

**Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)
Management Board Meeting
Helsinki, Finland
February 1-3, 2005**

Traveler:

Bobbie Jo Greenland – Youth Representative for 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 Management Meeting. Craig Fleener is the GCI Board Member who usually provides representation for GCI at any CAFF event. However, Craig had prior commitments involving other GCI business during that same week of the CAFF Management meeting and so he could not attend. As the Youth Representative, I was available and willing to attend the CAFF management meeting in place of Craig. This was the second event I have attended as the Youth Representative since I became involved with GCI and it has been a valuable learning experience for me that will contribute towards my on going involvement with 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) Greenland, ICC Canada, RAIPON and Saami Council. CAFF observers include UK, IPS, IUCN, The Netherlands, WCMC, Wetlands International and WWF Arctic.

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.

Genera Summary of Meeting Feb 1-3, 2005

There were a number of items discussed over the 3-day meeting. Much time was spent reviewing and discussing International Polar Year (IPY) projects. These projects include:

1. COMAAR-Coordinated Observation of the Arctic for Assessment and Research. IPY initiative submitted by Helen Odmark and Terry Callaghan, Sweden on behalf of the Arctic Council.
2. IPY 2- Vulnerability of Human Communities to Environmental Changes across the Arctic. Dr. Barry Smit from the University of Guelph, Canada gave a Presentation at the CAFF Management meeting on IPY 2.
3. IPY 3- Health of Arctic Bird Populations- submitted by Marteen Loonen- CAFF observer from the Netherlands Arctic Center.
4. IPY 4- Greening of the Arctic submitted by Skip Walker, CAVM.
5. IPY 5- Polar Bear Monitoring and Inuit Schools (CAFF)
6. IPY 6- Back to the Future – Terry Callaghan
7. IPY 7- CARMA Network
8. IPY 8- USFWS- Alaska National Wildlife Refuges

Also discussed was Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program.
Modification of CAFF website. The need to increase CAFF exposure.
The cooperation of CAFF with other working groups and projects.
Budget issues were discussed by the National representatives only.

Some discussion on upcoming meetings that request CAFF attendance.

1. OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic Meeting of the Biodiversity Committee- February 21-25, 2005, Bonn Germany
2. AMAP Oil and Gas Assessment Meeting. February 16-18, 2005. Helsinki, Finland
3. PAME Meeting. February 21-23, 2005. Copenhagen, Denmark
4. Cbird Meeting. March 2-5, 2005. St. Andrews, Scotland.
5. IPY Consultative Open Forum. March 10-11. Paris France.
6. COMAAR at the Abisko Scientific Research Station. Northern Sweden. Tentatively scheduled for May 19-20, 2005.

Personal thoughts and Opinions

This was the first CAFF Management Board Meeting I ever attended and the first exposure I have had with CAFF. Unfortunately I had picked up a nasty flu virus on my travel over to Helsinki. I had the flu throughout the entire trip and recovered fully after returning back home to Canada. It was a huge disappointment to be so sick during the meeting as it was really difficult to follow the discussions. The flu virus I had was a distraction and it limited me to focus and participate to my best ability. Unfortunately, these things just happen sometimes.

Because I was sick, I was rather quiet throughout the meetings. I did make some comments following Dr. Smits presentation on IPY 2- Vulnerability of Human

Communities to Environmental Change Across the Arctic. I stressed the importance of research in Indigenous Communities and the importance of Indigenous peoples to control and be involved with such activities and projects. I commented that GCI supported such projects that showed for good initiative and opportunity to have more Indigenous groups and organizations reporting on issues in the Arctic. Issues such as Biodiversity, Sustainable Development, Traditional Knowledge, Research Activities and Co-Management. I commented on how the Research community did not have the greatest history among Indigenous communities across North America and because of that, there is a critical importance of establishing and building on good relations in order to have successful research. I stressed the importance for the research community to ensure they have an honest and cooperative approach to the Indigenous community. Too many times in the past, research was not carried through in a proper manner, disrespecting the Indigenous peoples and causing mistrust and bad feelings. In order to see good research and accurate findings and results, there must be the proper approach to have good communications, understandings and cooperation throughout all research activities.

The following are some web sites to check out if you would like further detail to any of the items that were discussed at the CAFF Management Meeting I attended.

CAFF – www.caff.is

GCI - www.gwichin.org

PAME- www.pame.is

AMAP- www.amap.no

SDWG- www.sdwg.org