

Research and monitoring activities and needs related to ABoVE and POLAR activities

Mike Sutor

Regional Biologist, North Yukon
Fish and Wildlife, Environment Yukon

May 16, 2016

Ongoing research and monitoring *Related to ABoVe and POLAR activities*

- *Major partner in population, seasonal distribution, and health monitoring for Porcupine (see annual report at PCMB.ca) and Fortymile caribou herds*
- *Currently assessing recovery of historic seismic lines with respect to large mammals and specifically Porcupine caribou*
- *Assessment and monitoring in:*
 - *Dawson/Tombstone: Moose abundance; Dall's sheep productivity; sharp-tailed grouse range and habitat use; Fortymile lichen, fire risk; Hart River caribou abundance, trend, seasonal distribution*
 - *Old Crow/Eagle Plains: Mostly caribou related work, sheep abundance*
 - *Yukon North Slope and adjacent areas: muskox abundance, habitat, and interaction with caribou; moose abundance; sheep abundance; North Slope Conservation Planning and associated activities*

Planned research and monitoring

Related to ABoVe and POLAR activities

- *Fortymile caribou habitat carrying capacity (Dr. Hebblewhite in partnership with BLM and ADF&G – currently outside Boelman et al.)*
- *Lichen mapping for Porcupine caribou (Matt Macander, ABR Inc.)*
- *Lichen ground truth project in the Hart River caribou range*
- *Porcupine and Fortymile caribou movement and habitat selection (Boelman et al.)*

Management related research & monitoring needs

Related to ABoVe and POLAR activities

- *Land use impacts and thresholds for activities in the seasonal ranges of barren ground caribou (specifically Porcupine herd)*
- *Determine causes of shifts in Porcupine caribou range use, predictions of future shifts and what this will mean on the availability of the herd to communities*
- *Examination of Richardson Mountains Dall's sheep declines since 1997 to determine drivers*
- *Habitat use by the Hart River caribou herd to assist Park planning in Tombstone Territorial Park*
- *Trophic cascades from encroaching willow in the Richardson Mountains*
- *Mining mitigation and reclamation for sharp-tailed grouse*

Opportunities for ABoVE/POLAR for engagement, education, outreach

- *Wildlife Management Advisory Council (WMAC) North Slope (Inuvialuit Settlement Region) meets 3-4 times each year*
- *Porcupine Caribou Management Board also meets ~3 times*
- *The next opportunity with each would be in September and then December*
- *Porcupine Caribou Technical Committee has 1-2 meetings, generally on the phone each year but is due to have an in person over the next winter*

Recommendations for ABoVE/POLAR for engagement, education, outreach

- *Engagement needs to occur multiple times and on reasonable time lines with key Boards, Councils, Committees, and First Nations and Inuvialuit to be meaningful*
- *More invasive projects should plan on at least 1 year of lead in work with communities unless it is a specific need identified by that community*
- *Working towards community wildlife workshops in region led by Renewable Resource Council's and/or First Nations – NWT RRC's currently have one each February*