

**Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)
Management Board Meeting
Copenhagen, Denmark
September 17-20, 2007**

Traveler:

Bobbie Jo Greenland –Gwich'in Council International (GCI)

Funding:

Gwich'in Council International (GCI)

Purpose of Trip:

The purpose of this trip was to provide representation for Gwich'in Council International at the CAFF Working Group Management Board Meeting. To strengthen working relationship with CAFF Working Group through participation in discussions and to provide input in the decisions and the ongoing work of the CAFF working group. To gain more knowledge as a GCI Board Member and to report back to GCI and offer support for the ongoing work and mandate of GCI.

Background:

Conservation for Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) was established to address the special needs of Arctic species and their habitats as human activities and resource development activities continue to increase in the Arctic Region. CAFF is a forum that includes professionals from Indigenous Organizations, Government Organizations and Other Observer Countries. They meet and work together to address conservation issues in the Arctic. CAFF National representatives include Finland, Canada, Greenland, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and USA. The permanent participants include Gwich'in Council International (GCI), Arctic Athapaskan Council (AAC), Aleut International Association (AIA), Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) and Saami Council (SC).

CAFF is one of the working groups of the Arctic Council and the main role of CAFF is to advise the Governments of the Arctic Countries on conservation issues of common concern on an international level. In its time CAFF working group has sponsored a wide variety of projects relating to conservation strategies, protected areas and documentation of traditional ecological knowledge. The CAFF management board meets up to two times a year to provide ongoing direction to the work of CAFF working group.

General Summary of Meeting September 17-20, 2007

There were a number of items discussed over the 4-day meeting. Day 2 was a joint meeting between CAFF and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) Working Group. The new CAFF Executive Secretary Tom Berry was introduced in this being his first CAFF Board Meeting since he assumed the position.

Much of the agenda focused on the following topics:

1. The Green Paper
2. 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)
(Discussion on the work plan, financial strategy and timeline for submissions to Senior Arctic Officials (SAO's).

3. AMAP-CAFF Coordinated Monitoring (Green Paper and other ongoing National Programs relevant to CAFF/AMAP and how the countries expect to implement a joint monitoring effort in the future)
4. Sustainable Arctic Observing Network (SAON)
5. Project Directory and Interactive Maps (Many of the Arctic Council Working Groups have expressed interest in this and the CAFF Secretariat has expressed interest to join in the initiatives)
6. Production of Arctic Environmental Assessments (The Oil and Gas assessment and the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment)
7. Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)
8. CAFF cooperation with Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working group- Marine Sensitive Areas
9. Updates on other projects such as ECORA, Flora Group, Cbird Group, CPAN, BSSN, Arctic Portal
10. SAO Meeting Preparations (CAFF progress report, status report)
11. Administrative Matters & Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming Meetings

1. SAON November 12-14, 2007 in Stockholm Sweden
2. SAO Meeting November 28-29, 2007 in Narvik Norway
3. Working Group Chairs Meeting January 25-26, 2008
4. CAFF Biennial Meeting in Greenland (2008 or 2009? Should be arranged soon)
5. Next CAFF Meeting will be in Nuuk Greenland

Thoughts and Opinions

GCI supports numerous CAFF projects that show good initiative and opportunity to have more Indigenous groups and organizations involved with the ongoing work around issues in the Arctic. Issues such as Biodiversity, Sustainable Development, Traditional Knowledge, Research Activities and Co-Management. GCI looks at all of these as being equally important since they all impact and influence each other and of course impacts our communities and our lives. If priority is a question, then GCI would probably say that Human Health and Traditional Knowledge were surely part of our priorities or areas of main concern. GCI supports a lot of what our partner AAC was voicing at the table. GCI to work with the AAC in regards to the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA). GCI to be engaged and have more meaningful participation. There is a need for financial support in order for GCI to have that meaningful participation.

I made an effort to meet people during the breaks and evening receptions. An effort to build our networks and working relationships with other countries and working groups. On one of the evenings I volunteered to be part of a 6 person drafting team for the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA). The group met at 6 p.m. and worked until almost midnight. Colleen Henry from the AAC was also a part of this team. I thought it was very important that she and I were a part of this team. We were able to contribute to specific areas that concern us as Permanent Participants. One of the sections we spent much time on in the ABA draft was the Paragraph on "Ecosystem Goods and Services". The paragraph ended up being shortened and it read as follows:

-The ABA will discuss the cultural, social and economic values of biodiversity to society. In it's analysis the ABA will recognize that there is a strong relationship between

the well being of people and the state of biodiversity. The dependence of Northern people on healthy ecosystems will be reflected in the suite of indicators chosen and the relationships described. For example; the report could describe trends in the availability of particular species that are essential to maintain a traditional lifestyle and the consequences of changes in the abundance of those species to Northern People-

Our drafting team reported the entire draft to the CAFF Board the following morning. After some minor revisions the Board agreed on accepting the revisions. Our drafting team did not change the content, but just came up with ways to shorten some sections and make it briefer and straightforward. GCI to review the changes as well and provide feedback if there are any major concerns.

The following are areas where I think GCI need to be aware of and in some cases to follow up on:

1. To review and discuss the Green Paper and provide CAFF with more feedback. This Paper is seen as a working document and should be flexible. GCI to provide input.
2. To follow up on SAON. (According to Canada Rep Risa Smith of Environment Canada, this is fairly new in Canada and there needs to be more of us involved. INAC has recently put together a committee.
3. POP (Persistent Organic Pollutants) are higher in Polar Bears than any other species (National Environmental Research Institute)
4. Under Species Networks, Canada has taken the lead on Caribou and Arctic Char
5. Follow up with USA Peter Murdoch in regards to his work with the Yukon River
6. Under integrated environmental monitoring, the section of Fresh Water Ecosystems seems to be pretty slim at this time. GCI may want to stay on top of this issue
7. AAC will be submitting “authors” for the ABA in respect to traditional knowledge. GCI may consider getting involved in this assessment as well.

My requests for the Executive Director of GCI

1. To continue to provide formal comments to the working groups on behalf of GCI