

ATIK Forum

June 8 and 9, 2022, Amos



Marie-Ève D'amour - Lilotcoop.com

Organized by the Abitibiwinni First Nation Council (AFNC)

Territory and Environment Team

English version



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Foreword

On June 8 and 9, 2022, the ATIK Forum was held in Amos, organized by the Territory and Environment team of the Abitibiwinni First Nation Council. The forum brought together some thirty participants, including representatives of First Nations from Quebec and eastern Ontario, organizations supporting Indigenous peoples and the Government of Canada to discuss issues pertaining to the protection and persistence of woodland caribou and First Nations cultures.

The purpose of this document is to provide a record of the discussions and talks that took place during the two days of collaborative work at the forum so they can be shared. The context of the forum is first presented, followed by a list of participants and keynote speakers, a summary and links of the presentations made, and workshop contents and outcomes.

The work completed in small groups during the workshops allowed the following:

- To obtain an overview of the strategies and measures implemented by the communities and organizations in attendance to protect the caribou;
- To discuss more specifically four types of measures: Indigenous protected areas, acquisition and sharing of knowledge, habitat restoration and closure of roads, and partnerships and to identify recurring obstacles to the implementation of these measures;
- To develop, in response to the obstacles identified, an action plan for 2022-2023 primarily based on three joint actions: establishing and maintaining collaboration, developing knowledge acquisition and resource sharing projects, and lobbying governments.

These three actions to be undertaken jointly are the first steps of a collective initiative which the First Nations participants who attended the forum would like to see formalized through a **joint declaration** regarding the protection of the woodland caribou and Indigenous cultures.

A graphic facilitator also attended the forum to create a summary of the discussions. The graphic summary that she produced is presented on the following page and captions bring to light the contents of the entire report.

Enjoy your read!

June 8-9, 2022-Amos



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By Benoit Croteau

*Director – Territory and Environment
Department of the Abitibiwinni First
Nation Council*



The ATIK Forum was organized in response to the critical ecological issue faced by the woodland caribou in Quebec and Ontario, without knowing whether other communities would respond or not. With participants coming from as far away as Attawapiskat, in Ontario and representing ten First Nations, along with representatives of two Indigenous Peoples' organizations and two Government of Canada departments in attendance, clearly there is shared concern for the future of ATIK ("caribou", in Aᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ).

Essentially, such a marked interest reveals a pressing need for joint action: all the woodland caribou populations are in decline, the Val-d'Or and Charlevoix herds are likely destined to die out in pens if no action plan is implemented soon and the same fate awaits the Pipmuacan population.

Despite the work carried out in recent years which actively involved the First Nations, the situation has only gotten worse. In view of the wait-and-see policy and deliberate blindness of the Ministère des Forêts de la faune et des Parcs (MFFP) of Quebec (Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks), it is time for us, the Original Peoples, to take strong joint actions as the decline of the caribou is a direct threat to our cultures.

The overall objective of the forum was to reinforce the perspectives of Indigenous communities on the protection of woodland caribou. Specifically, the forum aimed at (1) reporting on current community strategies and protection measures; (2) developing a joint action plan for 2022-2023; and (3) initiating the drafting of a joint declaration to formalize and make known our commitment to action and collaboration.

By attending workshops and presentations during the forum, together we identified priority areas of action (pressure on governments, development of our collaboration, joint knowledge acquisition projects) and established a collaborative momentum which, I hope, will sustain our efforts in the recovery of woodland caribou populations and beyond.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the participants for attending this first ATIK Forum and for their active collaboration!

KITCI MIK8eTC

Declaration Project

During the two days of the ATIK Forum, a draft joint declaration emerged to highlight the commitment of the participants to work together, in order to protect caribou, restore their habitat and, in so doing, safeguard an important part of First Nations' cultures and traditions. For many First Nations across Canada, caribou are the foundation of their unique way of life.

The purpose of the declaration is to put into words how important the caribou and a sustained relationship with the land are to First Nations, the anticipated impact of caribou extinction on their cultures and traditions, the need to take action together before it is too late and the essential role of First Nations in conservation.

The declaration accounts for the following:

- The age-old relationship of First Nations with the land and the caribou and the central role of the caribou in the passing on of cultures;
- The impact of the decline of the caribou on the cultures and traditions of First Nations;
- The essential role that First Nations must play in protecting the caribou;
- The importance of working together to protect and recover the populations and habitat of caribou.

Enhanced by the discussions held at the ATIK Forum, the draft declaration written by Sophia Ladovrechis was submitted to all the participants for review and feedback. Formal endorsement by the leadership of the First Nations involved is expected in the fall of 2022.

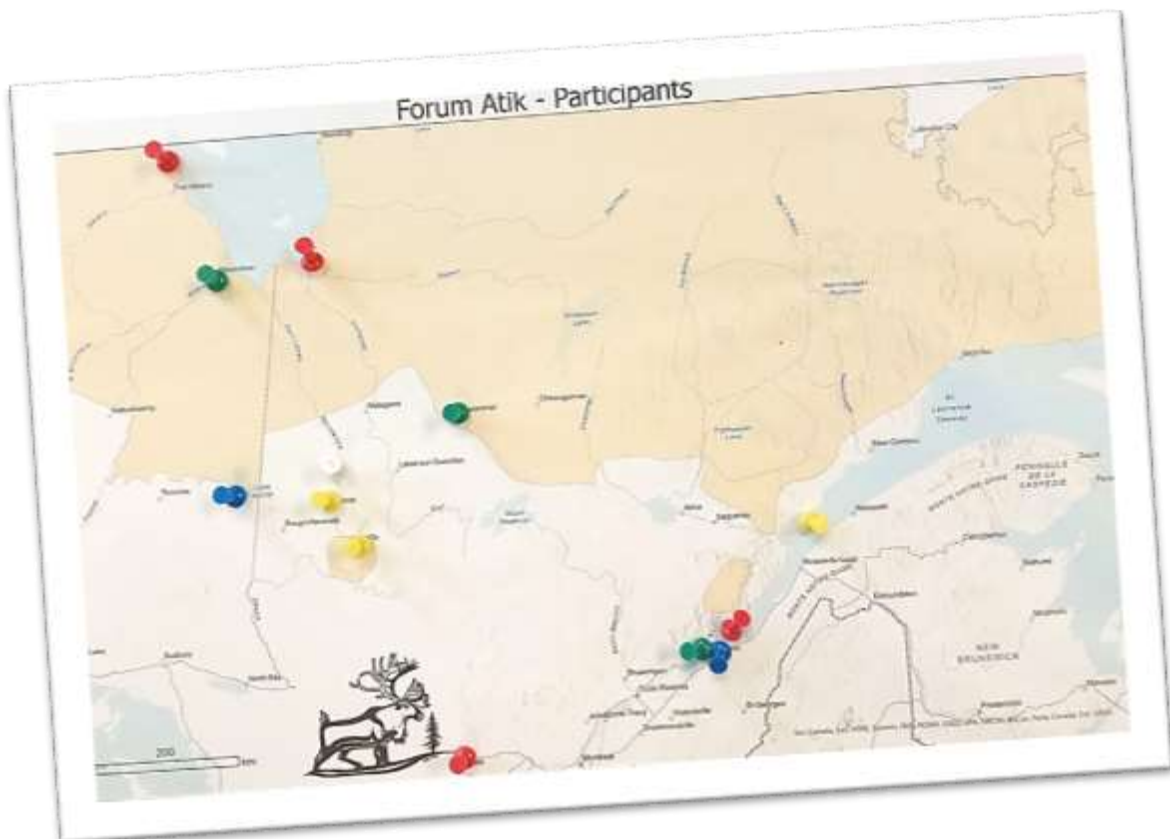




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List of Participants

Communities and organizations from Quebec and eastern Ontario with interest in the management and protection of woodland caribou were invited to take part in the ATIK Forum. Through individual letters of invitation and an announcement made by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI), the organizing team reached out to a maximum of communities. Seven communities in Quebec, three communities in Ontario, the Cree Nation Government (CNG) and the FNQLSDI answered the call (see the map below). Representatives of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) were also in attendance. Four keynote speakers were invited to talk about the work carried out by their communities or organizations regarding woodland caribou (program available in Appendix 1).



Community	Participant	
Apitipi Anicinapek Nation (Wahgoshig)	Aaron Brown Maurice J. Kistabish Kara Tremblay	
Attawapiskat First Nation	Dorothée Schreiber	
Essipit Innu First Nation Band Council	Kathleen Goulet	<i>Keynote Speaker</i>
Cree First Nation of Waswanipi	Eliane Grant Xavier Giroux-Bougard	<i>Visioconferencing Keynote Speakers</i>
Cree Nation of Washaw Sibi	Michael Mapachee	
Cree Nation of Waskaganish	Wayne Cheezo William Diamond Bert Moar Elvis Moar	
Moose Cree First Nation	Alex Leitnov Clarence Trapper	
Huron-Wendat Nation	Mario Gros-Louis	
Abitibiwinni First Nation	Benoit Croteau Roxane Germain Pascale Trudeau-Cananasso	<i>Organization Organization Organization</i>
Anishnabe First Nation of Lac Simon	Ronald Brazeau Lauriane Brisebois Andréanne Lord	
Saulteau First Nations	Naomi Owens-Beek	<i>Visioconferencing Keynote Speaker</i>
Organization	Participant	
Cree Nation Government	Emily Sinave	
Environment and Climate Change Canada	Danielle Cantin Marianne Gagnon	
FNQLSDI	Jacinthe Gosselin Raphaële Piché	<i>Keynote Speakers</i>
Natural Resources Canada	Frank Grenon Aude Tousignant	

Organizing Team		
Kendall Carot	Sophia Ladovrechis	<i>Lawyer</i>
L'ILOT Coop	Marie Eve D'Amour	<i>Graphic facilitator</i>
Abitibiwinni First Nation	Annie Claude Bélisle	<i>Biologist</i>
	Benoit Croteau	<i>Director of Territory and Environment</i>
	Roxane Germain	<i>Forestry engineer</i>
	Iris Lochon	<i>Project Officer</i>
	Clovis Mowatt-Parent	<i>IT Technician</i>
	Alain Poitras	<i>Director of Technology and Communications</i>
	Pascale Trudeau-Cananasso	<i>First Nation Guardian</i>
Traductions Global Expressions	Aimée LeBreton	<i>Interpreter</i>
	Audrey DeLuca	<i>Interpreter</i>
Les productions vives	Josué Bertolino	<i>Videographer</i>



Keynote Speakers

Naomi Owens-Beek

*Treaty Rights & Environmental Protection Manager
Saulteau First Nations*



Naomi Owens-Beek comes from the community of Moberly Lake, located in British Columbia. A registered professional biologist since 2019, Naomi is currently the Manager of Treaty Rights and Environmental Protection for the Saulteau First Nations. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Twin Sisters Native Plant Nursery and is the Director of the Nikanese Wahtzee Stewardship Society. Naomi's long-term goal is to link Western biological sciences to First Nations landscape values.



Recovering the Klinse Za herd

Initiated in 2012 by a multi-stakeholder forum, the Saulteau and West Moberly First Nations-led collective is one of the keys to the recovery of the Klinse Za caribou population. Three main actions were implemented: the construction of a maternity pen, predator management and habitat restoration. As a result of these actions guided by Indigenous knowledge, the population size increased from 36 caribou heads in 2013 to 101 in 2021. Indigenous leadership and knowledge led to the collection of lichen by community members, the installation of the pen in winter 2014, the safe capture and transport of pregnant females, satellite-collaring and pen monitoring.

"This work highlights the role of Indigenous Peoples can play in wildlife conservation, and how caribou conservation is at the center of legal, economic, ecological, and cultural issues." (Quote from the brochure available in the Resources section below.)

Links and Resources

[Talk](#) delivered by Naomi Owens-Beek on June 8, 2022, at the ATIK Forum

[Brochure](#): *Indigenous-led conservation. Pathways to recovery for the nearly extirpated Klinse-Za mountain caribou*

[Film](#): Caribou Homeland (11 min)

[Scientific Article](#): Lamb, C. T., Willson, R., Richter, C., Owens-Beek, N., Napoleon, J., Muir, B., McNay, R. S., Lavis, E., Hebblewhite, M., Giguere, L., Dokkie, T., Boutin, S., & Ford, A. T. (2022). "Indigenous-led conservation: Pathways to recovery for the nearly extirpated Klinse-Za mountain caribou." *Ecological Applications*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/EAP.2581>



Eliane Grant*Wildlife Biologist - Cree First Nation of Waswanipi***Xavier Giroux-Bougard***Consultant Biologist*

Identification of woodland caribou calving sites on the territory of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi



The Cree First Nation of Waswanipi is at the forefront of wildlife monitoring in Eeyou Istchee. Through the development of local expertise and on-site efforts, the community of Waswanipi has become proactive in environmental decision-making. With access to telemetric data on woodland caribou provided by the MFFP, Xavier Giroux-Bougard has carried out a study on the identification of calving sites in the territory, in collaboration with the forestry department of the Waswanipi Band Council. Such data are critical to support the community's efforts to protect the caribou and, more broadly, the wildlife and untouched forests of the Broadback River Valley.

Links and Resources

[Talk](#) delivered by Eliane Grant on June 8, 2022, at the ATIK Forum *[French]*



[Study Report](#): Giroux-Bougard, X., 2022. *Status of woodland caribou (Rangifer tarandus caribou) critical calving habitat in the traditional territory of Waswanipi*. Submitted to the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi. Waswanipi, Quebec. 55 pp.

Kathleen Goulet

*Land Use Planner
Essipit Innu First Nation Band Council*



Values, objectives, indicators and targets for Indigenous acceptability of the management strategy regarding the woodland caribou habitat



Presentation of results from one of the work streams set up by the Québec-First Nations Panel (active from 2017 to 2019). From 2018 to 2019, a working committee produced a table of Indigenous indicators to be integrated into the strategy, in order to achieve Indigenous acceptability and move towards co-management. The committee listed the optimal conditions for genuine collaboration between the Government of Québec and the First Nations.

Raphaële Piché

*Conservation Project Officer
First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development
Institute (FNQLSDI)*



FNQLSDI actions regarding the caribou issue: A new caribou health project by the FNQLSDI



Presentation of the FNQLSDI and its actions regarding the caribou issue: from initiatives implemented by their recovery team to actions undertaken during Québec's independent caribou commission and future steps to be taken (letters to the Forest Stewardship Council® certification organization and ECCC). The FNQLSDI can assist First Nations in their caribou conservation actions, whether through networking, project coordination or multidisciplinary support (legal, geomatics, biology). To assist First Nations in acquiring more knowledge regarding the health of wildlife species, an innovative, non-invasive field tool (detection of stress levels using hormone dosage in feces) has recently been under development.

Links and Resources

[Talk](#) delivered by Kathleen Goulet (Essipit) on June 9, 2022, at the ATIK Forum [\[French\]](#)

[Table](#) of Indicators [\[French\]](#)

[Talk](#) delivered by Raphaële Piché (IDDPNQL) on June 9, 2022, at the ATIK Forum





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Workshop No. 1: Overview of caribou protection strategies and measures implemented by the communities and organizations

The first workshop provided an opportunity for the representatives of the ten First Nations, the two organizations and the two departments in attendance to identify the caribou protection measures already implemented, in progress or to come in their respective structures. Their views regarding the strategies developed by the provincial governments (for instance, the independent caribou commission in Quebec) and their levels of satisfaction with these strategies were also collected (Appendix 2).

Answers grouped by type of measures

Types of measures	Number of mentions
Knowledge acquisition*	
- Population monitoring (inventories, collars, etc.)	15
- Research (partnerships, impact studies, habitats, etc.)	17
- Traditional knowledge	5
Partnerships – Collaboration*	
- Among First Nations	12
- With stakeholders	22
Education and awareness-raising*	
- Within communities (best practices, traditional knowledge, moratoria)	8
- General public (land users, decision-makers, industries)	13
Habitat restoration / Road closure*	8
Indigenous protected areas*	8
Statement of position and governance issue	7
Predator management	6
Legal proceedings and agreements	6

* Types of strategies/measures selected for Workshop N°2

Description of 8 types of strategies/measures:

*Knowledge acquisition**

Knowledge acquisition strategies and measures were mentioned by each participating First Nation or organization. The importance of acquiring knowledge was highlighted in particular to document the status of populations (size, health, recruitment) and habitats (feeding resources, level of disturbance, sites of interest) or assess the impact of human activities and the feasibility or effectiveness of the measures implemented. Population monitoring is carried out through surveys (mainly aerial), telemetric data, cameras or drones and may involve various partners (communities, MFFP, industry). Other stakeholders are involved in the acquisition of knowledge, whether for expertise or funding (universities, consultants, FNQLSDI, NGC, ECCC, NRCan, etc.). The valuing of Indigenous knowledge was mentioned as a key issue as important as the sharing of information, knowledge and initiatives.



*Collaboration – Partnerships with other First Nations or stakeholders**

Collaborative actions between First Nations are already in place or under development (forum, working groups, joint positions or legal actions, etc.). The overlapping territories of the area require such a collaboration, and each community can benefit from sharing information, expertise and skills.



Collaborative actions with all stakeholders were mentioned by most communities. Such collaborations allow for the sharing of information and resources (funding, working groups, etc.) and the representation of First Nations (recovery teams, range plans, regional tables, regional operational groups, etc.). However, the communities deplore the delaying of certain authorities and not being heard in certain decision-making processes.

*Education and awareness-raising**

Education and awareness-raising measures regarding caribou protection issues have been implemented by some communities. Local initiatives have also been set up to encourage best practices and pass on Indigenous knowledge about caribou (Attawapiskat) or to ensure the active protection of caribou populations: moratoria on caribou hunting (Lac Simon, Waswanipi, Essipit, Waskaganish), “caribou patrol” (Waskaganish, Waswanipi), etc. Several communities wish to turn to education and awareness-raising actions intended for every level of public outreach (land users, decision-makers, citizens) to inform the population at large about the critical caribou situation, heighten their awareness of the cultural link maintained by the First Nations with this animal and promote habitat protection (Lac Simon, Huron-Wendat Nation, Waskaganish, Essipit, CNG). Moratoria on industrial development are also being considered (Ring of Fire).

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*Habitat restoration / Road closure**

The objective of habitat restoration through roads closure is to reduce the level of disturbance and predator access, in order to restore a suitable habitat for caribou. Such measures require a great deal of effort and take several years to achieve (since 2012 for Essipit, since 2020 for Lac Simon). The necessary collaboration with industry and governments involves procedural delays.



*Protected areas**

The establishment of protected areas is an important measure for the immediate protection of caribou habitats. Some protected area projects were adopted (e.g., the Akumunan protected area in Essipit territory) or submitted (Mishigamish by Wawanipi, Atihuskaw by the CNG), are under consideration (Attawapiskat) or may be integrated into other initiatives (land use planning – Moose Cree). Organizations like the FNQLSDI and the CNG support the communities in this process. The Lac Simon community also mentioned the refusal by the MFFP to increase the surface area of the caribou wildlife site south of Val d'Or.

Statement of position and governance issue

The Indigenous communities and the organizations involved regularly take a stand regarding the caribou issue and the acknowledgment of First Nations' interests: media communications, letters to ministries and declarations (primarily through the FNQLSDI in collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador). Other joint assertions of position are planned, including with the joint declaration discussed during the forum (Abitibiwinni). The communities are also involved in the planning of land use, in order to better consider their use of the territory and limit industrial disturbances (particularly by the mining and forestry industries) on caribou and their habitat (Moose Cree, Waskaganish). Some communities would like to get more involved, such as the Huron-Wendat Nation. The Nation expressed their willingness to manage the Charlevoix herd themselves.

Predator management

Predator management is a strategy mentioned by four communities, including population monitoring (bear, wolf or alternative prey like moose - Huron-Wendat Nation, Waskaganish, Wahgoshig) and their regulation to limit the decline of caribou (Lac Simon, Huron-Wendat Nation).

Legal proceedings and agreements

Some communities have adopted legal strategies or measures regarding the assertion of their inherent Indigenous rights, by means of the *Species at Risk Act* (Lac Simon) or the filing of proceedings against governments for their failure to fulfill their duty to consult and accommodate with respect to caribou protection (Essipit). The federal government is also in discussions with the Government of Québec to pursue its cooperation agreement on the protection of caribou and the restoration of their habitat and wishes to discuss potential regulatory approaches with the communities.

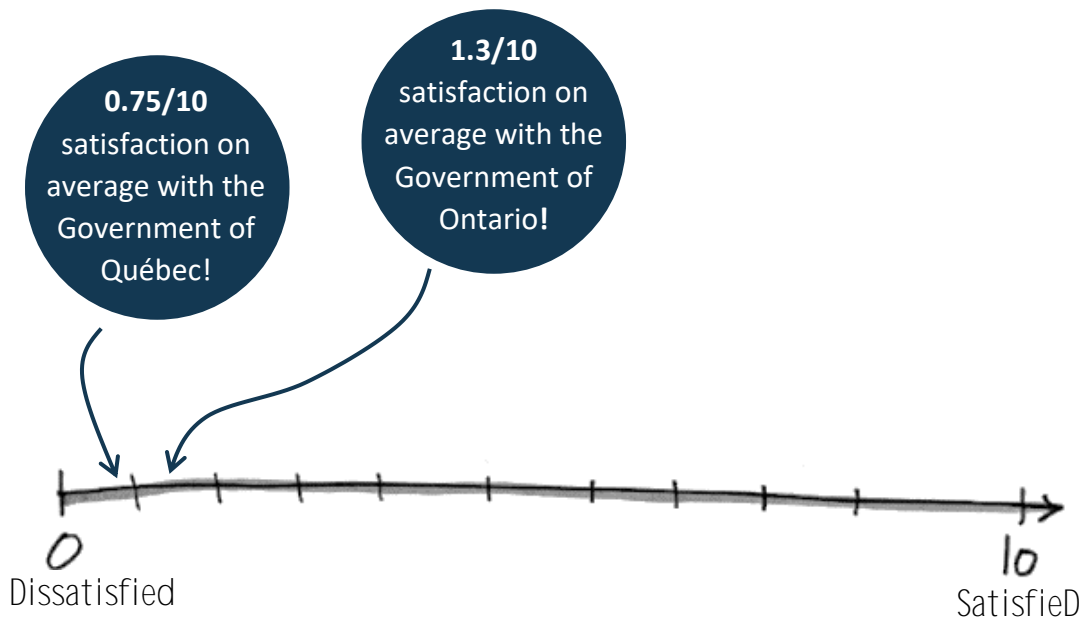
Satisfaction with provincial governments

The communities and organizations in attendance at the forum are very dissatisfied with the strategy and measures taken by their provincial governments.

Out of the seven First Nations from Quebec represented, five have participated, or intend to participate, in the independent caribou Commission established by the Québec Government (MFFP) in 2022 and two did not wish to participate. The reasons for participating were mainly to have the First Nations' voice heard (significance of caribou, concerns and rights, dissatisfaction) at every level of public outreach (commissioners, industries, general public, etc.) and demonstrate the First Nations' goodwill in this issue (history, collaboration, willingness to get involved).

The communities from Ontario which attended the ATIK Forum raised the issue that the current decisions are more in favour of the development of mining, the use of herbicides and the opening of multifunctional roads than of considering First Nations' concerns.

What is your level of satisfaction regarding the measures implemented by your government?





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Workshop No. 2: Management or conservation measures

The objective of Workshop No. 2 was to highlight issues specific to four measures selected based on the number of times they were mentioned in Workshop No 1. Participants were asked to choose one of the following measures: knowledge acquisition, Indigenous protected areas, restoration and road closure, partnerships, and education and awareness-raising. In groups, the participants identified the objectives of the selected measure, the resources needed for its implementation, the elements contributing to its success and the main obstacles encountered (Appendix 2). It should be noted that the theme “education and awareness-raising” was not chosen by any participant.

Objectives

- 1/ Updating and enhancing knowledge
- 2/ Stakeholder cooperation
- 3/ Data storage and sharing

Elements of success

- ✓ Pairing of elders and youths (sponsorship)
- ✓ Restoring environments

Required resources

Funding: \$\$\$

Human: project-specific labour force and skills needed

Expertise: using geographic information systems (GIS); data management



(Category 6 - International Union for Conservation of Nature)

Objectives

- 1/ Protecting large surface areas for caribou before development takes place (30% of protected areas in 2030)
- 2/ Protecting Indigenous Peoples and their cultures

Required resources

Funding: variable depending on the protected area size

Human: biologists; technicians; first nation guardians

Expertise: elders; trappers

Other: Ecological characterization survey (water, wildlife and plant life)
Documentation
Program development
Education of non-indigenous and youth

Elements of success

- ✓ Practice and teaching of cultural activities (hunting, fishing)
- ✓ Dialogue
- ✓ Alignment with governments
- ✓ Educating non-indigenous
- ✓ Educating youth



Objectives

1/ Restoring the caribou habitat

In the short term = preventing the use of roads

In the long term = rethinking the road development strategy

Required resources

Funding: 1 km = \$2,000-\$5,000 (Lac Simon)

Human: planting challenges

Expertise: sharing of knowledge

Elements of success

- ✓ Cost sharing agreement
- ✓ Territory-wide development plan
- ✓ True upstream consultation

Objectives

1/ Combining resources (\$, skills, labour force) to achieve results at a higher level: "Caribou and Nature know no borders."

2/ Establishing the foundations of communication

3/ Sharing information

4/ Building relationships of trust and mutual respect

5/ Setting up work groups

6/ Finding common interests and projects on which to work jointly

7/ Heightening the awareness of stakeholders

In the short term: addressing major issues, opening communication channels, bringing together the First Nations to address common problems

In the long term: adjusting conservation objectives, funding projects over the long-term [beyond changes in governments or industry plans (4-5 years)]



Required resources

Funding: Building partnerships with industry to bring in resources
Training current employees

Human: More discussions (individuals, government to government, industry leaders)
Trained individuals harder to retain
Invest in youth
Include and consult elders

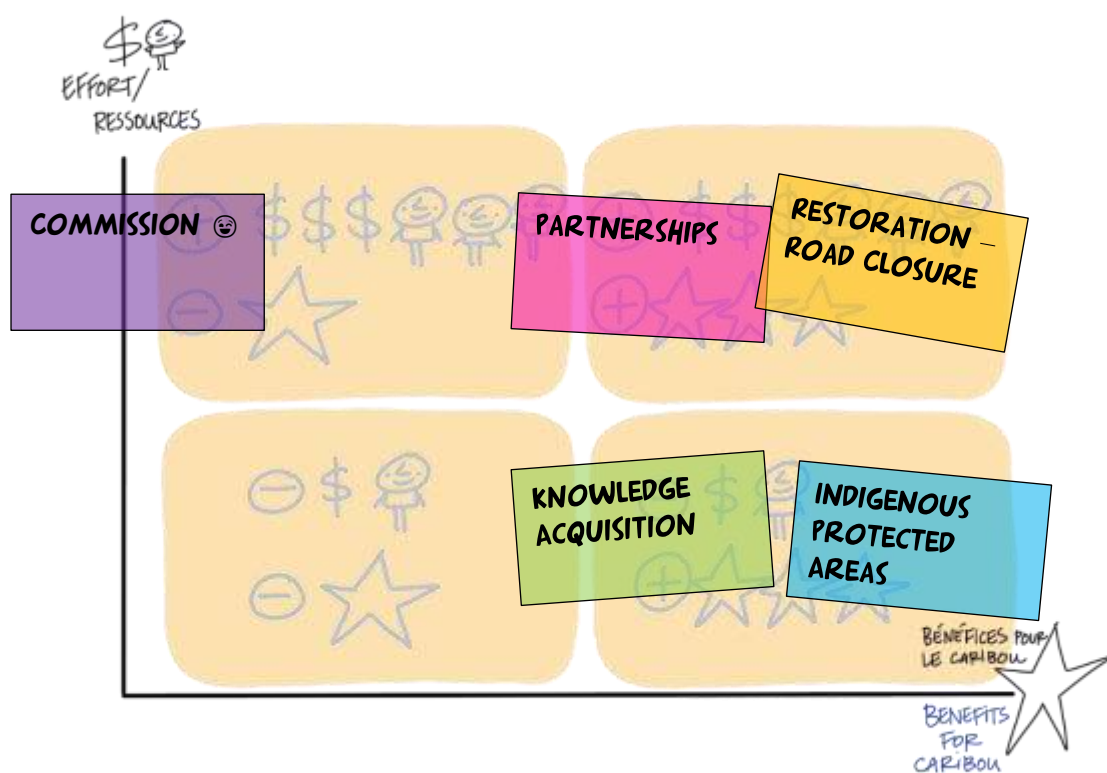
Expertise: Professionals (veterinarians, etc.) and scientific and Indigenous expertise
Education adapted to each culture

Others: Meetings to discuss issues
Trust, respect and transparent communication
Spirituality and respect for Nature and animals

Elements of success

- ✓ Partnerships with industries to become stakeholders in decision-making and advocate for the interests instead of only agreements (impact benefit agreements)
- ✓ Attend government decision tables, Nation to Nation
- ✓ Focus on "bottleneck issues"
- ✓ Using Two-eyed seeing approach in collaborations
- ✓ Joining of forces in land use development
- ✓ Flexibility by adjusting over time

After group work, the pooling of insights was an opportunity to post the different types of measures on a quadrant comprised of two axes representing the amount of effort and/or resources required to implement each measure and the expected benefits for caribou. The participants also discussed obstacles to the measures addressed (see opposite).



Government inaction

- Interest in development (biases in favour of forestry and mining companies)
- Lack of trust
- Opposing political views
- Economic growth versus long-term environmental impact

Lack of access to resources and data

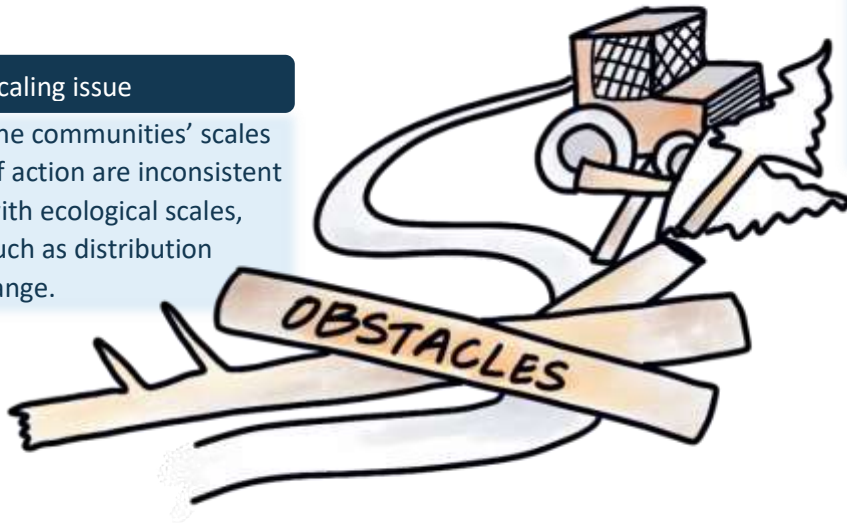
- Financial resources (programs of subsidies, information on programs)
- Technical skills
- Labour force
- Disparity of wealth
- Urgent issue versus long-term investment
- Conservation vs. impact benefit agreement (IBA)

Complexity of procedures

- Numerous
- Delays (consultation, road closure)
- Lack of transparency
- Working in silos

Scaling issue

The communities' scales of action are inconsistent with ecological scales, such as distribution range.



Connection to the territory under threat

- Youths were disconnected from the land
- Loss of elders' knowledge

Lack of communication, within communities, between communities and with land users

- Disparity of needs and resources (urban vs. remote communities)
- Indigenous and non-indigenous resistance, for instance, regarding the closure of roads
- Political conflict within communities and between communities

No acknowledgment of Indigenous perspectives

- Lack of willingness to acknowledge First Nations' visions and the importance of resources as the foundation of culture; discrepancy between programs and needs
- Acknowledgment of Indigenous knowledge
- Consultation \neq Consent or engagement



Workshop No. 3: 2022-2024 Action plan

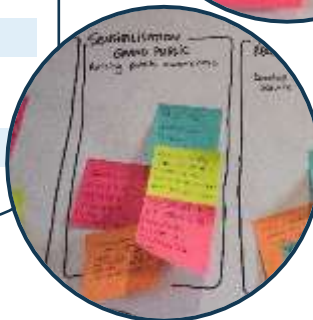
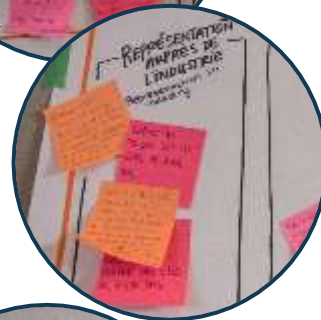
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An individual reflection process on the actions to be carried out together was proposed. Joint actions were written down on post-it notes and ten categories of actions were identified and put to the participants' vote. Each participant had three votes. The participants then worked in groups on the three most "popular" categories of actions. Participants considered: 1/ Developing and maintaining our collaboration, 2/ Developing knowledge acquisition and resource pooling projects and 3/ Lobbying governments. Each group described the action and identified desired outcomes, targets, allies and resources needed (Appendix 2).

Individual reflection on joint actions

Category of actions	Number of post-its	Number of votes
Developing and maintaining our collaboration*	10	8
Lobbying governments*	4	8
Pooling our resources*	6	4
Developing research projects - Knowledge acquisition*	4	4
Awareness-raising and education within communities	1	4
Sharing of existing data	5	3
Raising public awareness	5	3
Rethinking land governance	4	3
Making representations with the industry	4	2
Sharing actions and experiences	7	2

* Actions selected for Workshop No. 3



Joint Actions

Developing and maintaining our collaboration

Description:

- Engaging collaboration with clear objectives and steps to achieve them
- Different levels of meetings: between First Nations and with local, regional and provincial stakeholders
- Different venues: communities take turns in hosting meetings
- Balance between Indigenous and Western knowledge

Desired outcomes:

- Opening channels of communication between communities: regular, inclusive and trustful contacts to foster sharing, involvement and management of future problems
- Creating opportunities, sharing good practices/experiences, coordinating initiatives/actions and maintaining motivation with common goals in the face of common issues
- Building skills together to strengthen First Nations' influence and establishing contact with industry

Target: Communities (1/ Technical team, 2/Band council and population) – the caribou

Allies: Federal (NRCan and ECCC) and provincial governments, FNQLSDI, forestry and mining industries, all the land users, elders and the *Chaire de leadership en enseignement en foresterie autochtone* – CLEFA (leadership chair in Indigenous forestry education)

Experience: Pikogan's experience in organizing meetings

Resources required: Funding and staff!

Event planning professionals to ensure more interactive meetings



Leaders: Communities
(Pikogan, until the next forum)



Relayer: FNQLSDI, National Boreal Caribou Knowledge Consortium (NBCKC) and local or regional community coordinators

Providers: FNQLSDI, NRCan, ECCC



Actions

**SUMMER 2022: PARTICIPANTS
BRING BACK FORUM
OUTCOMES TO THEIR OWN**

**NOVEMBER 2022: VISIO TO
DETERMINE WHO/WHEN –NEXT
FORUM**

**SUMMER 2023:
NEXT FORUM?**

**SUMMER/FALL 2022
REPORT ON FORUM
PROCEEDINGS**

**MAY 2023: NORTH
AMERICAN CARIBOU
WORKSHOP (NACW)**

2022

2023

2024

Joint Actions

Developing knowledge acquisition and resource pooling projects

Description:

- Sharing to pool opportunities (to avoid working in silos or reinventing the wheel)
- Creating useful toolkits for communities: passing on, breaking down simpler terms and sharing knowledge on caribou, so that communities have the tools in hand to take action (e.g.: implanting lichen after the cutting/regeneration of habitats resulting from disturbances, compilation of best practices)

Desired outcomes:

- A dialogue to be aware of available consultations and programs
- Knowledge sharing among communities
- Discussions to develop programs (funding, research, etc.) in line with community needs
- Mutual understanding (Indigenous perspectives vs. Western science) to enable co-creation of knowledge and actions

Target: Every community

Allies: Researchers (universities and governments), community experts

Resources required:

- List of contacts and resources to identify counterparts on site in the communities and within governments (MFFP or other); update this list regularly
- Lists of experts/expertise; for instance, to rehabilitate roads
- A website site for the forum listing in detail resources (funding) available and participants



Leaders: Lac Simon, Huron-Wendat Nation, Essipit, Pikogan

Relayer: FNQLSDI

Providers: MFFP, NRCan, ECCC – Canadian Wildlife Service, *Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques*, forestry and mining companies, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada



Actions

2022: LIST OF FUNDING PROGRAMS

2022: LIST OF INDIGENOUS CONTACTS

2023: LISTING OF TOOLS AND INSIGHTS ON CARIBOU

2022

2023

2024

Joint Actions

Lobbying governments

Description:

- Negotiating with the federal and provincial governments
- Supporting the federal government to lobby provincials governments
- Putting pressure through the media (newspapers and television)
- Filing a formal notice or potential legal action if no action is taken

Desired outcomes: Collaboration, openness, fundings (Canada/Quebec/Ontario), data sharing, results, stewardship

Target: Federal and provincial governments, industries (electricity, forests, mines)

Allies: Non-government organizations (NGOs), universities, First Nations organizations, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), Greenpeace, population, Forest Stewardship Council® (Certification)

Experience: Innus, CNG, First Nations in general, Ontario Cree (Ring of fire)

Resources required: Lawyers, fundings, good relationships with partners, communications and trade unions



Leader: First Nations Coalition

Relayers: All the people involved (via a website)



Providers: Governments, private sector, NGOs, CNG



Actions

SUMMER 2022:
FINDING
PARTNERS

FALL 2022:
JOINT
DECLARATION

**SUMMER 2022: CONTACTING
FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL
GOVERNMENTS**

OCTOBER 2022:
DEVELOPING A
COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY

DECEMBER 2023:
JOINT LEGAL
PROCEEDINGS

SUMMER 2022 – 2023
SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND WORK (LINK WITH COMMUNICATION)

FALL 2022 – 2023:
PLANNING OUR OWN MEASURES

2022

2023

2024



Signing of the declaration

The declaration prepared during the two-day forum will be submitted to the Councils of the First Nations in attendance during the summer of 2022. A formal commitment is expected in the fall of 2022.

Initiating workgroups and their respective actions

The working groups which addressed the actions developed in Workshop No. 3 will be initiated in fall 2022.

More regular meetings

All the participants would like to see more regular meetings. This should help to maintain contacts and develop actions that could not be addressed during the two-day forum. An interest in creating a group of the communities' "technical" personnel (biologists, forest engineers, land use planners, etc.) was raised. The organization of an annual event like this forum could be based on the 2022 participants' evaluation (Appendix 3).

Widening the circle

Unfortunately, not all the First Nations interested in this forum were able to attend. Upon reviewing these forum proceedings, First Nations wishing to take part in the thought processes and actions undertaken, starting with a commitment to the declaration, may contact the report drafting team (forumatik@pikogan.com).

Raising public awareness

A work of art by painter Carlos Kistabish was acquired by the Territory and Environment Department of the Abitibiwinini First Nation Council. This artwork will soon be exhibited in Abitibi-Témiscamingue to heighten public awareness of the critical situation of woodland caribou.



©CPNA

CONCLUSION

The ATIK 2022 Forum brought together representatives from ten Indigenous communities in Quebec and Ontario to discuss the status of woodland caribou. This meeting was an opportunity to strengthen the leadership of First Nations in the protection of woodland caribou. Each participating community is concerned about the decline of caribou in its territory and committed to a number of actions to halt this decline. A consensus emerged regarding the urgency of the situation, dissatisfaction with the actions taken by governments and the desire to strengthen collaboration among Indigenous communities.

The urgency of the situation was the backdrop for the two-day forum. The workshops were an opportunity for the participants to share and compare the situations in their own communities. The communities near the southernmost caribou populations are concerned about the critical situation of the herds. The Val-d'Or and Charlevoix populations placed into pens highlight both the urgent need for habitat restoration, particularly by closing down roads, and the obstacles to its implementation. Communities further north are seeing an increase in industrial development projects while witnessing the gradual decline of caribou populations. It is likely only a matter of time before the northern communities experience the unbearable situation suffered by the southern communities. But a more positive perspective came from the west with keynote speaker Naomi Owens-Beek (Saulteau First Nations), who presented one of the few success stories of a caribou population on the brink of extinction being recovered through the joint efforts of First Nations and their partners. These collaborative initiatives are important and should serve as an inspiration to counter the decline of woodland caribou in Quebec and Ontario.

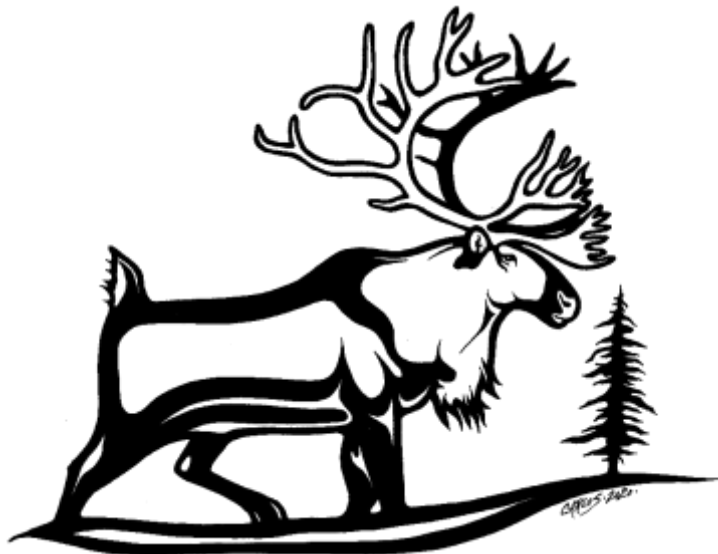
The widespread dissatisfaction with the wait-and-see attitude and scarce actions of governments voiced throughout the forum is indicative of a lack of acknowledgment of First Nations, their interests and their values in land management, both in Quebec and in Ontario. The uneasy and often conflictual relationships between First Nations and government institutions are reflected in inadequate consultation processes and poor access to existing resources to take action. The delays and recurring obstacles to the implementation of community-led projects like the dismantling of logging roads or the establishment of protected areas have also emerged as major issues for the communities. Enhancing dialogue with industries and land users, facilitating the presence of First Nations at decision tables, maintaining pressure on provincial and federal governments and increasing media visibility are among the strategies identified to increase the voice of First Nations in decision-making.

The ATIK Forum will have been the beginning of the pooling of knowledge, experience and expertise within the communities and, more broadly, of their commitment to the caribou. The collective actions to come are part of three priority work streams identified by the participants. First, the group wishes to increase pressure on governments by uniting the communities' voices. The release of a joint declaration affirming the commitment of the communities to work together will be the first step in this direction. Secondly, the group is committed to facilitating the sharing and acquisition of data, knowledge and expertise/insight by creating a shared database. This will be the first step towards the development of joint projects. Finally, a

permanent working group will be created with the mission to develop and maintain the collaboration initiated during the ATIK Forum through more regular discussions and possibly establishing a regular event.

The communities will need the support of partner organizations to ensure that these projects take shape and translate into real actions. In this respect, the Cree Nation Government and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute, both of which actively participated in the forum, will have to continue their key role of facilitation and coordination among the communities. The funding programs and support provided by Natural Resources Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada, with representatives also in attendance during the two days, are an essential support for the implementation of a number of projects, including primarily the holding of the 2022 ATIK Forum.

In conclusion, we, the organizing team, hope that each community which took part in the forum left knowing that its concerns and actions for the protection of the caribou are part of a series of initiatives led by the First Nations in Quebec and Ontario. We hope that the two days spent together at the forum will have made us want to meet again, join forces and contribute, together, to the maintenance and recovery of the woodland caribou on Indigenous lands.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Program

APPENDIX 2 – Workshop Data Collection Tool

APPENDIX 3 – Forum Evaluation

Appendix 1 - Program

Wednesday – June 8th

8:00 *Welcome*

8:30 *Opening Prayer* and speeches

Introduction by Benoit Croteau, director Territory and Environment – Abitibiwinni First Nation

Presentation of the declaration project by Sophia Ladovrechis, lawyer - Kendall Carot
Roundtable

10:30 *Break*

10:45 *Keynote speaker*

Recovering the Klinse Za herd (Nikanêse Wah tzee Stewardship Society) by **Naomi Owens-Beek** - Saulteau First Nations

11:30 *Workshop n°1*: Overview of the community-based measures

12:00 *Lunch*

13:15 *Workshop n°2*: Brainstorming on measures

15:30 *Break*

16:00 *Key-note speakers*

Identification of woodland caribou calving sites on the territory of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi by **Eliane Grant** and **Xavier Giroux-Bougard** - Cree First Nation of Waswanipi

16 :45. Conclusion of the day

17:00 *Cocktail*

Thursday – June 9th

8:00 *Welcome*

8:30 *Introduction* of the day

9:00 *Round table* on joint actions

10:30 *Break*

11:00 *Key-note speakers*

*Values, objectives, indicators and targets for Indigenous acceptability of the management strategy regarding the woodland caribou habitat by **Kathleen Goulet** - Essipit Innu First Nation Band Council*

*FNQLSDI actions regarding the caribou issue: A new caribou health project by the FNQLSDI by **Raphaële Piché** – First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute*

12:00 *Lunch*

13:30 *Workshop n°3*: Action plan

15:30 *Break*

16:00 Closing

Appendix 2 – Workshop Data Collection Sheet

To make it easier to take notes, summarize comments and archive discussions held during the workshops, information collection sheets were produced by the graphic facilitator on site at the Forum.

Workshop No.°1: Overview of measures Implemented by the communities or organizations

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

ONGOING MEASURES

WHAT MEASURES HAVE ALREADY BEEN TRIED, ARE UNDERWAY OR ARE PLANNED BY YOUR COMMUNITY?

PLANNED MEASURES

WHAT IS THE POSITION OF YOUR COMMUNITY WITH RESPECT TO YOUR GOVERNMENT STRATEGY?

QUESTION:

☐ YES
HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE COMMISSION?

3 MAIN REASONS

☐ NO

①
②
③

COMMENT:

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY YOUR GOVERNMENT?

0
NOT SATISFIED

|

|

|

|

|

|

|

|

|

|

|

10
SATISFIED

32

Workshop No.°2: reflecting on conservation or management measures

OBJECTIVE

WHAT RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION?

MONETARY: HUMAN: EXPERTISE: OTHER:

WHAT FACTORS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS MEASURE?

WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES PREVENTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS INITIATIVE?

SHORT TERM LONG TERM

Workshop No.°3: action plan

ACTION:

DESCRIPTION:

DESIRED EFFECT:

MAIN STEPS

2021 2022 2023 2024

WHO IS THIS ACTION FOR?

WHO ARE OUR PARTNERS?

RESOURCES NEEDED

WHO HAS ALREADY TAKEN THIS ACTION?

LEADER PROVIDER TORCHBEARER

Appendix 3 – Forum Evaluation

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VPzGisUVLWEtqb_ELQLonfMk8VZKRMux/view?usp=sharing

Contexte - Context

Questionnaire de satisfaction distribué aux participants du Forum Atik du 8 et 9 juin 2022 et récoltés en fin de forum.

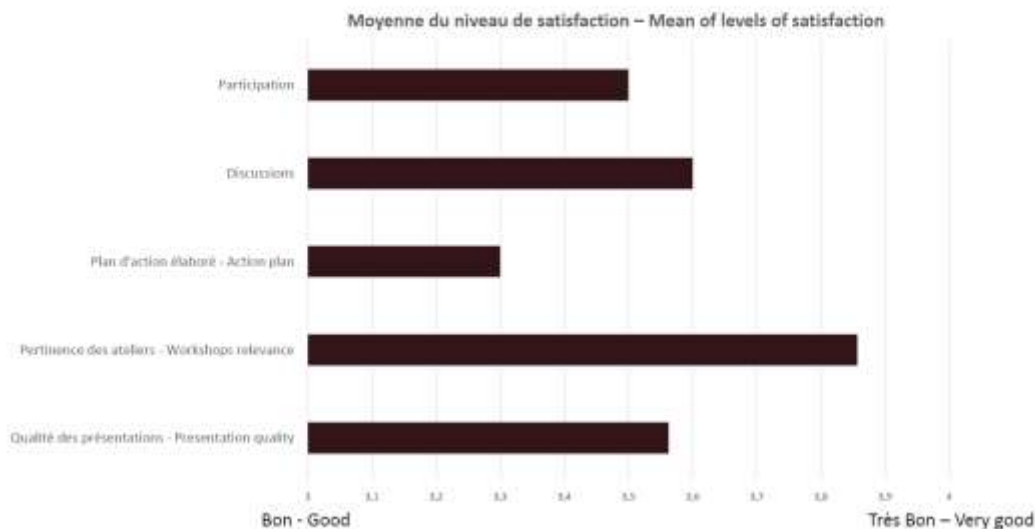
Evaluation form distributed to Forum Atik participants on June 8 and 9, 2022 and returned at the end of the forum.

Nombre total de répondants : 16

Number of answers : 16

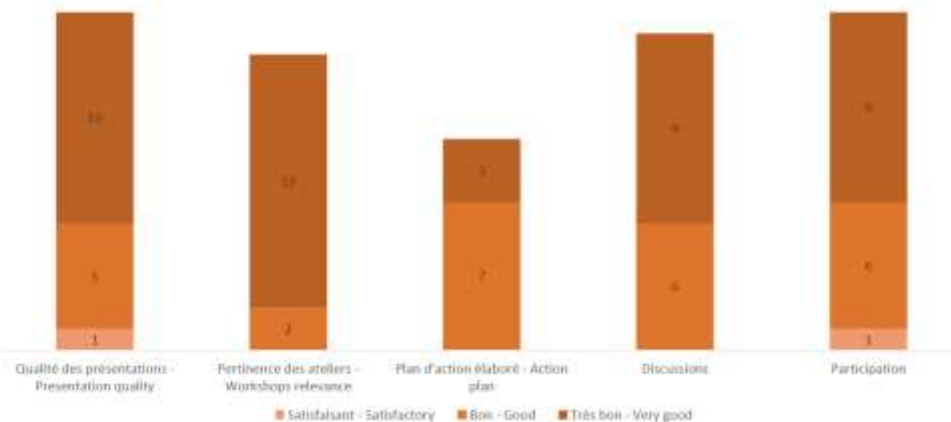
Contenu - Content

Note moyenne pour le contenu : 3,6/4
Mean score for content : 3,6/4



Contenu - Content

Nombre de réponses par niveau de satisfaction – Number of answers per level of satisfaction



Contenu - Content

Commentaires à propos du contenu – Comments about content

« Participation inégale entre les participants, trouver des façons d'engager les gens qui partagent moins ? »

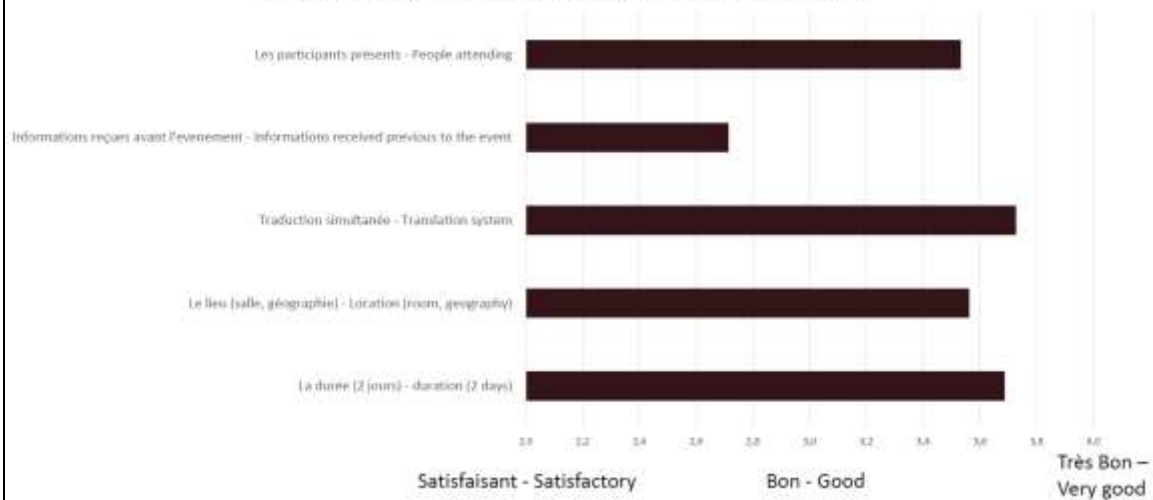
« Il manquait des gens importants (PN) lors de ce forum. Les personnes présentes partageaient très bien. »

« Forum très pertinent dans le cadre des travaux sur le caribou. Il y a besoin de plus collaborer entre PN. A refaire :) »

Formule - Formula

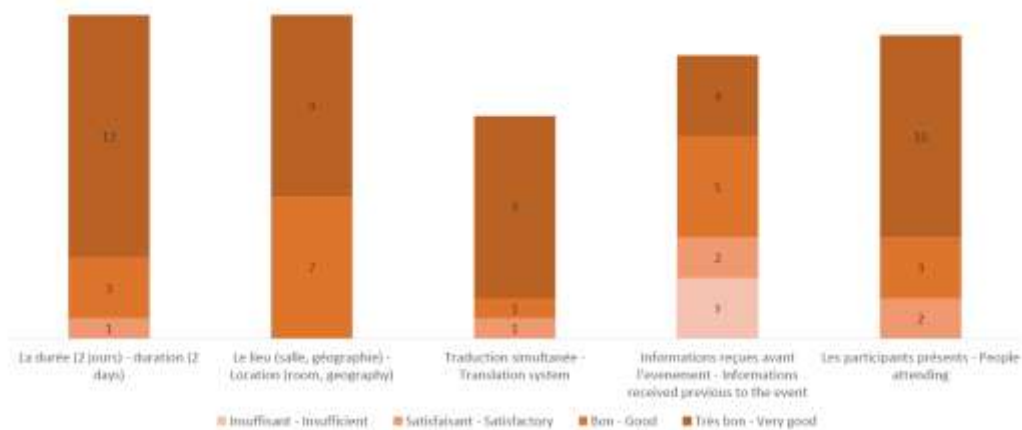
Note moyenne pour la formule: 3,4/4
Mean score for formula : 3,4/4

Moyenne du niveau de satisfaction – Mean of levels of satisfaction



Formule - Formula

Nombre de réponses par niveau de satisfaction – Number of answers per level of satisfaction



Formule - Formula

Commentaires à propos de la formule – Comments about formula

« Lieu : plus difficile pour les transports en avions, mais les organisateurs ont fait des efforts qui fallait pour être présent »

« Moins de représentant des communautés qu'anticiper. Peut être faire le prochain dans une région géographique différente pour encourager la participation de différentes communautés »

« Salle : neutre, un peu noir, des activités extérieur auraient été bien. C'est super que ce soit dans la région. Infos reçues : navettes dispos ou non des aéroports régionaux, ce n'était pas clair. »

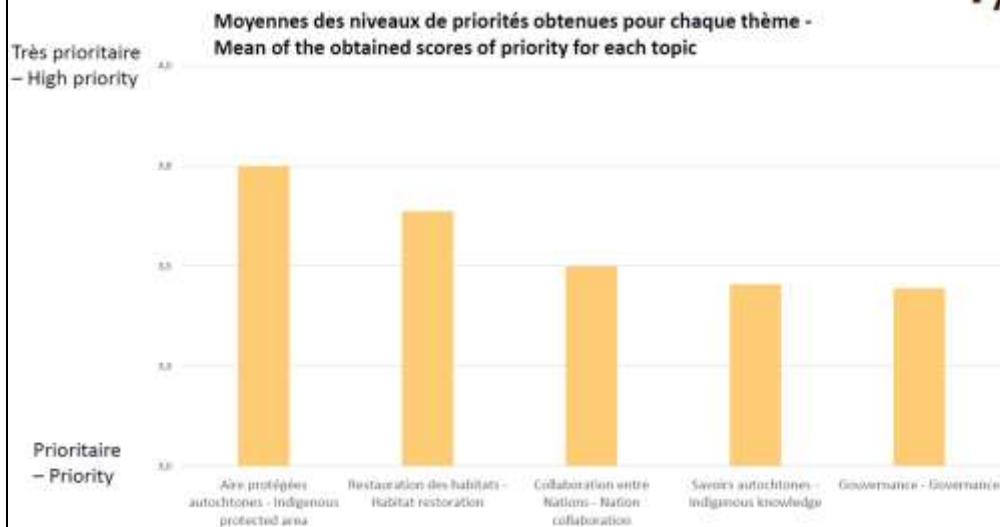
« un peu sombre et renfermé comme endroit. Manque de fenêtre/clarté. Les diapos auraient du être partagée avec les interprètes. »

"translation was a bit spotty at times due to fast speakers. Also group discussion was very difficult."

"Maybe have a university-based caribou expert (such as Philip McLoughlin at Univ. Of Saskatchewan) on a panel with an Indigenous caribou expert (such as the tallyman !)"

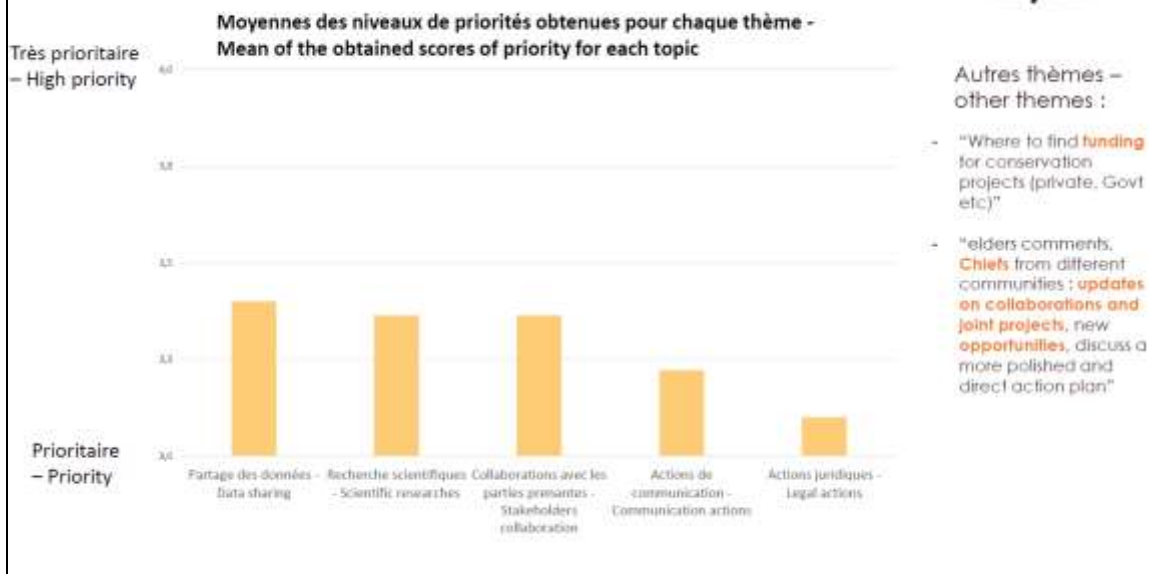
Thèmes prioritaires - Priority themes

1/2



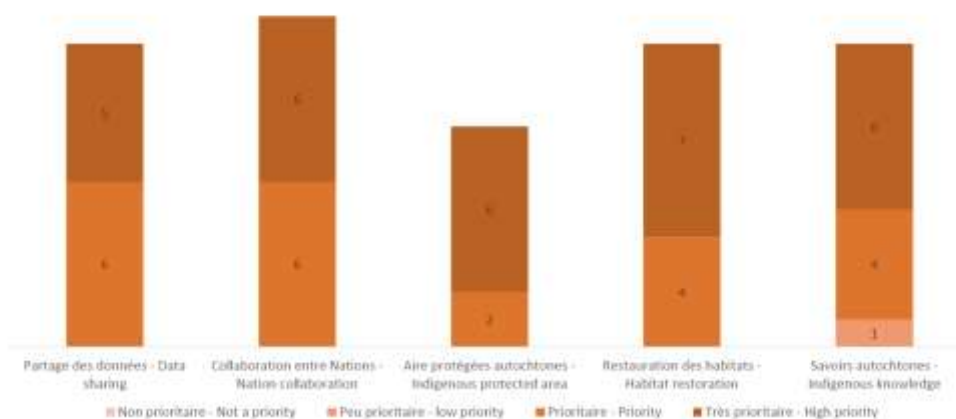
Thèmes prioritaires - Priority themes

2/2



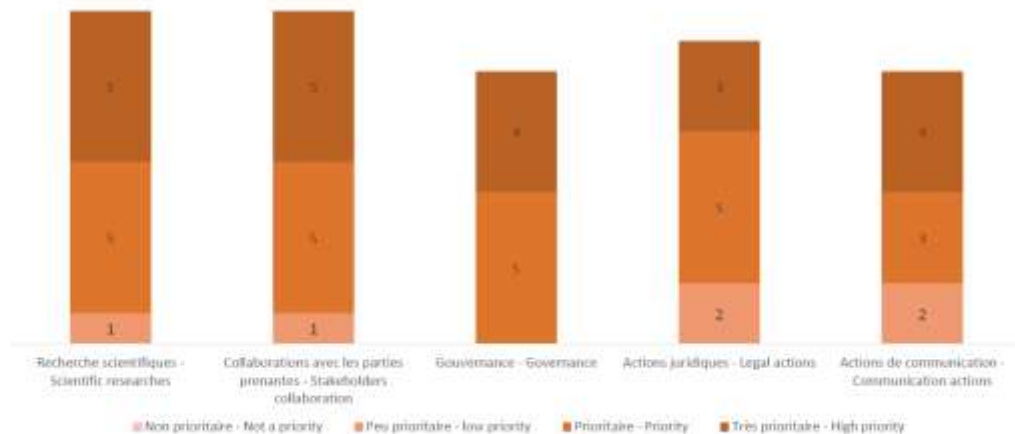
Thèmes prioritaires - Priority themes

Notes de priorités pour les futurs thèmes à aborder - Priority scores for futures themes to address
(1/2)



Thèmes prioritaires - Priority themes

Notes de priorités pour les futurs thèmes à aborder – Priority scores for futures themes to address (2/2)



Thèmes prioritaires - Priority themes

Commentaires à propos des thèmes – Comments about themes

« Actions juridiques et actions de communication à suivre ! »

"Updates on current state of knowledge on biggest threats to caribou habitat, how our knowledge on thresholds is changing, differences between northern and southern boreal caribou ranges."

« It seems to all high priority discussion, but some would be short to long term discussion/action. Il y a aussi une succession d'action qui pourrait faciliter la mise en œuvre et efficacité. Pour exemple :



Pensez-vous qu'il serait pertinent de tenir un tel évènement l'an prochain ?
Would it be relevant to hold a similar meeting next year ?

« **Oui** ! Il faut absolument continuer à faire des efforts pour protéger le caribou, les autres espèces, leurs habitats et l'environnement ! »

« **Oui**, il faut maintenir le contact pour voir évolution du dossier et rectifier le tir de manière commune au besoin »

« Ça serait intéressant de **tenir un évènement du genre chaque année**. Ça permet un partage entre communauté, il n'y a pas eu beaucoup d'occasion pour cela les 2 dernières année ».

"Yes, I'd would like to participate to another meeting"

« **Oui**, à tenir le plus souvent possible ! »

"I think it would be **a great idea** to have this meeting at least once a year. Thank you for planning and organizing this event !"

« **Oui vraiment** ! Une chose qui est ressorti du forum c'est l'importance du partage d'idée, de données, de ressources. Je crois donc que ces lieux d'échange sont très importants. Il me semble aussi super important de faire un suivi dans les actions et suite à des travaux. Donc, pour que le plan d'action fonctionne il faut réellement le mettre en action ! Et faire un suivi. Et continuer de s'entraider. »

"Yes I Maybe send invitations to more Ontario communities ?"

"**Be good to have a meeting next year** to update the progress of regions"

"**Yes** more nations should be represented as many territories overlap"

"**yes** we need to keep these going once a polished plan is established it would be great to present to community - gouvernement - industry - teachers- maybe not at the next meeting but once we have a solid plan with a clear path"



This forum was organized by the Abitibiwinini First Nation with the financial support of:



Relations Couronne-Autochtones
et Affaires du Nord Canada

Crown-Indigenous Relations
and Northern Affairs Canada



Ressources Naturelles
Canada

Natural Resources
Canada



Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

Environment and
Climate Change Canada



Indigenous Centre for
Cumulative Effects
Centre autochtone sur
les effets cumulatifs

Graphic facilitation

Drawings and artwork

by Marie-Ève D'amour

<https://www.lilotcoop.com>



Caribou logo (p. 28)

by Carlos Kistabish

<https://minwashin.org/artistes/carlos-kistabish>

Photo credit

*All pictures taken during the ATIK
Forum: Abitibiwinini First Nation Council*

Caribou p. 2, p. 6-13, p.26:

Jérémie Leblond-Fontaine

<https://www.jeremielf.com>

Snow-covered forest p. 14-25:

Dominic Leclerc