

Alsek Renewable
Resource Council
2003-2004
Annual Report







Rose Kushniruk, ARRC Chair thru March 31, 2004

Members

Alsek Renewable Resource Council (ARRC) members in 2003-04 included:

Rose Kushniruk (Chair), Valerie Drummond (Vice Chair), Patt Delaney, Boyd Campbell, Craig McKinnon and Hardy Ruf. Craig resigned in the fall of 2003 and was replaced by Paul Birckel. Alternates for the year were Shane Oakley and Martin Pauls.

Each member held various portfolios throughout the year, attended meetings on that topic, and ensured other members were updated regularly. Portfolio topics included: forestry, moose, caribou, sheep, goats, fish, bears, bison, traplines, land use, water use, finance and administration, YESAA, pipeline, tourism, communications, off road vehicles, mining and hunting. The portfolio system is working well for the ARRC and members anticipate continuing with updated portfolios in the new fiscal year.



Valerie Drummond, ARRC Vice Chair thru March 31, 2004

Rose and Val finished productive terms as chair and vice chair on March 31, 2004.

Staff

Amy McKinnon returned as executive director in May 2003 following six months maternity leave. Will Jones, who filled in as acting executive director during Amy's leave, finished his work with the Council in June 2003. Lindsay Chambers joined the staff for several weeks during the summer of 2003 as the ARRC summer student trainee. Brad Wilson was also hired by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board as the community steward for the region. Though not on the ARRC payroll, he shared office space with the Council and worked closely with members and staff throughout the year.



Amy McKinnon, ARRC Executive Director & Brad Wilson, Community Steward

MANAGEMENT PLANNING



Strategic Forest Management Plan

A printed version of the Draft Strategic Forest Management Plan for the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory was produced and circulated widely for public comment in 2003-04. The Plan was drafted by the “Core Group” made up of the Alsek Renewable Resource

Council, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and Yukon Forestry Branch with assistance from facilitator Lindsay Staples. Yukon Forestry staff replaced Indian and Northern Affairs Canada representatives to the process this year, as responsibility for forest management was devolved by the Government of Canada to the territorial government in April of 2003.

Comments on the Plan were received in a variety of ways. Copies of the Plan were widely distributed by mail, internet and throughout the community to governments, businesses, stakeholders and other organizations during a 60-day public comment period. The ARRC and other Core Group members also hosted a series of public meetings in Haines Junction, Champagne and Whitehorse.

Following the public meetings and incorporation of a wide range of input to the Plan, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) and Yukon governments submitted final revisions to the document. The ARRC will recommend the final Plan to both governments early in the next fiscal year and it is anticipated it will be approved quickly and implementation will begin shortly thereafter. The Council looks forward to its continued role in fulfilling its many mandated responsibilities under Chapter 17 of the Umbrella Final Agreement as the next more detailed steps in forest management planning begin. All forest management planning work carried out by the Council in 2003-04 was funded through special arrangements with the Government of Yukon.

Though finalization of the Strategic Forest Management Plan was the most demanding priority for the Council this fiscal year, the Council also participated in other forestry initiatives, including providing input into developing a Forest Policy Framework and attending during a one-week symposium on spruce beetles in Homer, Alaska.

CATT Integrated Fish and Wildlife Management Plan

Preliminary steps were taken by the ARRC and other partners to begin developing a plan to broadly address fish and wildlife management throughout the Champagne and Aishihik Traditional Territory (CATT). This plan will also incorporate the now expired Alsek Moose and Aishihik Integrated management plans. At this time the planning team is composed of the ARRC, CAFN and Government of Yukon (YTG). Kluane National Park and Reserve will also be represented throughout the process. All partners met and developed a workplan and timelines for beginning the planning process. Each partner also developed and submitted their goals and expected outcomes for the integrated plan. The group has not met for several months due to heavy demands with other projects, however, it is anticipated work on the integrated plan will resume in the fall of 2004.



Dezadeash Lake Management Plan

The Dezadeash Lake Management Plan neared finalization in 2003-04 till planning partner CAFN determined the current actions called for in the plan were insufficient to address First Nations conservation concerns. The ARRC and CAFN discussed ways of resolving these differences, and it is hoped the First Nations government will present several options for acceptable revisions or additions to the plan in the coming fiscal year. Some actions called for in the plan will also be carried out in 2004-05, such as developing signs to be posted near Dezadeash Lake about its uniqueness and special conservation concerns. Though this planning process has not yet resulted in a finalized operational plan, it has increased knowledge and improved communication about the area.

Bison Management

The Council continues to actively participate during Yukon-wide bison management planning, particularly in relation to management of the Aishihik herd. The ARRC is represented at all Bison Technical Team meetings, which primarily deals with harvest management and overall management planning. The Technical Team focused heavily in 2003-04 on drafting a new bison management plan.

OTHER MANDATED RESPONSIBILITIES



Trapping

Trapping continues to be a priority area for the ARRC. At the beginning of the fiscal year, the ARRC reviewed several trapping concessions expired in March 2003 and recommended all but one for renewal. This spring ARRC also reviewed one concession expiring in 2004 and recommended its renewal. The ARRC also responded to the Yukon

Government's proposed trapline allocation lottery and anticipates further involvement during the coming year. The Council also looks forward to reviewing and updating its Trapline Assignment and Re-assignment Criteria. The ARRC also plans to work with other local managers to promote wolf trapping and trapping in general.

Outfitter Quotas

The ARRC met twice in 2003 with the three Aishihik outfitters to negotiate the 2003 outfitter quota for Aishihik caribou. The ARRC is scheduled to meet with outfitters as soon as possible in 2004 to negotiate again for the outfitter (non-resident) Aishihik caribou quota. During the fall/winter of 2003-04, the Council again worked with Mervyn's Yukon Outfitting to distribute packaged, frozen moose and caribou meat throughout the community. The ARRC maintains a freezer at its office and advertises the meat in local newsletters, which generates awareness of both the ARRC and the outfitter.

Land Use

Members reviewed many and commented on several land use applications within the Traditional Territory in 2003-04. On occasion, the Council found it useful to meet with applicants to learn more about the proposed use. The ARRC also participated during the Yukon Land Use Planning Council's workshop this spring. Members look forward to contributing to land use planning for the area in response to increased demand for agricultural and other land use needs.

Water Use

The ARRC reviewed several water use applications within the Traditional Territory, most related to mining, in 2003-04.

Wildlife Act Regulation Changes

The ARRC proposed two fishing regulation changes during the 2003 review cycle, both of which were approved and implemented in the 2004-05 fishing regulations. The Council also participated and provided comments during the 2003 review of all regulation change proposals.

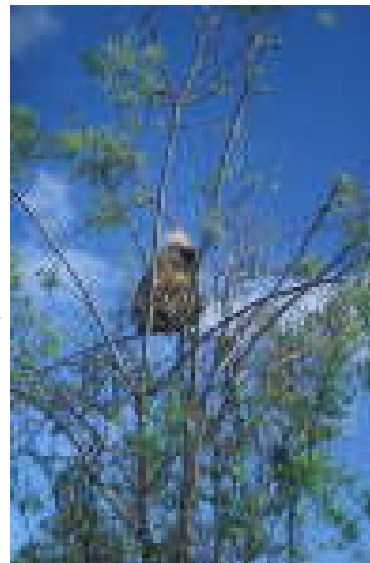


Off Road Vehicle Working Group

The ARRC participated on the Off Road Vehicle Working Group chaired by the Fish and Wildlife Management Board. The Council brought the topic to its public meetings in February 2004 and received many comments from residents, which were forwarded to the Working Group. The ARRC also assisted in collecting and forwarding completed comment forms to the Working Group.

Small Game Regulations Review

The ARRC investigated a community concern with potential overharvest of small game and game birds by non-residents. Members compared the current fees and bag limits with Alaska and British Columbia and asked for public input on the issue during community events and public meetings. The ARRC will continue to follow up on this issue in 2004-05 and will determine whether to propose regulation changes.



PARTNERSHIPS

Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board

The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board provides a great deal of support to Renewable Resource Councils in many areas. The ARRC found their help particularly useful this year during the Annual Chairs' Meeting, the all Renewable Resource Council Annual General Meeting, and during negotiations with Government of Yukon for new Contribution Agreements. The Board also provides a huge resource to this region through the community stewardship program and through Enhancement Trust funding initiatives.



Other Renewable Resource Councils

The ARRC participated during the Renewable Resource Council Annual General Meeting in Old Crow in 2003. This was a very informative and useful time for collaborating on a variety of common issues. The ARRC maintains close contact with other councils throughout the year and hopes to visit other RRCs during their regular meetings as time and funding permits.

Champagne and Aishihik First Nations



The Council enjoys a very close working relationship with staff for the CAFN government. Several staff in the Department of Heritage, Lands and Resources provide support and information on many issues related to fish, wildlife, forestry, trapping, water use and land use and participate during most ARRC meetings. CAFN participation during forest management planning has been invaluable. The First Nations have also contributed greatly to the success of the ARRC's summer student program.

Government of Yukon

Local Department of Environment staff members provide a wealth of information and support to the Council by providing updated harvest and research data and participating during regular and management planning meetings. Environment also provides administrative



and other support throughout the year. The Council has formed a close working relationship with several staff under Department of Energy, Mines and Resources during forest management planning and relies on local EMR staff for background on land use applications. Local fire management personnel for the Department of Community Services also consult with the Council on a variety of fire management issues as needed.



Yukon Salmon Committee

The ARRC and Salmon Committee have worked together in hosting public meetings in recent years. The Committee also updates the Council regularly on fisheries issues related to the Alsek, Tatshenshini and adjoining rivers. It is hoped the Council and Salmon Committee may be able to assist CAFN in developing a gaffing workshop in the near future.

Kluane Park Management Board

The ARRC share a positive working relationship and occasionally work together on joint community issues. This year the ARRC participated during the Board's discussions on fire abatement and Kokanee salmon management.

Ducks Unlimited

The Council receives regular updates from Ducks Unlimited on waterfowl surveys and related observations in wetlands in a number of areas in the Champagne Aishihik Traditional Territory. The ARRC is considering developing a habitat protection area in the Kloo Jarvis wetlands and Ducks Unlimited has offered their support.



Village of Haines Junction

The ARRC and Village council maintain a good flow of information when there is overlap in activities. Joint issues that arose during the last year included fire management and land use.

Government of Canada



Following devolution, the ARRC has found that its contact with Government of Canada staff is reduced. However, the ARRC is consulted and updated periodically on national renewable resource management decisions and issues.

COMMUNICATION

Public Meetings

Though the ARRC typically hosts only one public meeting each year, Council held several during 2003-04. The first was a joint public meeting and open house co-hosted with the Yukon Salmon Committee in April of 2003 in Haines Junction. In February 2004, the Council held a series of public meetings in Champagne, Haines Junction, and Whitehorse. The primary purpose of these meetings was to gain input on the Strategic Forest Management Plan, however, the ARRC was also able to gather comment on a variety of other issues including off road vehicle use, small game regulations, captive wildlife and Aishihik caribou. The Council found it very beneficial to hold public meetings in different locations as the participants and input were quite varied from location to location. Members hope to hold public meetings in multiple locations in the future provided time and funding are available.

Newsletter

The ARRC Update was distributed again in 2003-04 via the St. Elias Echo and the CAFN Newsletter. The Council uses these newsletters to communicate with residents of the traditional territory on the current activities of the Council, to advertise upcoming meetings and events, and to encourage community input into all the issues the ARRC is working on.

Web Page and Internet

The ARRC posted its own web page in 2003-04 at www.alsekrrc.ca. It is intended as a communication tool to inform a broad audience on the work of the Council. The Council will continue to maintain and develop the web site to serve as an even more useful tool in the coming year.



Kluane Ranges, St. Elias Mountains

ARRC web site banner, courtesy of Bruce Binder

Burbot Brochure

The ARRC and community steward partnered in producing a burbot brochure in response to increased interest in set-line fishing in this Traditional Territory and throughout the Yukon. This one-page, photocopied brochure provides simple descriptions of the burbot life cycle and set lining techniques. The brochure is available at the ARRC and other renewable resource management offices and to date has been well received.



Hunter Awareness Brochure

The ARRC, community steward and concerned community members collaborated to produce a “Hunter Awareness” brochure. This communication tool was developed in response to concerns about safety and bear hunting along the Haines Highway. It highlights current regulations related to use of firearms near residences or the highway and asks hunters to respect other users of the area. Contact information for various resources in the area and the TIPS hotline are also included. This single-page brochure has been posted at various public locations in Haines Junction and along the Haines Highway.

Community Events

ARRC members and staff participated during a number of community events during the past year. These included: providing new fishing regulations and burbot information during the Yukon Fish and Game Association’s family fishing day at Pine Lake, attending the CAFN annual general assembly in Aishihik, contributing to CAFN’s science and culture camps for youth, and co-hosting the Yukon Salmon Committee’s annual public meeting in Haines Junction.



CAFN 2003 Science Camp at Aishihik

Summer Student Training Program

With assistance from Yukon and CAFN, the ARRC was again able to offer a summer student training position. CAFN student Lindsay Chambers learned the administrative functions of the ARRC and contributed heavily in the office. She also worked with other local managers during a variety of summer field projects. The ARRC will continue to seek funding to hire at least one summer student annually. As awareness of the program increases, more and more opportunities become available to introduce students to the many aspects of renewable resource management in the Yukon.



*Lindsay Chambers,
2003 ARRC Summer Student Trainee*

ADMINISTRATION

The executive director provided support to the Council to carry out all the above projects and responsibilities. This position is full-time and is provided some assistance through the summer student program.

Operating Procedures

The Council passed various motions updating its operating procedures throughout the year. The ARRC's Operating Procedures summary was last updated in 1998 and is a priority for updating in the new fiscal year.

Financial Accountability

The executive director managed and maintained a record of all the Council's financial activities in 2003-04. The Council is in good financial standing and a copy of the ARRC's 2003-04 audited financial statement is available in a separate document.

*The ARRC membership and staff appreciates your interest and involvement in helping manage and conserve our precious renewable resources.
Please contact us with your questions and comments on this report.*



**180 Alaska Highway
PO Box 2077
Haines Junction, Yukon Y0B 1L0**

**Phone (867) 634-2524
Fax (867) 634-2527
Admin@alsekrrc.ca
Www.alsekrrc.ca**