

**Minutes of the  
Dehcho Watershed Ecosystem Advisory Committee  
AAROM Meeting  
March 5, 6, 2013  
Dene Cultural Institute – Hay River Reserve**

**Preamble:**

This was the annual year-end meeting of the Dehcho Watershed Ecosystem Advisory Committee for 2013. The general purpose of the meeting was to inform Committee members of program progress and receive community input for next year and future year programming. This interaction between the DWEAC members and the Dehcho AAROM Coordinator is important for program direction and development. Committee meetings are the main forum for the exchange of ideas and information between each other as community and organizational representatives. It is the time to provide the AAROM Coordinator with community information and perspective and also for the Coordinator and Technical Advisor to provide project updates and reports.

The committee members were briefed on the results of our community-based research and monitoring program. Dehcho AAROM, Technical Advisor Mike Low presented the results of the 2012-13 projects. DFO, Fisheries Management Biologist Deanna Leonard provided an update on the Great Slave Lake and Tathlina Lake studies which three of our member First Nations participated in.

**Participants; Day One;**

**DWEAC Members:** Nine out of eleven members present (82 %)

Present:

Angus Sanguéz – Jean Marie River First Nation  
Gabe Hardisty – Pehdzeh Ki First Nation  
Joe Lacorne – Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band  
Peter Sabourin – Katlodeeche First Nation  
Danny Peterson – Fort Simpson Métis  
Fred Simba – Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation  
Allen Bouvier – alternate for Liidlii Kue First Nation

Absent:

Jessica Jumbo – Sambaa K'e Dene Band  
Richard Lafferty – Fort Providence Métis  
Bobby Cayen - West Point First Nation  
Darrel Betsaka – Nahanni Butte Dene Band

**NOTE: It is important that we encourage all members or their alternates to attend our annual meeting since we need a quorum of 75% for official decision making.**

**Resource Management Personnel:**

Allan Bouvier – Director; Environmental Management (attended as member)  
Priscilla Canadien – Fort Providence Resource Mgmt. Board (recorder)  
Daniel Steiner – Pehdzeh Ki First Nation  
Melaine Simba – Ka’a’gee Tu First Nation

**Leadership:**

Chief Stanley Sanguetz of JMRFN sat in on the meeting and contributed to our discussions

**DFN, AAROM Staff:**

George Low – AAROM Coordinator (meeting facilitator)  
Mike Low – AAROM Technical Advisor

**DFO, Fisheries Management:**

Deanna Leonard – DFO, Senior Fisheries Mgmt. Biologist

**Meeting Agenda: (both days)**

- Opening Prayer & Introductions
- Meeting summary; 2012
- DFO presentation, Deanna Leonard
- Community project review
- Member Input
- program Results 2012-13; Mike
- What's New?
  - DFO Fish Habitat; Prov. Ck.
  - AFS; community fish monitoring & safe sustainable fish stocks
  - Ecosystems and fisheries; Contaminant Research; U of Waterloo
  - Water Quality and contaminants; monitoring effects on local fisheries
  - “Country Food” workshop KTFN
  - HC; Climate Change Adaptation;
  
- Training;
- Youth Program
- Equipment
- Partnering
- Logo and branding
- Meetings and workshops
- Salmon program

- Video
- Round table
- Closing prayer

Danny Peterson - MOTION: Meeting come to Order  
Gabe Hardisty – second

### **Opening Prayer**

**Introductions:** Members were welcomed and introductions around the table.

The Committees mandate is to: *...protect and preserve the rights of all Aboriginal peoples to healthy waters, fish stocks and aquatic environments in the Dehcho.*”

The Committees mandate was reviewed and George Low commented that the year had gone very well with successful projects in most communities. Dehcho AAROM was successful in negotiating a three year multi-year agreement with DFO. Abnormal winter conditions made winter projects difficult with freezing rain, heavy snowfalls and slush conditions on the inland lakes. In spite of this all projects were accomplished.

We have progressed to collaborative management and are now involving the leadership in some of our activities and have seen our Deh Gah Gotie recommendations on the Fort Providence area sport fishery accepted by DFO and put in place in the regulations this fiscal year. We have attracted partners to strengthen our fishery based programs.

The meeting summary notes from last year’s meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Danny Peterson: MOTION to accept 2011-12 meeting summary

Fred Simba: Second

Side comments:

Chief Stanley Sanguetz said we should make efforts to support food fishery harvesters in the communities. He suggested that some communities could come to Great Slave Lake to do their fishing. There was a discussion on environmental concerns and Gabe Hardisty commented on the difficulty of getting out on the land. George Low commented that AAROM wants to encourage community food fisheries and as a first step we are identifying sources of safe fish; Willow Lake, Big Island Lake etc. Also GNWT Health and Social Services stated at the “Country Food” workshop held last summer that there is very little concern about the levels of contaminants considering the current low levels of fish consumption in the Dehcho.

**DFO; Deanna Leonard presented on Great Slave Lake and Tathlina Lake studies. PP Presentation is on the Dehcho First Nations Website; AAROM page.**

Several items were discussed following her presentation

- Peter Sabourin; Coney Closures affect livelihood of fishermen making a living on Great Slave Lake
- Gabe Hardisty commented on concern for spawning areas and the low water conditions
- The value of the DNA samples DFO has been collecting on inconnu; Will be able to tell which discrete stocks the commercial fishery is accessing in different areas of the lake
- Peter Sabourin commented that the price of inconnu was going up; this might affect fishing pressure.
- Deanna Leonard commented that DFO has closed areas in effect and with the present state of the stocks wants to hold harvest to 10 000 Kg.
- Sports fishery issues were discussed
  - Baker Creek Grayling fishery closed due to mine remediation
  - Possible additional fishing effort on Kakisa River grayling run
  - Danny Paterson mentioned we should investigate the Redknife River grayling run
  - George Low mentioned that the grayling runs such as Rabitskin River and others have not recovered from the 1989 warm water related fish kill on the Mackenzie River. The Liidlii Kue FN has requested reducing C&P limits to allow these runs to improve.
  - The levels of mercury in fish was discussed. Canadian limits were 0.5 PPM while USA limits were 1.0 PPM.

Deanna Leonard listed DFO priorities for the Dehcho AAROM program involvement in 2013-14;

- Buffalo River/GSL inconnu index netting
- GSL Integrated Great Slave Lake (GSL) Study – continuation
- Integrated Fishery Mgmt. plan (IFMP) for GSL
- Community Subsistence Fishery data ) Ka'a'gee Tu & Hay River)
- DNA samples from Whitesand River for GSL inconnu
- Kakisa River grayling survey – re: Mack River bridge access
- Providence area sports fishery

Gabe Hardisty stated that the grayling run at River Between Two Mountains and Blackwater were in rough shape since fish kill.

Discussion about the numerous small cisco in GSL.

**Presentation and discussions; George Low, Dehcho AAROM Coordinator,  
PP Presentation available on Dehcho First Nations web site on the AAROM page**

- Katlodeeche First Nation;**
  - Successful season providing captains and crew for the Great Slave Lake Fish Stock and Ecological study. One crew worked out of Hay River and the other out of Fort Resolution. This was a great collaborative effort with two Dehcho Bands working with the NWT Metis Nation and the Akaitcho as well.

- The KFN was successful in collecting 11 inconnu from the Yates River at Buffalo Lake for the DNA stock identification study. The trail conditions were very severe with trees bent and broken over the road from our ice and heavy snow storms.
- We are happy to hear that the GSL working group will be meeting again after a short interruption. DFO will be meeting with each of the affected regions/groups before an all-party meeting.

**☒ West Point First Nation;**

- West Point participated in the GSL study by providing a field worker

**☒ Ka'a'gee Tu;**

- Kakisa River Fishery Survey; Melaine Simba surveyed anglers at the campground and along the river. She also maintained water quality instruments in the lake and river as a part of the fisheries study.
- Tathlina Lake Fish Stock Assessment study; Fred Simba and Frank Bonnetrouge did a great job of breaking trail through extreme snow and slush conditions and along with Chris Chicot and his young nephew Tarek provided fishing, sampling and fileting expertise. Both Mike and George worked the December project along with researchers from Sir Wilfrid Laurier University (SWL) and AANDC. This was the extreme winter project of all time and fun was had by all.
- Tathlina Lake and Cameron Hills Monitoring program; Ka'a'gee Tu and AAROM tech assisted with the Cameron River stream Assessment study
- & the SWL fish energetics study.
- The Ka'a'gee Tu Environmental Coordinator, Melaine Simba surveyed all Kakisa household on country food use and perception.

**☒ Fort Providence;**

- Sports fishery monitoring
  - First year that reduced catch and possession limits were in place. However we did not get a measure of the effectiveness of these changes because of the Bison anthrax out-break. Most of the anglers who are mostly from farm country in Alberta packed up and left.
- Sonde was placed on a nav. Buoy near town
- Temperature recorders were missing from the buoys in Beaver Lake!

**☒ Sambaa Ke;**

- Boat Patrol; fishery monitoring
- Water Quality Sondes
  - AAROM Sonde set in Trout Lake
  - ENR also had other sondes and monitoring equipment in the Island River
- Thermocline Monitoring
  - Temperature recorders set each meter to 66 meter depth

- There is a concern that the cold water habitat below the thermocline could be lost with global warming.
- Carrie & Stern – contaminants temporal study (long term data set)
  - Trout samples for mercury analysis
  - Sediment cores being analyzed; this study will establish a history of contaminant deposition for a 150 year period.
- Health Canada; Country food and contaminant perception survey
  - All household have been surveyed
  - Results at August 2013 workshop

☒ Liidlii Kue

- Boat Patrol Monitoring; Good coverage and this year set up a buoy in the Liard River as well as monitoring the Mackenzie River Sonde. Will expand to assist with the deployment of ENR water quality and contaminant monitoring equipment this summer.
- Winter fishing projects; Mustard Lake – 75 fish of four species and Little Doctor will be fished in March 2013
- Fish and diet survey to be completed this month with 167 surveys in Fort Simpson

☒ Nahanni Butte;

- Very little accomplished due to the flood recovery efforts; we need to concentrate on getting the Band back on track especially considering the start-up of the Canadian Zinc mine operation.
- AAROM will be contracting NBDB to hire a field worker to assist DFO with a fish stock assessment program

☒ Jean Marie River

- Boat patrol monitoring down somewhat; emphasis will be on the 5 fishing lakes study this summer but boat patrols will continue
- The Lue Tue Sulai PAS study was very successful at Deep and McGill lakes. All required data was collected and the final report on the 5 fishing lakes will be produced this month.
- The fish and diet survey was completed. All households were surveyed
- The burbot collection has been slow this year with only 2 of the 15 fish caught so far by hooks

☒ Pehdzeh Ki First Nation;

- The Boat garage has been completed – door to be installed this spring
- The patrol boat and outboard have been repaired by Kingland
- The snow and slush conditions are too severe for spring fishing this year

☒ Fort Simpson and Fort Providence Metis organizations

- The Metis organizations continued to work with the Bands in their areas and offer advice to AAROM.

- They continued to participate in the youth camps as well as conferences and workshops
- The Fort Simpson will be directly involved in the fish and diet survey

**Progress to date:**

- Community based projects in most communities
  - Fisheries Research: Katlodeeche, West Point, Sambia K'e, Jean Marie, Ka'a'gee Tu.
  - Fisheries Monitoring: Ka'a'gee Tu, Deh Gah Gotie, Jean Marie, Sambia K'e, Nahanni Butte, Liidlii Kue
  - Need to re-establish summer monitoring program with Pehdzeh Ki
- We are strengthening our monitoring program for Fish Habitat, Water Quality and Contaminants with new partnerships
- We need quality data from the community monitors

**Partnering and Collaborative Mgmt.**

- Extremely important to the Dehcho AAROM program
- Not only for the funding but to bring expertise into the Dehcho
  - Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Environment Canada, University of Waterloo, Aurora College, Taiga Labs, GNWT, Health, Health Canada, AANDC; Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP) and AANDC; Northern Contaminant Program (NCP), BEAT Environmental, GNWT; Water Strategy, GNWT, Transportation
  - All these partnerships are built on community involvement and employment

**Partnering with DFO; Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS)**

- AFS Projects (Dehcho First Nations, AAROM Administered) = \$248 K
  - Sambia K'e fishery monitoring
  - Deh Gah Gotie fishery monitoring
  - Katlodeeche & West Point; Fish stock assessment on Great Slave Lake
  - Ka'a'gee Tu; Tathlina Lake stock assessment
- Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte and Wrigley are funded through the AAROM program
- AFS provides O&M Equipment Funding

**What's New for 2013-14?**

- Habitat Rehabilitation
  - Partnerships; DFO Fish Habitat, Deh Gah Gotie FN, Dehcho AAROM, GNWT, Transportation
  - Location; a small creek on the south shore near the Dehcho Bridge
  - Fish Weir to count the grayling spawning run
  - Sampling and tagging
  - Removal of some beaver dams

- Spawning bed improvement by spreading clean stone
- ☒ Return to Country Food Workshop
  - Year two will be hosted by Ka'a'gee Tu in late August
  - Follow-up to the successful JMR workshop last summer
  - Brings together Dehcho leaders, environmental managers and monitors with government and university researchers
- ☒ Technical support for Water Quality and Contaminants Monitoring
  - ENR; Lands and Water Division partnership
  - AAROM has a contract to deploy, maintain and retrieve Sondes and other monitoring equipment
  - Aurora College student internship; hiring one student
  - Involves our AAROM monitors in Deh Gah Gotie, Ka'a'gee Tu, Liidlii Kue, Sambaa K'e
- ☒ Partnering with the University of Waterloo
  - Heidi Swanson; an experienced Arctic Researcher will be doing a three year bioaccumulation and biomagnification study in nine Dehcho lakes
  - Heidi works closely with the communities
  - The first year will involve JMR and Sambaa K'e
- ☒ Progress to date on training
  - Med III and SVOPC course
    - In Nahanni Butte 2009
    - In Fort Simpson 2010
  - CABiN stream assessment course in Ka'a'gee Tu 2010
  - Environmental Monitoring Certificate
    - Sambaa K'e – 2010
    - 8 students certified
  - Community monitors receive on the job training from Mike Low or researchers
- ☒ Youth Program
  - Curriculum development – Beat Env. – Bruce Townsend
  - Sandy Creek Youth Ecology Camp
  - Ekali Lake – Mini Science and Culture Camp
  - Mackenzie River Culture Camp – Bruce participated
  - McGill Lake youth session – Bruce
  - Tathlina Lake project – youth involvement – Terek Chicot
- ☒ Equipment
  - 2009 – equipped lunds delivered to Jean Marie, Nahanni Butte and Pehdzeh Ki
  - Great Slave Lake; Extra Funding
    - Katlodeeche – Buffalo Lake Cabin (11 K)
    - Katlodeeche – Skandic Skidoo, Sleighs (15K)
    - Katlodeeche – Buffalo River boat (9K)
    - Deh Gah Gotie – Two on the land Cabins (35K)
    - Scientific equipment (6K)



- Winter fishing and sampling equipment (12K)
- Liidlii Kue – 18 foot Lund, trailer and equipment (20K)
- DFN AAROM – 3 Skandic Skidoos and Sleighs to be used on community projects as required (30K)
- Garage for Wrigley (17K)
- Shed for Jean Marie River ((6K)
- Cameras, YSI instruments, DO meters, Microscopes etc
- 4 water quality sondes @ 16 K each
- Temperature recorders (6K)
- Freezer
- Outboard and boat and skidoo repairs as needed.

The AAROM logo was discussed; the attached logo designed by Gerry Antoine will be used at least in short term



Meetings and Workshops;

- George and Mike attended the Dehcho Annual General Assembly
  - Where they installed an information booth
  - Unfortunately the assembly was rained out and moved indoors
- Keepers of the Waters Conference; AAROM supported reps from Bands to attend
- Return to Country Food workshop; the six communities most affected by mercury advisories attended
- Sambaa K'e workshop; Mike and George – AAROM AFS monitoring results and future planning
- Northern Contaminants Results workshop; was cancelled this year
- CIMP results forum; YK; George and Mike; Chief Chicot, Melaine, Shawn and Ruby Jumbo were there
- DFO – Great Slave Lake Advisory Committee; Peter Sabourin who is the member for the Dehcho

Closing Prayer

*DWEAC Meeting March 2012*

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