Fish and Wildlife in Northern Alberta

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Fish and Wildlife in Northern Alberta

Position Paper and Conference Summary

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February 1994

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is pleased to present this position paper on fish and wildlife in northern Alberta.

In recent years, Council has received numerous briefs at its public meetings expressing concern about the north's fish and wildlife. In response to these concerns, the NADC, in cooperation with Alberta Environmental Protection, commissioned a review of fish and wildlife management in the north. Its goal was to identify ways to enhance northern involvement in managing these resources. The results from this review were discussed at the NADC's *Fish and Wildlife in Northern Alberta Conference* held in Grande Prairie on December 2-3, 1993.

The NADC would like to thank the more than 300 northerners who participated in the background study and conference. We believe the recommendations contained in this position paper will help address many of the region's critical fish and wildlife issues.

Wayne Jacques, MLA
Chairman

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Position Paper

Introduction

The Northern Alberta Development Council's (NADC) main purpose is to advise the Government of Alberta on matters that are distinctly northern. In support of this goal, Council holds regular public meetings in communities across the north to receive briefs on northern development issues. The NADC reviews the issues contained in these briefs with the relevant government departments. In some cases, Council may carry out background research to prepare specific advice for government.

Over the last few years, the NADC has received numerous briefs on the topic of fish and wildlife. In response, the NADC, in cooperation with Alberta Environmental Protection, commissioned a review of fish and wildlife management in the north. Its goal was to identify how northerners could become better involved in managing these resources. Greater community involvement will be essential for resolving a number of northern fish and wildlife issues.

In February 1992, the NADC set up a 15 member steering committee to provide direction for the review. Its members included:

- Saran Ahluwalia, NADC member, Cold Lake
- Gerry Storoschuk, Mayor, Bonnyville
- Diana Oliver, Mayor, High Prairie
- Allan Lamouche, Chairman, Gift Lake Settlement Association
- Simon Sparklingeyes, Whitefish Lake First Nation, Goodfish Lake
- Glen Richards, Athabasca
- Jim Robison, Whitecourt
- Danny Smyl, St. Paul
- Brent Watson, Grande Prairie
- Andy Thompson, Lac La Biche
- Jeff Dodds, Fort McMurray
- Dennis Giggs, Alberta Environmental Protection, St. Paul
- Pat Long, Alberta Environmental Protection, Peace River
- Ray Makowecki, Alberta Environmental Protection, Edmonton
- Doug MacKnight, Northern Development Branch, Peace River

The review process consisted of two phases.

Phase 1: Background Report

The first phase involved an extensive review of community involvement in fish and wildlife management in the north. The study was carried out by Equus Consulting Group Inc. of Edmonton.

Twelve visits were made to selected communities in the north to ask northerners about recent community involvement efforts. In addition, lengthy telephone interviews were conducted with key community leaders and government officials throughout the north. Nearly 200 people participated in the study. The results were compiled into a background report released by the NADC in November 1993. The report was sent to delegates attending the *Fish and Wildlife in Northern Alberta Conference* sponsored by the NADC.

Phase 2: Fish and Wildlife in Northern Alberta Conference

On December 2-3, 1993, the NADC hosted a conference in Grande Prairie to discuss the findings contained in the background report. It also provided a chance to discuss some new approaches to fish and wildlife management. Over 160 people attended the conference. A summary of the conference proceedings is included with this position paper.

Background Report

The *Fish and Wildlife in Northern Alberta Conference Background Report* contains the findings from the consultant's regional review. The background study had two main objectives:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of current approaches for involving northerners in addressing fish and wildlife issues
- To identify measures needed to improve community involvement in fish and wildlife management

The study highlights are summarized below. Copies of the background report are available from the NADC.

Fish and Wildlife Issues in Northern Alberta

Study participants were asked to identify some of the key fish and wildlife issues emerging in the north. The majority of comments fell into four topic areas:

- allocation of fish and wildlife resources between recreational, commercial and traditional users
- protection and enhancement of critical fish and wildlife populations and habitat
- impact of industrial development on fish and wildlife
- concerns related to aboriginal and treaty rights

Other concerns included the need to improve the quality of data on the north's fish and wildlife and the importance of public education to successful resource management.

Effectiveness of Current Approaches

Study participants were asked for their views on current approaches to involving communities in fish and wildlife management. The responses indicated that significant progress has been made in regard to community involvement. Departmental activities which were viewed positively included:

- use of volunteers in fish and wildlife studies
- redeployment of government staff to areas where there is an emerging need

- creation of community advisory committees and working groups to address local issues
- use of public information forums to share information on new policies or regulations

Study participants also commented favourably on the openness and availability of district and regional staff.

Despite this progress, participants also saw a number of problem areas. Their concerns included:

- lack of clarity about what was being sought by the department during its consultation efforts
- inability of people who are not members of specific groups to become directly involved in some programs
- lack of influence of local resource managers over decisions despite their better understanding of local issues
- failure to account for local conditions such as literacy level, ability of people to travel to meetings and the seasonal availability of local residents
- tendency of government officials to dominate community meetings rather than objectively seeking advice
- failure to consult with some communities or groups on certain fish and wildlife issues

Future Directions

As part of the study, northerners were asked for specific advice on the future of community involvement in the north. Their comments can be organized into five theme areas:

Community Based Decision-Making

1. Actively and effectively involve community members in making fish and wildlife management decisions
2. Ensure all community members have an opportunity to become involved in the decision-making process
3. Place greater emphasis on community needs and conditions when designing involvement programs
4. Clearly describe how community input is being used in the decision-making process
5. Have government staff act as facilitators and advisors to the community involvement process
6. Allow local communities to jointly manage fish and wildlife with government

Aboriginal Involvement

7. Aboriginal and treaty rights must be recognized when designing community involvement programs
8. Develop co-management arrangements with aboriginal communities
9. Train aboriginal people to carry out fish and wildlife management activities

Government Operations

10. Provide greater autonomy to local resource managers
11. Have all resource management agencies adopt community involvement principles

Resource Information

12. Collect reliable data on fish and wildlife resources in support of community involvement programs
13. Seek out and use local knowledge about fish and wildlife

Education and Awareness

14. Implement public education programs in conjunction with community involvement efforts
15. Provide easy access to information on government programs and policies

Conference Proceedings

The NADC's *Fish and Wildlife in Northern Alberta Conference* confirmed many of the findings in the background report. However, delegates and speakers provided additional insights that served to expand the NADC's understanding of fish and wildlife issues. Some of the main points raised by conference delegates are described below.

Ecosystem Management

A predominant conference theme was the need to re-evaluate our traditional concepts of fish and wildlife management. Concerns about land and water management were expressed throughout the conference. Many delegates believed that government needs to take a total ecosystem approach to addressing fish and wildlife issues.

Co-Management

The development of structured co-management agreements to address complex resource management issues was extensively discussed at the conference. Delegates strongly supported the idea of government establishing partnership agreements with northern communities to manage natural resources. A key feature of these agreements would be the formal involvement of aboriginal communities.

Commitment

Many delegates believed that government needs to become more committed to the concept of local decision-making. There was a strong view that the ideas discussed at the conference and in the NADC background report were well known to government. However, many felt that government was reluctant to make the changes necessary to support local decision-making.

Inclusiveness

Another widely discussed concern was the issue of who should be involved in the decision-making process. Many delegates felt that the term "community involvement" could be viewed as too exclusive. There was a general consensus that all resource users, including those living outside the affected area, need to be considered when making resource management decisions.

Cooperation

Many delegates believed that effective fish and wildlife management will require greater cooperation and understanding between all resource users. This includes improving cooperation between aboriginal, recreational and commercial users.

Data Collection

Another recurring theme was concern about the lack of good quality data on the north's fish and wildlife. Delegates felt that increased efforts at data collection were needed to address some of the more complex resource management issues. These efforts should also include greater use of local and traditional knowledge.

NADC Recommendations

Based on the findings in the background report and the results of the conference, the NADC has prepared the following recommendations for government. These recommendations cover five areas:

- strengthening and expanding the community involvement efforts of Fish and Wildlife Services
- developing structured co-management agreements with aboriginal governments and other resource users
- adjusting the province's resource planning activities to accommodate greater community involvement in decision-making
- placing a higher priority on collecting data in support of community involvement
- providing a timely response to the NADC recommendations

A description of each recommendation, along with its supporting strategies, is given below.

Recommendation 1

The NADC recommends that Fish and Wildlife Services strengthen and expand its community involvement efforts.

Strategies:

- 1. Maintain efforts to foster better community relations.** During the study, the NADC received many positive comments about recent programs designed to increase community involvement in fish and wildlife management. The use of volunteers in departmental studies was frequently cited as being beneficial to the long-term management of the resource. Public meetings and other forums of receiving public comment on departmental activities were also identified as being important for improving two-way communication. These efforts on the part of department staff should be supported and encouraged.
- 2. Establish clear terms of reference for all community involvement programs.** It is difficult to evaluate the overall effectiveness of recent involvement programs. There is currently little documentation about their purpose, objectives and results.

More attention is needed in developing clear terms of reference for involvement programs that include such things as:

- a problem statement describing the issue or issues being addressed
 - an overview of the involvement process
 - a description of roles and responsibilities of government staff and community members
 - a list of expected outcomes
3. **Establish a tracking and evaluation system to monitor community involvement programs.** Like all services, community involvement requires continuous experimentation and improvement. The NADC believes that more efforts need to be made in the area of tracking and evaluating community involvement programs. This would assist in identifying successful initiatives and fine tuning existing programs.
4. **Strive for greater consistency in the delivery of community involvement programs.** The NADC is concerned about the inconsistencies evident in the community involvement programs conducted in the north. The NADC review indicated significant differences between the various administrative regions of Fish and Wildlife Services in regard to their community involvement efforts. Measures that would improve the delivery of involvement programs include:
- a common community involvement philosophy that is well understood and supported by staff
 - clear definitions of staff roles and responsibilities
 - regular sharing of information between regions about their involvement programs
5. **Shift more resource management responsibilities to the district level.** Community involvement will only be successful if greater resource management responsibilities are placed at the district level. This view was strongly supported by study participants and conference delegates. A shift towards greater local decision-making will require:
- redefining the role of district officers to place greater emphasis on facilitating community input and resolving local issues
 - training district staff in support of this new role
 - placing more technical personnel in the north to help local resource managers address complex issues

Recommendation 2

The NADC recommends that the Government of Alberta, in partnership with aboriginal governments and other resource users, develop structured co-management agreements in the north.

The concept of co-management was strongly supported by those who participated in the study and conference. For purposes of this position paper, the NADC defines co-management as follows:

Co-management is a system of shared resource management based on structured agreements between interested and affected parties.

Council believes that this definition is broad enough to accommodate a wide variety of co-management models.

Strategies:

- 1. Within six months, establish guiding principles to govern the development of co-management agreements.** A clear set of principles are needed to govern the development of co-management agreements. These guiding principles should include:
 - a straightforward definition of co-management, such as the one prepared by the NADC, that can be consistently applied throughout the north
 - a recognition that all resource users need to be fairly represented on co-management committees
 - a commitment to eco-system management
 - a recognition of the rights of all participants including aboriginal and treaty rights
 - a commitment to openness and community accountability
- 2. Within the next two years, establish pilot co-management agreements in the north.** Several communities and groups have expressed an interest in developing co-management arrangements with the province. These communities represent excellent opportunities to develop co-management pilot projects based on the guiding principles described above. The NADC envisions two types of pilot agreements:

- lake management agreements which would address both fisheries and water issues
 - land management agreements which would address both wildlife and habitat issues
3. **Maintain flexibility in the development of co-management agreements.** While the NADC believes that a clear set of principles is essential, there is also a need to ensure that implementation of these principles is flexible. The wide variety of problems affecting the north's fish and wildlife means that no single solution will likely apply to all areas of the north. Co-management committees will need to be given latitude to develop strategies that meet the needs of their specific area.
 4. **Conduct public reviews of co-management agreements prior to their approval.** The NADC believes that public discussion of any proposed co-management agreement will help ensure that practical models are developed. These agreements should therefore be publicly reviewed before they are implemented.
 5. **Prepare a strategy for funding co-management agreements.** The NADC believes that the costs of co-management should be shared by the agreement partners. These funds can come from a variety of sources including in-kind contributions from government, industry and communities. It may also involve using funds from existing programs to support the operation of co-management committees.
 6. **Regularly monitor and report on the activities of co-management committees.** The NADC believes that regular monitoring and reporting of the activities of co-management committees will be essential for the long-term success of these initiatives.
 7. **Retain final Ministerial approval for management plans developed by co-management committees.** The NADC believes that the Government of Alberta must retain final authority for decisions affecting Crown resources. Consequently, all co-management agreements should provide for Ministerial approval of management plans. The Minister's decision should be guided by the terms of the co-management agreement.

Recommendation 3

The NADC recommends that Alberta Environmental Protection adjust its resource planning activities to accommodate greater community involvement in decision-making.

Strategies:

1. **Ensure that community involvement efforts reflect an ecosystem approach.** Conference delegates stressed the need to focus on the entire ecosystem and not on individual resources. This is particularly evident in the area of fish and wildlife where concerns about specific populations are often inseparable from habitat issues. In the future, it will be necessary to ensure that community involvement efforts are capable of responding to the full range of issues affecting the resource.
2. **Ensure that resource planning activities are responsive to northern needs.** The recommendations contained in this position paper suggest that Alberta Environmental Protection will need to make its resource planning activities more responsive to the needs of northern communities. Not only must the department better integrate its planning functions but it must adjust them to accommodate greater local involvement in decision-making. This implies the need to consolidate and regionalize the department's planning services. It also means the creation of a resource planning system that is capable of:
 - facilitating community input and consensus building
 - responding quickly to community concerns
 - providing on-the-ground technical and logistical support to local resource managers

Recommendation 4

The NADC recommends that Alberta Environmental Protection place a high priority on collecting data in support of its community involvement efforts.

Strategies:

1. **Ensure that local and traditional knowledge is used wherever possible.** Local and traditional knowledge is a valuable source of resource management information. Increased use of this information has a number of important benefits:
 - early identification of changes in wildlife populations and habitat
 - improved targeting of scientific research
 - active involvement of local people in data collection and analysis
2. **Establish department-wide priorities for data collection.** The limited availability of good quality data on fish and wildlife was a recurring theme throughout the study and conference. Currently, funds for data collection are divided among a number of agencies within Alberta Environmental Protection. Consolidating these funds and establishing clear department-wide priorities would help improve the effectiveness of the province's data collection efforts.
3. **Examine funding programs to determine their ability to meet the changing needs of the north.** Along with the department's own spending, other programs, such as the Fisheries Enhancement Fund and Buck for Wildlife, also fund data collection. These programs are financed by revenues collected from resource users. The NADC believes that these programs should be examined to ensure that they are capable of meeting the full range of resource management needs. This includes the cost of gaining community input, collecting local knowledge and funding scientific research. The review should also examine whether all resource users are contributing fairly to data collection costs.

Recommendation 5

The NADC recommends that an interdepartmental committee be established to prepare a response to the NADC recommendations.

Strategies:

- 1. Ensure broad representation from resource management agencies.** In keeping with the need to take an ecosystem approach to fish and wildlife issues, the NADC believes that an interdepartmental committee with broad representation from resource management agencies within government should be established to prepare a written response to Council's recommendations.
- 2. Report by December 1994.** Conference delegates believed that progress was made at the NADC conference towards improving northern input into fish and wildlife management. They also indicated a desire to see quick action on the ideas stemming from the review. Accordingly, the NADC would like to receive a response to its recommendations by December 1994.

Conference Summary

Conference Agenda

Thursday, December 2, 1993

Opening Remarks

Speakers:

- Marlin Sexauer, Deputy Chairman, NADC, Whitecourt
- Gordon Graydon, Mayor of Grande Prairie

Keynote Address

Moderator: Marlin Sexauer, Deputy Chairman, NADC,
Whitecourt

Speaker: Les Cooke, Associate Deputy Minister, Saskatchewan
Environment and Resource Management, Regina

Overview of NADC Report

Moderator: Saran Ahluwalia, NADC, Cold Lake

Speaker: Jim Gendron, Equus Consulting Group Inc.

Small Group Discussions

Provincial Address

Moderator: Wayne Jacques, MLA Grande Prairie-Wapiti, NADC
Chairman

Speaker: Hon. Brian Evans, MLA Banff-Cochrane, Minister of
Environmental Protection

Aboriginal Perspective

Moderator: Wayne Jacques, MLA Grande Prairie-Wapiti, NADC
Chairman

Speakers:

- Chief Johnsen Sewepagaham, Little Red River Cree Band
- Hon. Mike Cardinal, MLA Athabasca-Wabasca, Minister
responsible for Aboriginal Affairs

Friday, December 3, 1993

Report Back from Small Group Discussions

Speakers:

- Floyd McLennan, NADC, Grande Cache
- Diana Knight, NADC, Little Smoky
- Jim Carbery, NADC, Fort McMurray
- Don Lussier, NADC, Athabasca

Concurrent Workshops

Workshop A: Using Local Knowledge

Moderator: Marlin Sexauer, NADC, Whitecourt

Speakers:

- Lea Bill, Program Manager, Traditional Knowledge, Northern Rivers Basin Study
- Mike Robinson, Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary
- Mike Mercredi, Athabasca Native Development Corporation, Fort McMurray

Workshop B: Cooperative Management Agreements

Moderator: Don Lussier, NADC, Athabasca

Speakers:

- Dave Witty, Witty Planning Consultants, Vancouver
- Ross Thompson, Coordinator of Co-management, Government of Manitoba, Winnipeg

Workshop C: Local Advisory Committees

Moderator: Jack Newman, NADC, Fort Vermilion

Speakers:

- Dave McArthur, Chairman, Lac La Biche Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee, Lac La Biche
- Dave Walty, Regional Fisheries Biologist, Peace River Region, Fish and Wildlife Services, Peace River

Workshop D: Fish, Wildlife and Forestry

Moderator: Jim Carbery, NADC, Fort McMurray

Speakers:

- Dr. Brad Stelfox, Head, Wildlife and Forest Ecology, Alberta Environmental Centre, Vegreville
- Daryll Hebert, Integrated Environmental Resource Manager, Alberta-Pacific Industries Inc., Boyle

Conference Summary

Moderator: Saran Ahluwalia, NADC, Cold Lake

Speakers:

- Les Cooke, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, Regina
- Jim Nichols, Assistant Deputy Minister, Fish and Wildlife Services, Edmonton
- Simon Sparklingeyes, Whitefish Lake First Nation, Goodfish Lake
- Diana Oliver, Mayor, Town of High Prairie

Adjournment

Speaker: Marlin Sexauer, Deputy Chairman, NADC, Whitecourt

Opening Session

Opening Remarks

Marlin Sexauer, Deputy Chairman of the NADC, welcomed delegates on behalf of the NADC Chairman Wayne Jacques, MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti. He explained that NADC had received numerous presentations from northerners concerned about the region's fish and wildlife. In response to these concerns, the NADC, in cooperation with Alberta Environmental Protection, began a review of fish and wildlife management in the north. Its goal was to identify strategies to better involve northern Albertans in managing these resources. The NADC sent a background report summarizing the study findings to all delegates before the conference.

After introducing other NADC members, Mr. Sexauer described the conference's two main goals:

- to gain delegate feedback on the findings from the background study
- to share information about new approaches to fish and wildlife management

Mr. Sexauer told the delegates that their comments would be used to prepare the NADC's final recommendations. He then introduced Gordon Graydon, Mayor of Grande Prairie, who provided greetings from the City of Grande Prairie.

Keynote Address

Following the opening remarks, Mr. Sexauer introduced Les Cooke, keynote speaker for the conference. Mr. Cooke is the Associate Deputy Minister of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management. He previously spent 23 years in environmental management with the Alberta government. Mr. Cooke is presently assisting the Saskatchewan government in its move toward greater co-management of natural resources.

Les Cooke

Mr. Cooke said the overarching issue in fish and wildlife management is habitat, meaning the land, air and water that support the resource. How man and nature affects habitat determines the condition of its fish and wildlife populations. So the larger topic of

habitat management is the key to fish and wildlife management.

According to Mr. Cooke, government must make three important changes to its approach to resource management:

1. *Integration.* Resource managers in the areas of water, forests, recreation and agriculture must decide together how to manage the entire ecosystem, instead of managing individual resources. Integrated resource management should include:

- a long-term (decades-long) focus
- a process for fair distribution of the land's benefits
- coordination of government agencies involved in ecosystem management

2. *Decentralization.* Senior government must empower resource managers in the field to apply policy based on local conditions and needs. The best way to do this is by co-managing land use with all affected local parties through the creation of co-management boards. This would require:

- a commitment from government to adopt a new approach to decision-making
- an emphasis on the whole ecosystem rather than on individual resources
- using local and traditional knowledge instead of relying solely on scientific data
- allowing everyone who has a stake in local resources to take part in the decisions affecting them

3. *Structured Co-management Agreements.* Government must become more of a facilitator, information supplier and planner, while still ensuring that local decisions are consistent with broader provincial policies. This hierarchy would mean that:

- the various co-management boards would not operate with a "free-for-all" mentality
- resource managers would chair the co-management boards, freeing other members to participate fully
- provincial policies must be translated into local actions with everyone taking part

Mr. Cooke gave several examples of successful co-management efforts in Saskatchewan. He concluded by saying that government must follow the principles of decentralized decision-making and integrated management to achieve good long-term resource management.

Overview of NADC Report

Following Mr. Cooke's presentation, NADC member Saran Ahluwalia introduced Jim Gendron of Equus Consulting Group Inc. Mr. Gendron conducted the review of community involvement in fish and wildlife management on behalf of Council. The results of this review are contained in the conference background report. The following are some highlights from Mr. Gendron's presentation.

Jim Gendron

Mr. Gendron began by reviewing the study objectives and methods. Close to 200 people participated in the study. They were asked two basic questions:

1. How effective are current approaches for involving northerners in addressing fish and wildlife issues?
2. What measures are needed to improve community involvement in fish and wildlife management?

Mr. Gendron then summarized some of the highlights from the study:

- Study participants identified a wide variety of issues that require community involvement. Over 300 specific concerns were identified during the study. These were grouped into nine issue areas:
 - allocation of fish and wildlife resources
 - protection and enhancement of fish, wildlife and habitat
 - industrial development
 - treaty and aboriginal rights
 - land access and management
 - government staffing and priorities
 - enforcement
 - data collection
 - public education
- As far as current approaches to community involvement, study participants made many positive comments. Many were impressed by the access to and openness of Fish and Wildlife Services staff. Respondents also liked taking advantage of recent programs in the areas of public education, data collection, enforcement and planning.

- Alberta's integrated resource planning process also received a number of positive comments. Respondents thought community relations efforts such as the recent moose management meetings in the Peace River Region were effective. They also saw Fish and Wildlife Services responding to local needs for increased government staffing and improved native liaison.
- Study participants made many comments on ways government could improve community involvement. Many thought that Fish and Wildlife Services, as well as other government agencies, seemed to make decisions without taking community values and concerns into account. In general, northerners said they wanted to see action in five areas:
 - movement towards a system of local decision-making on fish and wildlife issues
 - more aboriginal involvement in fish and wildlife management
 - greater attention to collecting data on fish and wildlife
 - changes in government operations to accommodate more community involvement
 - more public education and awareness programs in support of community involvement efforts

Mr. Gendron concluded by reminding delegates of the diverse geography and cultural makeup of northern Alberta communities. He asked them to consider several questions as they discussed the conference background report:

- Who do we include in the decision-making process?
- How do managers decide how much community consultation is enough?
- Will local people and organizations be able to administer local management programs?

Small Group Discussions

Following the review of the NADC report, delegates broke into 12 small groups to discuss the study findings. Each group was asked to address the following questions:

- Are the fish and wildlife issues described in the conference background report the most important ones facing the region? Are there other issues that need to be considered?
- Are the action steps correct for improving community involvement in fish and wildlife management? Is there anything else that should be included?
- What are the three most important areas of community involvement in the next 2-3 years?
- What practical measures are needed to implement one of these areas?

NADC members gave delegates a summary of the discussion group results on the morning of the conference's second day. The following is a summary of delegate comments based on a thorough review of the discussion notes.

Emerging Issues

Discussion groups generally agreed that the nine issue areas described in the background report were the major fish and wildlife issues facing the region. Six issue areas received the most comment:

- protection and enhancement of critical habitat and wildlife populations
- allocation of resources among commercial, recreational and aboriginal users
- concern about the impact of industrial development on fish and wildlife
- lack of good quality scientific data on the north's fish and wildlife
- management of private and public lands

In addition to these issues, the discussion groups identified two other concerns that require attention:

- the need to take a broader ecosystem approach to fish and wildlife management
- the need to shift more decision-making authority to the local level

Review of Action Steps

Each discussion group was asked to review the 15 action steps for community involvement contained in the background report (see pages 10-11). The groups agreed that these actions were necessary to resolve many of the issues described above. However, the groups identified several additional actions that government should pursue in the area of community involvement:

- involve all stakeholders in resource management including the absentee public. Many groups felt that the term “community” was too restrictive.
- develop a framework for community involvement that recognizes community diversity and is more accountable to participants.
- implement pilot co-management agreements with northern communities.
- become more committed to the process of local decision-making. This includes becoming more facilitative and willing to change.
- improve the integration and coordination of resource management agencies at the local level.
- focus on ecosystem/habitat management and not species management.
- broaden data collection to include local knowledge.

Community Involvement Priorities

Based on the review of action steps, each group was asked to identify their top three community involvement priorities for the next 2-3 years. All twelve groups indicated that a shift towards greater local decision-making was their highest priority. Some of the delegate comments included:

- emphasis should be on consensus not consultation
- community involvement programs should be done on a habitat basis
- all stakeholders and affected parties should be involved
- decision-making authority should be decentralized to the local level

The second most frequently cited priority was the need for government to change its operation to support local decision-making.

Some of the most frequently cited issues included:

- government needs to be committed to change
- government should act as facilitator rather than a decision-maker
- funding for community involvement must be reviewed to ensure it meets growing needs
- government should focus on habitat and not individual species

Discussion groups were divided on the final priority area. Three issues were widely discussed:

- strengthening aboriginal involvement in resource management
- enhancing the quality of data on fish and wildlife resources, including increased use of local knowledge
- improving public knowledge about fish and wildlife issues

Practical Measures for Implementation

After identifying priorities, each group was asked to pick one area and discuss practical measures for implementation. Many groups were able to discuss more than one topic. The following is a summary of comments arranged by theme area:

Local Decision-Making

- conduct co-management pilot projects in the north
- clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all government officials and community members
- provide more autonomy to local resource managers and avoid “blanket” solutions
- expand the use of local advisory committees and establish local management boards
- establish principles, guidelines, priorities and objectives for the decision-making process
- use small working groups with representatives chosen by the community; avoid large public forums when building consensus

Government Operations

- commit to a more facilitative and less regulatory role
- provide feedback to the community on the results of their involvement efforts
- find additional funds for resource management including increased user fees

Education

- promote a better understanding among resource users and managers, particularly in regard to aboriginal and treaty rights
- increase efforts to educate people on resource management issues

Data Collection

- use local knowledge and increase the use of volunteers in data collection
- expand scientific research in support of community involvement efforts

Provincial Address

Hon. Brian Evans, Minister of Environmental Protection, was the featured speaker on the evening of the first day. He was introduced after dinner by NADC Chairman Wayne Jacques, MLA, Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Hon. Brian Evans

Mr. Evans commended the NADC for bringing together representatives from so many groups with an interest in the north's fish and wildlife. He commented that the conference was an important opportunity to share concerns and, most importantly, seek solutions. The Minister then described several trends affecting fish and wildlife management in Alberta:

- changing public attitudes towards natural resources and their use
- growing public demand for greater involvement in decision-making
- streamlining and downsizing of government operations

The Minister said the recent amalgamation of resource management agencies into Alberta Environmental Protection was an important step in responding to these changes. All of Alberta's resources could now be managed together rather than in isolation. Mr. Evans indicated that for this new approach to work properly his department would require the active assistance of the public. The Minister then highlighted some of the department's recent public involvement initiatives. These include:

- the development of a forest conservation strategy that looks at the needs of the entire forest ecosystem
- the use of volunteers to deliver hunter training programs, restore habitat and collect data
- the creation of local advisory committees to assist in fisheries management
- the establishment of public advisory committees to oversee Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund programs

The Minister concluded by saying that the conference was an excellent chance for his department to learn its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. He assured delegates that what they decided at the conference would help guide future government policy.

Aboriginal Perspective

Following the provincial address, NADC Chairman Wayne Jacques introduced two speakers who would provide an aboriginal perspective on natural resource management. The first speaker was Chief Johnsen Sewepagaham of the Little Red River Cree First Nation. Chief Sewepagaham is also a member of the environment committee of the Grand Council of Treaty 8 First Nations. He was followed by Hon. Mike Cardinal, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs.

Chief Johnsen Sewepagaham

Chief Sewepagaham gave delegates an update on the resource management goals of the Grand Council of Treaty 8 First Nations. He said that Treaty 8 First Nations had tabled two detailed co-management proposals with Alberta Environmental Protection. The Chief said that the Minister had expressed an interest in their request, but there had since been little progress on either proposal.

Chief Sewepagaham said many First Nations people still depend on the resources of the forest for sustenance. He said that First Nations want co-management to ensure the province meets its treaty obligations. The Chief described the legal origins of these obligations:

- The 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA) gave Alberta management of its natural resources. The NRTA also required Alberta to honour the Crown's responsibility for protecting treaty rights.
- The Supreme Court ruling in *Regina vs. Sparrow* that in the area of "highly contested resources" aboriginal use must be given a priority second only to legitimate conservation objectives.
- The Supreme Court ruling in *Regina vs. Horseman* which stated that the Crown must preserve an environment conducive to the exercise of aboriginal rights.

Chief Sewepagaham noted it was ironic that as a first inhabitant, he should be at a conference asking to be part of the decision-making process. He concluded by saying that the First Nations would always try to work with others to reach mutual agreements.

Hon. Mike Cardinal

Mr. Cardinal greeted the many aboriginal delegates in the Cree language. He was encouraged by the level of aboriginal participation at the conference. Switching to English, he then reviewed the recent struggles and achievements of northern Alberta's aboriginal people. Some of the key events described by Mr. Cardinal included:

- the collapse of traditional aboriginal governments and cultural structures in the 1960s
- the first aboriginal involvement in Improvement District councils in the 1970s
- the election of northern Alberta aboriginals in provincial elections in the 1980s
- aboriginal leadership of the Northland School Division
- the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the province and Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 First Nations
- the settlement of native land claims
- the signing of the Metis Settlements Accord
- the employment of aboriginals in the forestry and petroleum industries

The Minister said the provincial government must work with aboriginal communities to ensure self-sufficiency through access to the north's natural resources. This includes both jobs in resource industries and the option to pursue a traditional lifestyle.

Concurrent Workshops

The second day of the conference featured a series of concurrent workshops on new approaches to fish and wildlife management. Each workshop began with presentations by two or three knowledgeable speakers. This was followed by a period of facilitated discussion where delegates could provide their views.

Delegates could choose from two of four workshops:

- Using Local Knowledge
- Local Advisory Committees
- Cooperative Management Agreements
- Fish, Wildlife, and Forestry

A summary of speaker and delegate comments from each workshop is given below.

Using Local Knowledge

Marlin Sexauer, NADC member from Whitecourt, opened the session by introducing the three workshop speakers:

- Lea Bill, Program Manager, Traditional Knowledge, Northern River Basins Study
- Mike Robinson, Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary
- Mike Mercredi, Executive Director, Athabasca Native Development Corporation, Fort McMurray

Mr. Sexauer explained that the speakers were involved in pioneering work using local and traditional knowledge in resource management. The first speaker was Lea Bill.

Lea Bill

Ms. Bill described four aboriginal needs in the collection and use of traditional knowledge:

- *Spirituality.* Acknowledging the Creator for both the land and knowledge of the land.
- *Credibility.* Recognition by the scientific communities that traditional knowledge is a form of scientific information.
- *Ownership.* Traditional knowledge is shared only if asked for openly and returned to the community.

- *Pride.* Aboriginals themselves collect the information and see their knowledge being treated as valuable by others.

She also described a number of important principles to follow when collecting traditional knowledge:

- use a variety of media (print, oral, video) to reach all segments of the community, as not everyone sees and hears the same way
- act with the belief that the community is most knowledgeable about its traditions and experiences
- establish a formal protocol for collecting information from community members
- follow community tradition and ceremony when training community members
- include both elected and unelected community leaders in data collecting
- expect a variety of emotional reactions (pride, fear, confusion)

Mike Robinson

Mike Robinson is the executive director of the Arctic Institute of North America at the University of Calgary. He has extensive experience in the Northwest Territories in the area of traditional knowledge. He began his talk by describing an approach to collecting traditional knowledge called participatory action research. While new to Canada, it has a 50-year history in other parts of the world. The technique features the following elements:

- communities, not government or industry, define their own research needs
- the community hires its choice of trainers and consultants
- the community forms a committee to allocate the budget, decide who gets hired and who gets trained
- the community may form a technical advisory committee to search out expertise that neither the community nor the trainer can provide
- after the research is complete, consultants, trainers and government sponsors give control of the results to the community

Mr. Robinson said that an example of this approach was the traditional land use study done by the Athabasca Native Development Corporation (ANDC). ANDC represents five aboriginal communities in northeast Alberta. The Arctic Institute was retained by ANDC to provide training and data collection expertise.

Mike Mercredi

Following Mr. Robinson's presentation, Mike Mercredi discussed some of the highlights from the ANDC's traditional land use study. He said the Arctic Institute spent time in five aboriginal communities training community members on how to gather information. The resulting information was assembled into a report containing a series of traditional land use maps. These maps can now be used by ANDC communities to evaluate the impact of forestry and oilsands developments. Some of the information collected by ANDC included the location of:

- trap line and inter-community trails
- berry picking sites
- salt licks
- reusable cabins
- hunting areas for fur-bearers, ungulates and birds
- community gathering areas
- archaeological sites
- fishing areas

Mr. Mercredi said this study showed both aboriginal communities and resource developers how they could gain from each other's expertise. He said ANDC was encouraging other aboriginal communities to consider their own traditional land use studies.

Delegate Comments

Because of time constraints, participants did not discuss in detail the information given by the speakers. There was, however, general support for the approaches used for collecting traditional knowledge.

Local Advisory Committees

Jack Newman, NADC member from Fort Vermilion, began the workshop by introducing the two guest speakers.

- Dave McArthur, past Chairman, Lac La Biche Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee, Lac La Biche
- Dave Walty, Regional Fisheries Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Services, Peace River

Mr. Newman said that both speakers had extensive experience in working with local advisory committees to address fisheries issues. The first speaker was Dave McArthur.

Dave McArthur

Mr. McArthur explained the structure and activities of the Lac La Biche Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee. He said the committee was formed in 1988 by community members concerned about the decline in the local fishery. The committee includes representatives from:

- Heart Lake and Beaver Lake First Nations
- Lac La Biche Fish and Game Association
- Lac La Biche Fisherman's Co-op
- local municipalities
- Lac La Biche Chamber of Commerce
- Blueprint for the Future Committee (Community Futures)
- Lakeland Park and Recreation Area
- Fish and Wildlife Services

The committee looks at all issues affecting the fishery. It has helped develop fisheries management plans, conduct scientific research and carry out community education programs. Mr. McArthur mentioned some of the committee's recent achievements:

- attracting donations of cash and office supplies to support committee activities
- sponsoring a walleye survey of Lac La Biche and the Owl River
- obtaining an agreement with Al-Pac on logging limits along the Owl River
- helping Al-Pac conduct public information meetings to review its forest management plans

Mr. McArthur concluded by outlining some of the future activities planned by the committee:

- lobbying for changes to the commercial fishing licensing system
- boosting the area's walleye population
- getting an agreement to close walleye spawning areas during the spawn
- reviewing perch and pike catch limits and the effect of sport fishing derbies on local fish populations

Dave Walty

Mr. Walty is the regional fisheries biologist for the Peace River Region of Fish and Wildlife Services. He described some of the recent community involvement programs that have occurred in the Peace River Region:

- a tagging program for walleye in Sturgeon Lake
- discussions to manage commercial and domestic fishing in Gift Lake after a large winter kill
- using local fishermen to help survey bull trout and walleye populations
- initiating a visual display campaign to explain walleye biology and management
- conducting test netting with commercial fisherman to determine how to best manage whitefish populations

Mr. Walty said community involvement programs work best when certain principles are followed. He then described what he has learned from recent community involvement efforts:

- surveys are one of the best tools for reaching the community at large
- volunteers must be given enough information about the project so they can organize themselves effectively
- resource managers must show volunteers how their work contributes to the project objectives
- local knowledge should be used wherever possible to minimize costs and maximize data quality
- keep “red tape” to a minimum
- involve local people at the earliest possible stage
- use education materials that refer to local conditions and distribute these through local media outlets

Delegate Comments

After the presentations, delegates were asked what types of issues local advisory committees should address. Delegates identified three areas:

- resolution of specific resource management problems
- assistance in collecting resource data
- feedback on resource management plans or proposed policies and regulations

Delegates saw many issues involved in setting up local advisory committees. These included:

- the need for government to actively support both the process and outcome
- the need to clearly define the purpose of the committee and the roles and responsibilities of participants

- the need to provide good quality resource information in support of committee activities
- the need to motivate people to get involved
- the need to account for the time and expense involved in attending meetings
- the need to adequately train committee members
- the need to inform community members and elected officials of committee activities

Delegates were also asked to comment on how to determine representation on local advisory committees. They suggested a number of measures:

- involve all government agencies that either manage or influence both wildlife and habitat
- avoid political appointees but focus instead on representatives of resource users and other interest groups
- ensure that committee members know the resource and are willing to spend time on the issue
- ensure committee members have the support of local elected bodies such as band councils, metis settlements and municipal governments

Cooperative Management Agreements

Don Lussier, NADC member from Athabasca, began the session by introducing the two guest speakers:

- Dave Witty, Witty Planning Consultants, Vancouver
- Ross Thompson, Coordinator of Co-management, Government of Manitoba, Winnipeg

Mr. Lussier said that the two speakers had been asked to describe how co-management agreements operate. The first speaker was Dave Witty.

Dave Witty

Dave Witty has helped the governments of British Columbia and Ontario establish co-management agreements. He began by describing Ontario's experience in developing a co-management system based on shared decision-making. He emphasized the importance of a flexible approach that responds to the needs of each area. Mr. Witty then described four principles that are critical to the success of co-management:

- *Fairness.* Co-management must be seen to be a logical extension of the cultural and natural history of the region.
- *Integration.* Any local decisions must be linked to broader regional and provincial strategies and policies.
- *Inclusiveness.* Decision-making must include all special interests and respond to broad interests.
- *Wholeness.* Co-management must be seen as one element of an ecosystem approach to resource management.

Mr. Witty also explained some of the main lessons he has learned in setting up co-management agreements:

- a political commitment from the province is crucial to the agreement's success
- provincial staff must "buy into" the principles of the agreement
- all interested parties must be kept informed of activities under the agreement

Ross Thompson

Mr. Thompson gave many examples of co-management in Manitoba. He described some of the benefits of setting up co-management agreements and boards including:

- the development of good working relationships between resource managers and communities
- the increased ability to supplement scientific data with local knowledge
- the chance to test new approaches to resource management that, if successful, can be used elsewhere
- the pooling of community and government resources (training, data collection, land use planning)

He also gave some advice on how to approach the development of co-management agreements:

- be clear about the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all participants
- keep "outside groups" aware of the board's activities either by keeping them informed or allowing them to sit at the table
- capitalize on the common respect and appreciation for natural resources we value and share
- accept that you may not like all the conclusions of a co-management board
- acknowledge the dollar value of the resources you are trying to manage

- be prepared to donate some of your community's resources to board projects

Delegate Comments

Workshop participants generally agreed that co-management agreements could help resolve some of the north's more difficult fish and wildlife issues. Delegates identified four potential benefits from co-management:

- providing local people with a greater say in resource use
- allowing First Nations to become full partners in resource management
- promoting sustainable resource use
- ensuring the cumulative effects of development are accounted for

Delegates said that co-management agreements developed in northern Alberta should include:

- a focus on the entire ecosystem and not just a single species
- the creation of co-management committees that are small enough to operate efficiently while remaining accountable to the community
- a recognition of aboriginal rights
- a description of funding arrangements

According to delegates, co-management agreements should be guided by the following principles:

- decision-making by consensus, allowing all interested groups to comment
- communication of the actions and decisions of co-management committees
- a clear definition of who is represented by the agreement
- the flexibility to deal with changing circumstances
- a consistent set of standards and guidelines

Fish, Wildlife and Forestry

Jim Carbery, NADC member from Fort McMurray, began the session by introducing the guest speakers:

- Dr. Brad Stelfox, Head, Wildlife and Forest Ecology, Alberta Environmental Centre, Vegreville
- Daryll Hebert, Integrated Environmental Resource Manager, Alberta-Pacific Industries Inc., Boyle

Mr. Carbery said that the two speakers would explain some of the trends in forest management. The first speaker was Dr. Brad Stelfox.

Brad Stelfox

Dr. Stelfox began by comparing the traditional forest management model with the new, eco-system approach. He said the forest industry historically managed forests with the goal of maximizing the harvest of wood fibre and minimizing disturbances from fire, insects, flooding and wind. Responding to the needs of the hunting community, foresters have also adjusted their logging practices to accommodate certain target species. Dr. Stelfox questioned the wisdom of this approach by pointing out:

- it is based on the short-term needs of the hunting community, whose size and future needs will change
- it can result in the destruction of habitat needed by other species
- it is still vulnerable to natural forces such as fire and infestation

Dr. Stelfox then described an ecosystem approach to forest management where the interests of all forest users are balanced. The model features:

- an integrated approach that sets appropriate limits on land-use practices that harm the long-term viability of the forest
- a recognition of society's demand for preserving natural areas

According to Dr. Stelfox, a shift to ecosystem management would require:

- a thorough understanding of how natural disturbances affect the forest and its wildlife population
- the development of land use practices that closely approximate the effects of natural disturbances
- the maintenance of forest age structures to protect wildlife diversity

Dr. Stelfox concluded by saying that ecosystem management would be difficult and expensive, but probably more cost-effective than traditional approaches. He said government must be a key player by integrating its land management practises. He added that the next step for researchers was to gain a better understanding of landscape patterns and the effects of natural disturbances.

Daryll Hebert

Daryll Hebert is the Integrated Environmental Resource Manager with Alberta Pacific Forest Industries (Al-Pac) in Athabasca. He outlined some of the obstacles to integrating forest and wildlife management.

Mr. Hebert said resource managers must address many questions before they can achieve ecosystem management. Two important issues are:

- how does the age and debris level of a tree stand affect movement of the birds and animals?
- how do the wildlife surveys taken in northern Alberta relate to the landscape and vegetation patterns?

After describing the difficulties of managing hundreds of inter-related wildlife species, Mr. Hebert reasoned that managing the structure of tree stands would be the best way to maintain wildlife populations. He then gave some advice on what individuals should do to fully participate in the planning process:

- develop an understanding of what ecosystem management means
- learn about the ecological processes taking place on the landscape
- be willing to compromise and settle for less of the resource

In a question and answer period, Mr. Hebert pointed out the following:

- in maintaining wildlife levels, the size of a cutblock is not as important as the type of trees and debris that are left behind
- given competing forest uses, local advisory committees will have to decide which wildlife populations are most important
- farmers need incentives to preserve the natural areas on their property

Delegate Comments

After listening to the guest speakers, workshop participants were asked to identify the most important fish and wildlife issues related to forestry. Delegates identified the need to:

- better coordinate the collection and distribution of resource data
- collect good quality inventory information on fish and wildlife in support of forest management
- focus on ecosystem and habitat rather than individual species or resources
- better integrate government programs, regulations, and operations to accommodate ecosystem management
- establish clear objectives for fish and wildlife resources within a forest area

To meet these needs, delegates suggested:

- reorienting government priorities and operations to habitat management
- emphasizing a proactive rather than a reactive approach to resource management
- establishing a credible process for community involvement with clear timelines, actions, roles and expected results
- strengthening communication between all interested parties
- emphasizing long-term management based on cooperation and consensus
- giving honest, accurate information on the activities of government and industry
- providing for the effects of other resource industries, especially oil, gas and agriculture

Closing Session

Summary Panel

Following the workshops, delegates reassembled for the closing session of the conference. Saran Ahluwalia, NADC member from Cold Lake, began by introducing the members of the summary panel:

- Les Cooke, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, Regina
- Jim Nichols, Assistant Deputy Minister, Fish and Wildlife Services, Edmonton
- Simon Sparklingeyes, Whitefish Lake First Nation, Goodfish Lake
- Diana Oliver, Mayor, Town of High Prairie, High Prairie

Les Cooke

According to Mr. Cooke, delegates were not *debating* the issues covered at the conference. Instead, they understood that the issues were real to northern Alberta and it was just a matter of “where do we start?”. Based on what delegates said, he thought two things must change:

- senior government and industry must become committed to the concept of cooperative management
- all concerned groups must retreat from their lists of absolute rights and demands and instead listen and try to understand each other's views

Responding to the question, “where do we start?”, Mr. Cooke described several steps to take:

- user groups and communities must take the initiative and learn more about each other's aspirations and objectives
- all parties must take action when the opportunity presents itself
- decision-makers must empower their local officials to act
- all parties should develop partnerships with others in their community

Mr. Cooke also suggested three ways to avoid future problems:

- don't let unresolvable issues or unattainable objectives prevent progress where progress can be made
- don't worry about the cost of doing things; co-management is inexpensive because it inspires people to contribute time and resources
- accept that the process you go through will probably be different than everyone else's, since there is no single "right process"

Jim Nichols

Mr. Nichols began by thanking the NADC for taking on the study and holding the conference. He said that he was initially concerned that the project would lead to expectations that could not be met under the current fiscal situation. However, he now believed that the exercise was a tremendous success and that the ideas discussed at the conference would result in some valuable recommendations for his department. He was particularly pleased to see such a wide range of resource users represented at the conference.

On the issue of community involvement, Mr. Nichols said that although his department had made progress in recent years, more needed to be done. He indicated that the NADC study and conference would help in fine-tuning these efforts. Some of the things he felt that Fish and Wildlife Services could act on immediately included:

- start including communities and aboriginal groups in its involvement efforts in addition to the usual commercial, sport and conservation groups
- shift the emphasis from consultation to shared responsibility for program implementation, evaluation, and monitoring
- act in the *spirit* of "co-management" rather than wait for a formal definition of the word
- move staff closer to the resource and away from regional centres

Simon Sparklingeyes

Mr. Sparklingeyes said he saw co-management in its beginning stages in Alberta, and it was a step in the right direction. He summarized aboriginal concerns on behalf of his community leaders:

- co-management must be backed up by a government commitment to cooperation and shared decision-making
- aboriginals need the public-at-large to understand their place in Canadian society

- there are enough resources for all to share, but the First Nations have not had a say in their management, nor enough of a share to be self-sufficient

Diana Oliver

Ms Oliver used humour to summarize what she saw as delegate priorities. Reading from an imaginary government press release, Ms Oliver suggested the following actions:

- change the role of Alberta Environmental Protection to that of a participant in local decision-making
- have government bring local resource users and managers together to develop co-management agreements suitable for their area
- implement four co-management pilot projects in the north to address land use, aboriginal rights, and social and economic needs

Conference Adjournment

Following the panel presentation, Marlin Sexauer, Deputy Chairman of the NADC, adjourned the conference with a few closing comments. He thanked all conference delegates, speakers and facilitators for their hard work. He said the NADC shared the opinion of delegates that the conference was a success, both in the range of communities represented, and in the quality of information presented. He assured delegates their input would be used in preparing the NADC's final recommendations.

Delegate List

Saran Ahluwalia, Northern Alberta Development Council, Cold Lake
David Anderson, Environmental Council of Alberta, Edmonton
George Anderson, Gift Lake Settlement Association, Gift Lake
Richard Anderson, Gift Lake Settlement Association, Gift Lake
Ernie Bass, Improvement District #21, Worsley
Betty Bateman, Improvement District #23, High Level
Jim Bateman, Commercial Fisherman, High Level
Glen Belrose, Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement, Paddle Prairie
Barry Bentham, Economic Development and Tourism, Edmonton
Doug Bergeson, Wood Buffalo National Park, Fort Smith
Lea Bill, Northern River Basins Study, Edmonton
Charles Bissell, Bissell Bros. Lumber Ltd., Enilda
Steve Blanton, Manning Diversified Ltd., Manning
Roy Borstad, County of Grande Prairie No.1, Grande Prairie
Christy Butt, Weldwood Canada, Hinton
Robert Cameron, South Peace Environment Association, Debolt
Jim Carbery, Northern Alberta Development Council, Fort McMurray
Dan Cardinal, Sucker Creek Band, High Prairie
Eugene Cardinal, Pelican Hills Community Association, Sandy Lake
Frank Cardinal, Fish and Wildlife Services, Rocky Mountain House
Hon. Mike Cardinal MLA, Family and Social Services, Edmonton
Henry Chojnacki, Weyerhaeuser Canada, Grande Prairie
Fabian Chonkolay, Dene Tha' First Nation, Assumption
Morley Christie, Alberta Environmental Protection, Ashmont
Kirby Claggett, Alberta Parks Services, Valleyview
Lou Comin, Wood Buffalo National Park, Fort Smith
Les Cooke, Sask. Environment and Resource Management, Regina
Willie Courtorielle, Mikisew Cree First Nation, Fort Chipewyan
Ross Daniels, Fishing Lake Metis Settlement, Spathnow
Tom Daniels, Alberta-Pacific Industries, Boyle
Gabriel Didzena, Dene Tha' First Nation, Assumption
Jeff Dixon, Parks Canada, Fort Chipewyan
Norm Dube, Fort McMurray Fish and Game Assoc., Fort McMurray
Max Edgar, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
Ivan Ellingson, Improvement District #16, Valleyview
Hon. Brian Evans, Alberta Environmental Protection, Edmonton
Richard Flamand, Eagle's Nest Board, Grande Cache
Sonny Flett, Northern River Basins Study, Fort Chipewyan
Jumbo Fraser, Fort Chipewyan Wildlife Advisory Board, Fort Chipewyan
Lyle Fullerton, Fish and Wildlife Services, Peace River
Al Geary, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
Jim Gendron, Equus Consulting Group, Edmonton
Tom Ghostkeeper, Alberta Aboriginal Affairs, Edmonton
Dennis Giggs, Fish and Wildlife Services, St. Paul
Grant Golosky, Athabasca Native Development Corp., Fort McMurray
Cathy Goulet, Venture Initiatives Council, Fort McMurray
Gordon Graydon, City of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie
Toni Hafso, Alberta Environmental Protection, Edmonton

Greg Halinda, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Reni Hall, Mackenzie Regional Planning Commission, Berwyn
 Daryll Hebert, Alberta-Pacific Industries Inc., Boyle
 Elmer Herman, Janvier Band, Janvier
 Margot Hervieux, Peace Parkland Naturalists, Grande Prairie
 Neil Hinton, High Level Sporting Association, High Level
 Irwin Huberman, Northern River Basins Study, Edmonton
 Wayne Jacques MLA, Northern Alberta Development Council, Grande Prairie
 Sven-Erik Jansson, Professional Outfitters Association, Edmonton
 James Janvier, Janvier First Nation, Chard
 Stuart Janvier, Janvier First Nation, Chard
 Dave Johnston, Alberta Aboriginal Affairs, Edmonton
 Chris Jones, McLennan
 Pete Joyce, Sturgeon Lake Band, Valleyview
 Morgan Kehr, Kinuso Fish and Game Association, Kinuso
 Gerry Kemp, Metis Settlements Transition Commission, Edmonton
 Kelly Kincaid, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Diana Knight, Northern Alberta Development Council, Valleyview
 Christine Kreibom Quinn, Canfor, Grande Prairie
 Lynn Kreke, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Allen Lamouche, Gift Lake Settlement Association, Gift Lake
 Dave Lamouche, Gift Lake Settlement Association, Gift Lake
 Paul Langevin MLA, Lac La Biche-St. Paul, Edmonton
 Ben Lefebvre, Cold Lake-Grand Centre and Dist. Chamber of Commerce, Grand Centre
 Christine Livingstone, Hythe Chamber of Commerce, Hythe
 Pat Long, Fish and Wildlife Services, Peace River
 Ray Luchkow, Land and Forest Services, Lac La Biche
 Jerrold Lundgard, Peace Country Fish and Game Assoc., Peace River
 Don Lussier, Northern Alberta Development Council, Athabasca
 Brian MacDonald, Weyerhaeuser Canada, Grande Prairie
 Keith MacDonald, Parks Service, Lac La Biche
 Doug MacKnight, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Eugene Makokis, Fish and Wildlife Services, St. Paul
 Ray Makowecki, Fish and Wildlife Services, Edmonton
 Brent Markham, Fish and Wildlife Services, Edmonton
 Donna Mastel, Alberta Environmental Protection, Edmonton
 Dave McArthur, Lac La Biche Fisheries Advisory Committee, Lac La Biche
 Floyd McLennan, Northern Alberta Development Council, Grande Cache
 Bruce McMahon, Zone 6 Metis Nation, Edmonton
 Mike Mercredi, Athabasca Native Development Corp., Fort McMurray
 Geoff Milligan, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Jim Morgan, Wood Buffalo National Park, Fort Smith
 Dennis Musselman, Fish and Wildlife Services, Grande Prairie
 Colin Needham, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Don Nelson, Monkman Fish and Game Association, Beaverlodge
 Pat Nelson, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Greg Newman, Fort Vermilion
 Jack Newman, Northern Alberta Development Council, Fort Vermilion
 Jim Nichols, Fish and Wildlife Services, Edmonton
 Bill O'Toole, South Peace Fish and Game Association, Grande Prairie

Diana Oliver, Town of High Prairie, High Prairie
 Donna Lee Ost, Blueprint for the Future, Lac La Biche
 Doug Piquette, Lesser Slave Lake Community Futures, Slave Lake
 Gary Pollock, Town of Swan Hills, Swan Hills
 Randy Poole, Weyerhaeuser Canada, Grande Prairie,
 Dennis Potter, Professional Outfitters Association, Manning
 Andy Raniseth, Peace Parkland Naturalists, Grande Prairie
 Blair Rippin, Fish and Wildlife Services, St. Paul
 Phillippe Robert, Grande Cache Fish and Game Association, Grande Cache
 Mike Robinson, University of Calgary, Calgary
 Jim Robison, Alberta Trappers Association, Whitecourt
 Bob Rohatinsky, Improvement District #16, Valleyview
 Bruce Scales, Swan Hills Outdoor Recreation Club, Swan Hills
 Martin Scholz, Louisiana-Pacific Canada, Dawson Creek
 Hugh Seaton, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Roger Senecal, Grand Council of Treaty 8 First Nations, Edmonton,
 Richard Servetnyk, Fish and Wildlife Services, High Prairie
 Gary Severtson MLA, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, Innisfail
 Chief Johnsen Sewepagaham, Little Red River Cree Band, High Level
 Marlin Sexauer, Northern Alberta Development Council, Whitecourt
 Douglas Slatnik, Fish and Wildlife Services, St. Paul
 Rick Sloan, Northern Development Branch, Peace River
 Darryl Smith, Alberta Fish and Game Association, Valleyview
 Stuart Smith, Cold Lake-Grand Centre and Dist. Chamber of Commerce, Grand Centre
 Danny Smyl, St. Paul Fish and Game Association, St. Paul
 Simon Sparklingeyes, Whitefish Lake First Nation, Goodfish Lake
 Lloyd Steeves, Weyerhaeuser Canada, Grande Prairie
 Brad Stelfox, Alberta Environmental Centre, Vegreville
 Gerry Storoschuk, Town of Bonnyville, Bonnyville
 Bruce Stubbs, Fish and Wildlife Services, Edmonton
 Cliff Supernault, Aboriginal Affairs, Edmonton
 John Supernault, East Prairie Metis Settlement, High Prairie
 Carl Surrendi, Metis Nation of Alberta, Edmonton
 Bert Taron, Trapper, Sandy Lake
 Andy Thompson, Commercial Fisherman, Lac La Biche
 David Thompson, High Level Sporting Association, High Level
 Ross Thompson, Manitoba Natural Resources, Winnipeg
 Walter Tichonuk, Lac La Biche Fish and Game Assoc., Lac La Biche
 Gerry Tranter, Alberta Parks Services, Valleyview
 Andy Van Busse, Alberta Fish and Game Association, Edmonton
 Sharon Van Hout, Athabasca Fish and Game Association, Athabasca
 Leo Vasseur MLA, Bonnyville, Bonnyville
 Chief Lawrence Vermilion, Mikisew Cree First Nation, Fort Chipewyan
 Dan Vines, Swan Hills Outdoor Recreation Club, Swan Hills
 Johnny Vos, Farmer, Keg River
 Dave Walty, Fish and Wildlife Services, Peace River
 Brydon Ward, Land and Forest Services, Lac La Biche
 Jim Webb, Little Red River Cree Band, High Level
 Phyllis Webster, Town of Swan Hills, Swan Hills
 Dwight Weeks, Canfor, Grande Prairie

Francis Willier, Sucker Creek Band, Enilda
Dale Willsey, Alberta Agriculture, Grande Prairie
Dave Witty, Witty Planning Consultants, Bowen Island, B.C.
Bob Wynes, Daishowa-Marubeni International, Peace River
Joyce Zinyk, Kinuso Fish and Game Association, Kinuso
Ken Zurfluh, Alberta Parks Services, Valleyview