

**Minutes of the  
Dehcho Watershed Ecosystem Advisory Committee  
AAROM Meeting  
March 10, 11, 12, 2015  
Dene Cultural Institute – Hay River Reserve**

**Preamble:**

This was the annual year-end meeting of the Dehcho Watershed Ecosystem Advisory Committee (DWEAC) for 2014-15. 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 Committee, environmental staff and the Dehcho AAROM Coordinator is important for future 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 2013-14 & 2014-15 projects.

Day Two was an information and training day for the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy program. Gila Somers and Ryan Gregory of the GNWT ENR, Lands and Water Division were on hand on Day 2 to lead a very informative workshop.

The AAROM meeting continued on Day 3

**Participants;**

**Dehcho Community Delegates;** All nine First Nations and both Metis organizations were represented.

Present:

Angus Sanguéz – Jean Marie River First Nation (Committee Member & Monitor)

Tyrone Sanguéz – Jean Marie First Nation (Monitor)

Charlie Tali – Pehdzeh Ki First Nation (AAROM Monitor)

Joe Lacorne – Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band (Committee Member & Monitor)

Edward Cholo – Liidlii Kue First Nation (Committee Member & Monitor)

Dean Holman – Liidlii Kue First Nation (Resource Manager)

Danny Peterson – Fort Simpson Métis Nation (Committee Member)

John MacKay – Fort Providence Métis Nation (Committee Member)

Fred Simba – Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation (Committee Member, Monitor)

Victor Jumbo – Sambaa K'e Dene Band (Monitor)

Margaret Jumbo – Smbaa K’e Dene Band (Councilor)  
James Cayen - West Point First Nation (Committee Member)  
Abner Cayen – West Point First Nation (Field worker)  
Jonathan Konisenta – Nahanni Butte Dene Band (Alternate Committee Member)  
Melaine Simba – Ka’a’gee Tu First Nation  
Wilfred Lafleur – Katlodeeche First Nation  
Peter Sabourin – Katlodeeche First Nation (Member)

**DFN, AAROM Staff:**

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

**GNWT, ENR, Lands and Water Division:**

Gila Somers  
Ryan Gregory

**Meeting Agenda:**

**Day One and Three**

- ≡ Opening Prayer & Introductions
- ≡ Review of previous minutes
- ≡ The Advisory Committee; mandate and responsibilities
- ≡ AAROM program review
- ≡ Programs and partnerships; collaborative management
- ≡ Research and monitoring studies by community.
- ≡ Mike Low; Project results presentation
- ≡ Member community input – round table discussion
- ≡ What’s up for 2015-16?
- ≡ Youth programing and Traditional knowledge
- ≡ Salmon program
- ≡ Closing prayer

**Day Two; ENR**

Water Quality Stewardship information session and training

**Day 1 & 3;**

**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 Committee's mandate was reviewed and George Low commented that the year had gone very well with successful projects in most communities. Dehcho AAROM has completed a three year multi-year agreement with DFO and DFO region has suggested we renew with a 5 year multi-year plan. We also continue to have good funding and expertise support from our other government programs. DFO AFS continues to fund most of the community monitoring programs, as well as the Great Slave Lake Ecological Fisheries Assessment study. AANDC NCP and our GNWT partners ENR, Transportation and NWT CIMP continue to support our research studies. Dehcho AAROM continues to build on our research partnership with the University of Waterloo. (Heidi Swanson's Mercury studies and now Brian Laird's Human Biomonitoring study).

We continue to move towards collaborative management and are now seeing the Dehcho leadership in some cases using the results of our studies to support management decisions and recommendations to government. Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band's recommendations on the Fort Providence area sport fishery that were supported by Dehcho AAROM sports fishery monitoring were accepted by DFO and put in place in the regulations last year. Unfortunately the Great Slave Lake, Integrated Fisheries Management planning process has stalled due to changes in DFO policy and staff shortages. Dehcho AAROM and member First Nations were becoming involved in the process. It is hoped this Great Slave Lake fisheries management planning process will be revived in the near future.

Note: Deanna Leonard is on educational leave to complete her University Master's degree and was unable to attend.

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

- ≡ **Dehcho AAROM Partnerships;**
  - **ENR, Water Division; agreement with Dehcho AAROM**
    - Deploy, maintain and relieve water quality and contaminant measuring equipment
  - **GNWT, CIMP funding;**
    - Heidi Swanson, U of Waterloo; Mercury Bio-accumulation study
  - **AANDC, NCP funding;**
    - Country Food workshop annual results workshop; share funding
    - Analysis support of Heidi's mercury project
  - **GNWT, Marine Transportation;**
    - Third year of "Providence Creek" Grayling Spawning Ground Rehabilitation Project
- ≡ **Dehcho AAROM Program;**
  - DFO provides good core funding for the AAROM program
  - Staffing; Coordinator & Technical Advisor; 18 seasonal monitors
  - Meetings, admin, training, travel youth camps, projects, equip.
  - Project funding for JMR, Pehdzeh Ki & Nahanni Butte
  - AAROM program has an experienced Technical Advisor. Mike Low works with the community monitors to ensure quality data is collected.

- Capacity building; ongoing, most community programs are working well.

≡ **Partnering with AFS;**

- Samba K'e Monitoring Program
- Deh Gah Gotie Sports Fishery Monitoring
- KFN and West Point; Fish Stock Assessment studies on Great Slave Lake
- Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation; Tathlina Lake Stock Assessment
- Liidlii Kue FN; River Monitoring Program
- Some O&M Equipment Funding

≡ Mike Low presented his community by community project results

- Presentation attached

**Community Projects and Studies;**

≡ **Katlodeeche First Nation;**

- Successful season providing captains and crew for the Great Slave Lake (Peter Sabourin and crew) Fish Stock and Ecological study. This was a great collaborative effort with two Dehcho Bands providing boats and field assistants in support of DFO researchers.
- The KFN was unsuccessful collecting inconnu from the Yates River at Buffalo Lake for the DNA stock identification study. Inconnu not present in March.
- GSL, IFMP delayed again.
- Future involvement in Water Quality sampling

≡ **West Point First Nation;**

- West Point participated in the GSL study by providing a field assistant (Sasha Cayen)
- West Point was curious about chlorine and other chemicals in municipal water
- West Point inquired about getting a boat

≡ **Ka'a'gee Tu;**

- Chief Chicot would like to see all fish production marketed by them – not FFMC. Still require fish plant certification
- Community has concerns with effects of forest fire run-off on the lake.
- Kakisa R. Sports Fishery Survey; AAROM study-Melaine Simba
- Tathlina Lake Fish Stock assessment
  - Every second year (Fred Simba, Chris Chicot)
  - Ka'a'gee Tu gillnetting and sampling study
    - CPUE, size and age, sex and maturity, mercury levels etc.
    - Mike Low and crew did the fishing and sampling, Dec. 2014
    - DFO, Science Assessment responsible for the analysis.

- Need for Colin Gallagher, the DFO researcher to present update of Tathlina results to the community
- Tathlina Lake Monitoring
  - Melaine, with CIMP, Wilfrid Laurier University & AAROM
- Human Biomonitoring Pilot \*
  - Brian Laird; U of Waterloo
- The Ka'a'gee Tu Environmental Coordinator, Melaine Simba surveyed all Kakisa household on country food use and perception.

≡ **Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band;**

- Chief Bonnetrouge is very concerned about the low water levels in the Mackenzie River and tributaries.
- Sports fishery monitoring
  - Joe Lacorne and Steven Nadli
  - Survey anglers in the Mackenzie River and Horn River.
- Assisted with Water Quality Monitoring
- Providence Creek Grayling Project – needs signage
- AAROM boat and crew support for “Youth Canoeing Camp”
- Built a cabin at Axe Point – still one garage package to build.
- Issue with only AAROM crew should take the boat out – safety and maintenance issue

≡ **Sambaa K'e;**

- Sambaa K'e is worried about Embridge pipeline leaking into Techo and Trainer Lake – additional monitoring. Also sour gas wells
- The Band is concerned about anglers flying in from Fort Nelson and being guided by an unlicensed operator.
- The Band is concerned about slinky fish and diseased fish
- Band would like to get a small weather station set up.
- Band is concerned about climate change effects – small fish kills fish disease showing up,
- Boat Patrol; fishery monitoring – Victor and Tyler Jumbo
- Outboard is getting old.
- Water Quality Sondes
  - AAROM Sonde set in Trout Lake and 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.

≡ **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. Edward Cholo and Nick de Pelham

- Excellent boat patrol info and photos recorded
- Winter fishing projects; Cli Lake – John Tsetso collected 20 Trout and 20 other species for mercury sampling
- Due for a Committee meeting.
- Dean inquired about water sampling in the winter as well.
- Liidlii Kue would also like to see contaminant equipment deployed below the town influence – summer monitoring

≡ **Nahanni Butte;**

- Roxanne is filling in as Band manager and got the boat patrol up and running in late summer
- AAROM will be contracting NBDB to hire a field worker to assist DFO with a DFO fish stock study of the tributaries of Praire Creek.
- Crew needs new life jackets etc

≡ **Jean Marie River**

- Tyrone Sanguiez reported on low water conditions – Jackfish Creek ran dry this year which is rare
- The monitors will concentrate on the Sanguiez Lake preparations and pilot year.
- Boat patrol monitoring down somewhat; emphasis will be on fish-down project
- 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.
- Ecological Report delivered to the PAS Committee

≡ **Pehdzeh Ki First Nation;**

- Charlie Tale had a good season of boat patrol monitoring
- Assisted with deploying, maintaining and retrieving water quality instruments.
- Issue with others taking the boat out without AAROM approval
- Garage is finished except for some interior work
- Need to find AAROM trailer
- Charlie brought n fish from Fish Lake – were sent on to Marlene Evans

≡ **The Metis organizations continued to work Fort Simpson and Fort Providence Metis organizations**

- 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 Concern brought up by heavy fishing at Redknife River – JMR should address this and AAROM staff should observe when travelling by. Also noted by Coordinator that the Redknife and Bouvier were running dry by mid-summer last couple of years.

≡ **General;**

- Need to replenish boat safety and other equipment

**What's up for 2015-16?**

- ≡ Habitat Rehabilitation; observation only for 2015 run
    - 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
  - ≡ Technical support for Water Quality and Contaminants Monitoring
    - ENR; Lands and Water Division partnership continues
    - Dehcho AAROM has a contract to deploy, maintain and retrieve Sondes and other monitoring equipment
    - Hiring one field worker from KFN this year
  - ≡ Partnering with the University of Waterloo
    - Heidi Swanson; an experienced Arctic Researcher will be completing her third year of a three year bioaccumulation and biomagnification study in nine Dehcho lakes
    - Heidi works closely with the communities
    - The third year will involve Liidlii Kue and Ka'a'gee Tu
  - ≡ Progress to date on training
    - Med III and SVOPC course
    - Nicolas de Pelham and Jeff Fabian will take the course at Aurora College
    - Environmental Monitoring Certificate
- Melaine now has completed this course thru Aurora College
- Community monitors - on the job training from Mike Low
- ≡ Youth Program
    - Curriculum development – Beat Env. – Bruce Townsend
    - Youth Camp being organized by DFN – Dahti Tsetso
    - Mackenzie River Canoe Culture Camp – Organized by Dahti & Bruce participated
  - ≡ Equipment
    - Liidli Kue outboard to be replaced
    - Liidlii Kue – 18 foot Lund, trailer and equipment (20K)
    - Outboard and boat and skidoo repairs as needed.
  - ≡ Dehcho AAROM Logo



**AAROM**

**Dehcho Aquatic Resource Management**

Closing Prayer

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