential.

*Sea Ice Crossings*

7. This section states that “Option 3 was chosen for these areas given that limited information is available regarding timing of sea ice crossing to formulate specific management options.”

QWB is of the opinion that such information can be accessible through direct engagement with HTOs. While there is variances year to year depending on weather, the way it is currently worded suggests that information does not exists, when this is not entirely the case.

*Polar Bear Denning Areas:*

8. The polar bear is an important animal for communities. Not only is an important source of food and clothing, its an important economic source for those sell their hide and/or participate in sport hunts. For the past two years, there has been an application to uplist Polar Bears under CITES. Uplisting the Polar Bear would ban all international trade of polar bear products/hides. Communities do not want this and Nunavut’s current wildlife regime has been created to prevent this from occurring.

The international community has been vigilant in its public relations regarding polar bears. Most often, climate change is cited as the source for polar bear decline. This rationale goes against what hunters and Inuit have been saying: that polar bears are hugely adaptable to their environment conditions, and the population in Nunavut is on the rise. With that being said, hunters would argue that protecting denning sites is central to respecting the integrity of Polar Bear development. Polar Bear denning, and new cub populations are important for the current research being done on polar bears, which feed into the current polar bear management regime. All these factors combined influence QWB's recommendation that Polar Bear Denning Areas should be listed at Option 1.

#### *Walrus Haul-Outs*

9. HTOs in the Baffin region have been working with the Department of Fisheries and Ocean to develop a Walrus management plan. This has been a process that has been supported for around 7 years. These meetings have included representatives from QWB and the HTOs of Igloodik, Hall Beach, Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. It is in these meetings that the importance and vulnerability of Walrus Haul Out sites for walrus have been made very clear. The slightest disturbance has the potential to scare walrus away from the site indefinitely. Therefore, QWB recommends that these sites be uplisted to "Option 1".

QWB recognizes that important sites of Foxe Basin was identified as an area of community importance. This designation should be highlighted in this section for consistency.

#### *Arctic Cod Lakes*

10. In considering the important economic potential of commercial fisheries for communities, QWB recommends that NPC focus this discussion with the impacted communities and parties directly on this matter.

#### *Marine Areas of Importance*

11. In explaining what Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas, the plan states:

*The designated EBSA's in the DNLUP are a work in progress. In the future, as available science, traditional knowledge, and an understanding of these areas expand, DFO may be able to provide additional information to NPC to assist with the designation and recommendations for these areas.*

QWB agrees that Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas are necessary to identify. Each community in the Qikiqtaaluk, and throughout Nunavut, have areas where they get food, and know where those animals get their food.

QWB asks NPC whether or not this information was collected throughout its community

consultation, and whether or not this information has been articulated, and therefore, drawn from for this current plan?

QWB would also encourage NPC to consider working with NWMB as it develops its habitat program. Also, HTOs, with RWO support, will be a central force in developing the collective understanding of these areas.

QWB also supports NPC's commitment to working with the best available science and traditional knowledge. Based on our experience within Wildlife Management, a seamless process to support this has not been developed, and much work, learning, listening and interaction is consistently required by all parties. This is not a recommendation per say, but an acknowledgement of the time, energy and patience needed to make decisions based on both sources of knowledge.

#### *Land use Outside of Nunavut*

12. QWB would like to recognize and support concerns raised by the community of Sanikiluaq regarding the impacts of hydro electric development in the James Bay Area. Members of the HTO have raised concerns that hydro development is impacting multiple environmental factors, including the salinity of the water, which in turn impacts marine wildlife, impacting an important food source for the community. While the draft plan does make reference to climate change, should another section be included to highlight changes to environment based due to human induced factors?

Also, in our experience within Wildlife Development, developing processes for addressing transboundary issues requires specific supports, as it is a politically sensitive environment.

#### *Climate Change*

13. QWB would like to recognize the important role HTOs, with RWO support, will have in identifying and articulating the cumulative affects climate change will have on wildlife, habitat and infrastructure.

We would also like to reaffirm that changes to environment due to human activity should also be considered.

### **Chapter 3:**

14. For Parks, whether established or proposed, QWB would encourage regulatory agencies to develop effective means for enforcement of boundaries and/or restrictions. This is especially important to consider as the tourism industry continues to develop. Required community based monitoring and educational outreach may be necessary for areas specifically identified as important wildlife/habitat areas.

In drawing on the experience of communities in the Qikiqtaaluk, National Parks and Sanctuaries have been established to protect areas and wildlife, ensuring that development does not occur in those sites. In becoming recognized protected sites, or sites of importance for wildlife, they have become tourist attractions for cruise ships. This traffic does impact the wildlife in those areas. Currently, there is no effective means for ensuring protection measures are supported and enforced.

For example, the community of Igloolik has raised the concern that traffic related to tourism was impacting the migration routes of walrus. As referenced earlier, walrus are very sensitive to environmental changes. Understandably, areas such as these are interesting, specifically to the burgeoning eco-tourism interest that is developing in the north. Igloolik raised the concern that the tourist traffic was causing the walrus to move away, and therefore, the community asked that there be a stop of tourist visit in the community for a couple of years. Since that time, the walruses have begun to return.

While QWB does understand that the jurisdiction over tourism licensing does fall under the jurisdiction of the GN, specifically, ED&T, what is NPC's responsibility in responding to the community's request to pause activities that are having detrimental impacts on wildlife. More specifically: how is NPC set up to hear the concerns of people from the community, especially as the activities on land development and tourism take place. Is their opportunity for restrictions in areas where wildlife life to pause activity for a couple of years?

#### *Migratory Bird Sanctuaries.*

15. For each of the sanctuaries identified under this section include an "additional considerations" section, and it references priorities and values: which include other species. These identified areas should be cross referenced/included in the wildlife specific areas in Chapter 2.

Also refer to the concerns in point 14 about the impact on tourism for the species.

## **Chapter 4: Building Healthier Communities**

### *Community Areas of Interest*

16. Take into consideration cultural factors and priorities (as outline in the NLCA) In explaining what these additional considerations are, NPC quotes DFO consultation data and reports for explanation.

Did consultations NPC conducted with the communities impact, inform or influence these recommendations? QWB raises this concern, as from the perspective of QWB, this sets a precedent where NPC takes direction from the federal government departments more so than from Nunavut communities. Again, HTOs and the membership they represent not only have this knowledge. They are mandated under

the NLCA to represent their communities on these matters as they related to wildlife and habitat.

17. As the areas identified within the Qikiqtaaluk region (Foxe Basin, Moffett Inlet and Nettilling Lake) include specific species and environmental landmarks for protection, and these should be referenced in the appropriate heading in Chapter 2.

*Community Land Use Areas:*

18. The point is made that:  
*“At this time, the Use and Occupancy Mapping information identifies areas that are used by community members, but does not include the communities’ views on the relative importance of the areas and management direction that may be appropriate.”*

**Chapter 5:**

19. QWB understands that role of a mixed economy in Nunavut now and into the future. We are of the opinion that for an economy system to truly be mixed, then there must be an equal consideration for the multiple uses in the land in each decision making process. In chapters 1 – 4, there is consistency in outlining “Considered Information”, which range from community priorities to economic development. Chapter 5 does not. In listing its Considered Information, it focuses solely on economic development. For the sake of consistency in the plan, QWB recommends that Chapter 5 be updated to reflect the other chapters. Doing so creates some space to engage in discussions on economic development with the other land uses in mind. This is important, as the other chapters all make reference to economic development.

**Overall recommendations:**

20. This is a plan for Nunavut. QWB recognizes that work that government agencies and departments do to provide information and mapping information for this plan, and yet, this plan is missing direct citation of community based concerns. The goal of a land use plan should be to start with community concerns and then back up these concerns with the information available from government departments and agencies. It is in only doing that that plans such as this can be really claim to be made in Nunavut.
21. There needs to be a consistency among sections in terms of identification of site details, current human activities at site, threats to species from current/future activities throughout the plan.
22. At various points throughout the plan there are references made to “potential consequences of species”, “recommended setbacks”, etc. Again, it is unclear what role community input had on the development of this plan, nor is there reference to how it will inform future versions of this plan. Specifically, HTO input and

engagement on these matters is necessary.

23. The plan does require an update to include the valuable, direct guidance communities have provided in the development of this plan. Doing so places further responsibilities for NPC to develop effective measures to ensure community involvement, and HTO participation particularly, is central to the development of future generations of this plan.

#### Research, Consultations and the Plan's future generations:

The plan is specific in stating this plan is a first generation plan. QWB is aware that this plan will develop, and change, as time goes on, and community needs and priorities change. And yet, it is QWB hope believes as future generations of plans are developed, there is increased and developed research and information to better inform communities so that they can continue to provide necessary input into those future plans.

QWB is requesting that NPC clarify what mechanisms it has in place to receive future, and on going, knowledge about the animals, land, movement and change. Knowledge sources will include research from various levels of government, IQ, and migration patterns (and changes) and finally, observations on changes to climate.

24. In Chapter 2, NPC argues that where lack of information is available, Option 3: Mixed uses for areas of limited information? More restricted? Potential to provide restrictions or open it up in the future? Would option 2 be better? Default?

#### **Additional concerns:**

##### North Pole:

The communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute are Qikiqtaaluk's most northerly communities. Resolute specifically is a hub and jump-off/landing point for research related to the north pole.

In considering the ongoing international debate on who owns the north, in considering the expressed interest of range counties in exploiting that area for resource development, and in considering there has been continued concern raised that emergency preparedness is not to the level that is required, how will NPC incorporate those concerns within this plan, and future generations?

##### Musk-Ox:

The plan does not include any specific reference to Musk-Ox. In the Qikiqtaaluk, there are Musk-Ox near Resolute and Grise Fiord. These communities have expressed multiple times that Caribou and Musk-Ox do not get along, as they are competing for the same

vegetation, and when one population is in decline, the other flourishes. And while Caribou is the preferred food over Musk-Ox in the Qikiqtaaluk, the other two regions do hunt from this species (personal and sport hunts), and therefore, it is necessary that it be raised.