

Call to order and adoption of the agenda

The Vice-Chairperson welcomed the members, along with Geneviève Dionne, who joined the JBACE as its new analyst in October 2009. Ginette Lajoie invited the members to adopt the agenda.

On motion by Jean Picard, seconded by Serge Alain, the agenda was adopted as amended.

1. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 160TH MEETING (SEPTEMBER 30, 2009)

On motion by Maryse Lemire, seconded by Glen Cooper, the minutes of the 160th meeting of the JBACE were adopted as amended.

2. ITEMS CONCERNING ADMINISTRATION OF THE JBACE

a. Summary of the Dec. 2 meeting regarding the amount of the JBACE's annual subsidy as of 2010-2011

The JBACE Administrative Committee met with François Boulanger of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and Robert Joly of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP) on December 2 to discuss the JBACE's budget requests. According to a member for Canada, Mr. Boulanger and Mr. Joly understand the JBACE's situation and its need for increased funding in order to maintain its activities; however, neither the Agency nor the MDDEP have a dedicated budget for the JBACE, which means that the requested increase has to be taken out of the Agency's and MDDEP's current budgets.

A CRA-appointed member pointed out that \$30 000 of the JBACE's budget is reserved to cover the cost of the Evaluating Committee (COMEV) secretariat. The member feels that this amount should not be included in the JBACE's budget, because it is withheld by the MDDEP before payment of the Committee's annual subsidy is made.

A member for the CRA thinks that the JBACE should make representations to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), which is liable for the Government of Canada's obligations under the JBNQA. Responsibility for complying with those obligations should not fall solely to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. Another member for the CRA thinks that the JBACE should seek the Grand Council of the Crees' (GCC) support in this matter, given that several Cree leaders have already

backed the JBACE. The GCC could encourage the other parties to the JBNQA to increase the JBACE's funding.

The members agreed to write to the Québec ministers of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, Natural Resources and Wildlife, and Aboriginal Affairs, the President of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, and the Canadian Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to impress upon them the need to increase the JBACE's funding.

Furthermore, the Agency and CRA are apparently willing to pay their share of JBACE funding directly to the Committee, rather than to the MDDEP. If they did so, it would partially avoid the long wait to receive payment from the MDDEP. Some said that the *Environment Quality Act* provides that the MDDEP pays the subsidy to the JBACE and claims 50% of the amount from the Government of Canada. The secretary will check to see if this is true.

b. Work plan for the analyst

The Administrative Committee studied the proposed work plan for the JBACE analyst. The analyst's duties will primarily consist in continuing to examine the issues of mineral exploration and contaminated mine sites. The analyst will also participate directly in the development of public consultation guidelines as well as in JBACE representations with regard to the Northern Plan. The analyst will also contribute, although to a lesser extent, to the Cree Trappers' Association's project on climate change impacts.

c. Absent Québec members

A member for Québec informed the secretariat that she's resigning from the JBACE. However, she can't leave until a replacement member has been appointed. According to a CRA member, this situation affects the JBACE, which sometimes has a hard time getting quorum for its meetings. In addition, the remaining Québec members are forced to take on more responsibilities.

A Québec member suggested that the JBACE write to the Deputy Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks to make her aware of the problems created by the member's resignation and another Québec member's absenteeism. The member will take steps within his department to get the appointment process rolling. A member for the CRA suggested also writing to the associate secretary general of the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, which is responsible for enforcing agreements entered into with First Nations, such as the JBNQA. The members were in favour.

d. Adoption of the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan

The members suggested changes to the presentation of themes in the draft strategic plan submitted by the secretary in September. They'd like the strategic plan to be presented in table form, presenting the JBACE objective for each issue, the proposed action for achieving the objective and the timeline.

The members would like to add the following items to the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan:

- *Organization of a symposium or workshop on the 35-year history of the environmental and social protection regime under the JBNQA:* planned for fall 2010, the event would mark the 35th anniversary of the signing of the JBNQA by providing a retrospective of implementation of Section 22, highlighting the strengths and possible improvements. The event would give the JBACE an opportunity to present the work done to update the regime, including the planned development of public consultation guidelines.

A working group composed of five members was formed to define, in conjunction with the JBACE analyst, the content of the event as well as identify potential partners.

- *Redelimitation of the territory covered by Section 22:* when the JBNQA was signed, the southern boundary of the territory, as defined in Section 22, coincided with the southern limits of the Cree traplines in this area. However, because very little data on trapline limits existed at the time, the southern boundary of the territory instead coincides with township boundaries.

Establishment of the adapted forestry regime under the Agreement Concerning a New Relationship Between Québec and the Crees (ANRQC) allowed for clear delimitation of Cree traplines making up forest management units. The JBACE will invite the parties to redelimit the Section 22 territory on the basis of the trapline boundaries defined under the adapted forestry regime.

On motion by Chantal Otter Tétreault, seconded by Jean Picard, the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan was adopted as modified.

3. ADOPTION OF THE 2010-2011 BUDGET PROPOSAL

The secretary went over the main items in the budget proposal. A member for Canada proposed that the \$30 000 withheld from the subsidy to cover the costs of the COMEV secretariat be clearly deducted from the JBACE's income. In addition, the member feels that "provision for operating funds" would be a more suitable item heading given that the current surplus is used to finance the secretariat while waiting to receive the annual subsidy.

The secretary explained that the amount of \$20 000 was included in the budget to create a fund for studying forest management plans, which is normally done every five years. A member for Canada said that \$20 000 is not enough if ever the plans have to be studied during the 3rd year of the five-year period. Given that the next generation of forest management plans are supposed to be filed in 2012-2013, it was decided to contribute \$33 000 a year to the fund.

JBACE Resolution 2009-12-15-01 regarding the 2010-2011 budget proposal:

- WHEREAS the budget proposal was submitted to the JBACE Administrative Committee, which has recommended its adoption;
- WHEREAS the JBACE must approve the forecasted expenditures for each budget item for the fiscal year starting April 1;

On motion by Chantal Otter Tétreault, seconded by Jean Picard:

It is hereby unanimously resolved to adopt the budget proposal for fiscal year 2010-2011.

4. FILE UPDATE

a. Research project on climate change impacts and adaptation in James Bay

The JBACE is still collaborating on this project of the Cree Trappers' Association. The JBACE analyst helped organize the workshop held in Mistissini in November 2009 to

record trappers' observations. She also plans on working with the CTA to train the Cree interviewers who will be meeting with trappers to collect more data on climate change in the territory.

b. Bill 57, Sustainable Forest Development Act

The secretary explained that Bill 57 was reintroduced in the National Assembly under the above name, the government having decided to no longer call it the *Forest Occupancy Act*. The section dealing with application of the Act in the territory covered by the ANRQC was expanded upon: the Québec government and the Crees may initiate talks on adapting the ANRQC after considering the recommendations made by the Cree-Québec Forestry Board.

A CRA member feels that the bill also needs to mention the role of the JBACE in implementing the guiding principles of Section 22. These same principles are set forth in the adapted forestry regime established by the ANRQC and entrenched in the JBNQA as Section 30A. The members agreed to write to the Minister of Natural Resources and Wildlife to request that Bill 57 be amended to that effect.

c. Protection of fish habitat during follow-up studies to the Opemiska tailings dike failure

The JBACE wrote to the federal environment minister and the associate deputy minister at Faune Québec (MRNF) regarding the fact that no monitoring studies have been conducted on the impact of the tailings dike failure on fish habitat. In the JBACE's opinion, it is important that this issue be documented, especially since the Crees have observed a degradation in the quality of fisheries.

After meeting with people from the Cree Regional Authority (CRA) and the community of Waswanipi, Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada officials agreed to visit the area affected by the Opemiska dike failure. They will also be meeting with the responsible MRNF officials soon. In addition, officials from the CRA, MRNF and MDDEP continue to hold conference calls every two weeks to discuss the monitoring studies and restoration work.

A member for the CRA said she was dismayed by the extent of impacts. For example, the MDDEP asked the MRNF, which has been responsible for the site since the company concerned was given acquittance, to increase the area of the settling impoundment five-fold. Also, traces of tailings have been found up to 200 km downstream from the failed dike. The member wonders whether the remediation work being carried out will be enough to restore the quality of ecosystems.

d. Contaminated site at Cape Jones (Pointe Louis XIV)

A member for Canada said that documents relating to Capes Jones, which was designated a contaminated site, are available at his department. A member for Québec explained that her department has several boxes of documents relating to the site as well. She said that she hasn't had time to look over all the information, but she knows that a preliminary characterization study was conducted, because the provincial Review Committee (COMEX) received a copy of the study during the Kativik Regional Government's environmental assessment of the project to clean up former Mid-Canada Line radar sites.

According to a CRA member, it was a preliminary environmental site assessment based on just a few samples. In her opinion, a detailed soil characterization study should be conducted for Cape Jones. The member feels that the JBACE should make representations to the Department of National Defence (DND), which is responsible for the site. According to a member for Canada, responsibility for the site was transferred to the Québec government, but the latter has not given acquittance.

The secretary will find out who's responsible for this matter at DND and draft a letter asking DND to conduct a detailed soil characterization study with a view to the site's restoration.

e. Life-cycle assessment of residual materials management scenarios

On December 8, the CIRAIIG consultants presented the highlights of their final report to the JBACE subcommittee on integrated residual materials management. In essence, the life-cycle assessment (LCA) showed the environmental and social benefits of recycling. Incineration releases atmospheric emissions and therefore has more adverse effects on the environment than landfilling. On the other hand, landfills can have negative social impacts if they encroach on traplines. Burning in landfills has negative environmental impacts that aren't offset by avoided impacts.

A CRA member explained that a number of corrections will be made to the final LCA report. For example, the impact of burning in landfills was measured considering the fuel used to accelerate combustion, but this doesn't apply in James Bay. Furthermore, it's hardly surprising that recycling got a positive assessment. In the member's opinion, a cost-benefit analysis needs to be conducted before setting up recycling programs in the James Bay communities. Lastly, she pointed out that LCA reports are highly technical. The JBACE will have to decide on the best way to make the data accessible to decision makers in the Cree communities.

f. Recommendations report on the review of schedules 1 and 2 of Section 22

In response to the JBACE report on its review of the list of development projects subject to and exempt from impact assessment, a member for Québec explained that the MDDEP solicited comments within the department as well as from other departments. A summary report of the comments received should be available soon. A member for Canada said that the government is still waiting for comments from a few stakeholders.

A CRA member thinks that the JBACE should remind those who received the recommendations report in July 2008 that the Committee is still waiting for their comments. The governments, including the CRA, are expected to render a decision in early 2010, at the latest.

According to a member for Canada, the Schedule 1 and 2 review procedure should be clarified. The James Bay Implementation Office (Indian and Northern Affairs) is responsible for establishing the procedure at the federal level. A CRA member thinks that the JBACE could support the parties by requesting a legal opinion determining whether changes to schedules 1 and 2 of Section 22 require amendment of the JBNQA. The members were in agreement.

g. Coordination of review processes for the Matoush uranium exploration project

The federal and provincial administrators as well as the Review Committee (COMEX) all responded to the JBACE's recommendation to coordinate the review processes for the Matoush uranium exploration project by saying that talks were underway to coordinate the federal and provincial review processes. The provincial administrator even indicated that a directive had been issued to COMEX in 2006 ordering it to coordinate its activities with those of the federal Review Panel as much as possible. A member for the CRA would like to obtain a copy of the directive.

h. Development of public consultation guidelines for the Section 22 impact assessment and review procedure

The JBACE wrote to the administrators of the impact assessment and review procedure as well as to the evaluating and review committees requesting their collaboration in the development of public consultation guidelines. According to a member for the CRA, the JBACE should approach Pierre André, geography professor and expert in the field, and Kelly LeBlanc, who conducted the research, to sit on the steering committee tasked with developing the consultation rules. The other members will consist of a member from each party on the JBACE and members of the evaluating and review committees.

The JBACE analyst will initiate the work by preparing a summary of the procedures existing in other northern jurisdictions and involving Aboriginal participation.

5. NORTHERN PLAN AND JBACE INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONSULTATIONS

The vice-chairperson of the JBACE attended the meeting on the Northern Plan held by the Québec government on November 6. She sent the members a summary of the proceedings as well as recommendations for action by the JBACE.

The government intends to set up two partners committees. One would be composed of government department, municipal and First Nations representatives and be tasked with getting communities to commit to a common vision and defining a work procedure and priorities. The second committee would be devoted specifically to issues affecting First Nations and divided into four sector-based working groups dealing with the Inuit, Cree, Naskapi and Innu people, respectively.

According to a member for Canada, the JBACE chose its course of action in recommending that the Northern Plan be submitted to strategic environmental assessment; since the aim is to get an overall view of the planned developments, the JBACE should be a part of the principal body dealing with the matter, i.e. the partners table representing the government departments concerned. A member for the CRA concurred, provided that the directions for the various types of development planned are addressed. A member for Canada feels that the JBACE should have a place on each working group because of the special status conferred on it by the JBNQA.

The members agreed to write to the interdepartmental committee for the Northern Plan to propose giving a presentation on the JBACE's mandate and the role it could play in the Northern Plan. The secretary will contact the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee to see if it would be interested in taking concerted action.

Furthermore, the members feel that the JBACE should increase its visibility with environmental groups that also voiced the need for comprehensive assessment of all developments proposed under the Northern Plan. The JBACE will write to them to solicit their collaboration.

6. DRAFT CONTRACT WITH ENAP FOR PREPARATION OF A FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE NORTHERN PLAN

A CRA member thinks the proposed contract with a consultant for the preparation of a framework document for strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of the

Northern Plan should be amended. Given the extent of road development and resulting increase in access to the territory, the member feels greater focus should be placed on sector-based SEA of transportation development under the Northern Plan. She cited the example of the Otish Mountain road project: the proponent will be preparing the impact statement soon, even though a project notice hasn't even been submitted to the Evaluating Committee (COMEV) yet.

A Québec member agreed that SEA of transportation developments would definitely be worthwhile given that transportation projects pave the way for other types of development, such as mining. A member for Canada said that because SEA of the transportation sector would be more concrete, government officials would be more liable to accept it.

The secretary will inform the consultant of the proposed amendments to the contract. The members agreed to hire someone who is familiar with the issues affecting the James Bay territory to revise the framework document.

7. BILL 79, AN ACT TO AMEND THE *MINING ACT*

At the beginning of the month, the Minister for Natural Resources and Wildlife tabled Bill 79, *An Act to amend the Mining Act*, in the National Assembly. The JBACE analyst gave the bill a cursory review and suggested that the Committee examine the new public consultation provisions and the rehabilitation and restoration requirements. The bill provides for increased public access to the register of mining activities.

A CRA member asked about the time frame for public consultations on Bill 79. The secretary will call the MRNF to find out. In all likelihood, a parliamentary committee will hear from interested groups. After studying the amendments and consultation calendar, the JBACE will decide whether or not to submit a brief.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Impact of forest roads on the habitat of woodland caribou

The JBACE received a letter from the Société pour la Nature et les Parcs (SNAP) expressing concerns about the protection of woodland caribou habitat during future forest road construction. According to SNAP, the directives issued to the proponents by the Evaluating Committee (COMEV) don't take into account the MRNF's recovery plan for woodland caribou, even though the species has been designated as vulnerable.

A member for the CRA said that two forest road projects are currently subject to the Section 22 assessment and review procedure. As far as she knows, protection of woodland caribou habitat is not an important criterion in the impact studies being carried out. She suggested that the JBACE write to the provincial and federal administrators as well as to the evaluating and review committees to make sure that caribou habitat is considered during environmental assessment of forest roads.

A member for Canada said that Environment Canada published a status report on woodland caribou herds. A CRA member thinks that the JBACE should recommend also conducting an assessment at the regional level, rather than just assessing each road project individually. Among other things, a regional assessment inspired by the recovery plan would make it possible to identify the habitat requirements of woodland caribou. A member for Québec stressed that it's not enough to assess solely the impact of the road's construction: the impact of the ensuing forest management activities must also be assessed.

The members agreed to start by writing to the Section 22 administrators and committees to underscore the importance of taking the protection of woodland caribou habitat into account when assessing the environmental impacts of road projects. The members also agreed to ask Environment Canada and the MRNF to assess the effects of forest roads on woodland caribou habitat at the regional level. The letters will be copied to the Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee. The Committee will follow up on the issue with SNAP.

b. Sustainable development indicators

In conjunction with the Government Sustainable Development Strategy 2008-2013, the MDDEP published the first list of sustainable development indicators for Québec, which was studied by a parliamentary committee in June 2009. The secretary explained that there are indicators for monitoring and measuring the global progress of Québec society toward sustainable development; for example, employment rates, level of graduation, family income, etc. Other indicators are designed to measure the progress made in attaining the objectives of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy. The objectives deal with such things as environmental protection, reduction of energy and natural resource consumption, and sustainable land use and development.

A member for the CRA is surprised that the JBACE was not invited to participate in the consultation process. The members agreed to write to the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks to suggest modifying the indicators in accordance with the indicators for implementation of the environmental and social protection regime for the James Bay territory.

c. New residual materials management policy

The Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks launched a public consultation on the new residual materials management policy and the draft regulation respecting the recovery and reclamation of products by enterprises. The JBACE analyst will prepare an explanatory note for the members.

9. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PUBLIC LAND USE PLAN, ÉLIZABETH HARVEY AND GUY HÉTU (MRNF)

Guy Héту explained that his presentation would be on the process of preparation of the public land use plan (PLUP) for Northern Québec. However, if the JBACE members have questions regarding other planning initiatives, such as the regional plan for integrated land and natural resource development (PRDIRT), Mr. Héту would be happy to answer them at the end.

Élizabeth Harvey said that 92% of Québec's land mass is in the public domain. The government has granted or assigned over 200 000 rights and statuses (rough shelter leases, outfitters' licences, forest management contracts, etc.) in respect of these lands. Owing to the challenge posed by coherent management of the various rights and statuses, the *Act respecting the lands in the domain of the State* requires the MRNF, in cooperation with the other government departments concerned, to prepare a land use plan (PLUP) for each administrative region.¹ The plan must ensure integrated management of natural resources and coherent action within a given territory in order to minimize land use conflicts.

The first step in preparing a PLUP consists in collecting environmental, social, economic and institutional data on public lands. Ms. Harvey explained that the MRNF takes a snapshot of existing land uses before addressing potential uses. For that purpose, the territory concerned is subdivided into special, priority and multiple-use zones. Uses include protection, which may be designated as either priority or exclusive.

Élizabeth Harvey said that public participation is an important aspect of preparation of a PLUP. For the James Bay region, the MRNF and other departments concerned will set up two participation groups: one with the regional conference of elected officials of James Bay (CRÉBJ) and the other, with the Cree Regional Authority (CRA). Broader consultations will be conducted with multiple stakeholders, including representatives of various user groups, Aboriginal organizations and bodies established by the JBNQA.

¹ No land use plan has been approved for James Bay yet.

Once it is adopted, the PLUP is subject to monitoring every two years. As needed, the MRNF updates the plan based on observed changes in land uses (e.g. at the end of a hydroelectric project). All PLUPs are reviewed every five years.

Questions and comments

A CRA member asked if the MRNF would be consulting partners when delimiting the different zones within a given territory. Also, does the MRNF take the boundaries of Cree traplines into account when preparing a land use plan? Élisabeth Harvey explained that zones are delimited on the basis of existing and planned uses. Because of the scale used for maps, Cree traplines cannot be shown on them. For example, there are 42 traplines in the Weh-Sees Indohoun sector, where the Eastmain 1A/Rupert hydroelectric project is located. However, Guy Hétu clarified that even if trapline boundaries cannot be shown on land use planning maps, they can certainly be taken into account during preparation of the PLUP.

A member for Canada wanted to know to what extent ecological characteristics are considered when delimiting zones. Mr. Hétu explained that they are taken into account when formulating government directions for a given zone.

A member for the CRA asked if steps were taken to protect the habitat of woodland caribou. Élisabeth Harvey said that areas used by woodland caribou are taken into consideration. If necessary, they can be designated priority zones and will be considered by forest planners when preparing their forest management plans. A member for Canada thinks it's just as important to identify migration corridors as it is the caribou's range; otherwise, it could result in fragmentation of woodland caribou habitat. Guy Hétu replied that the MRNF has adopted a recovery plan for woodland caribou because the species has been designated as vulnerable. The protection measures contained in the recovery plan will be considered in the PLUP.

The JBACE analyst asked how the Northern Plan will be taken into account in the PLUP. According to Guy Hétu, the Northern Plan will automatically affect land use planning, which is why the land use plan is designed to be flexible so that it can be modified in keeping with the Northern Plan or the new forestry regime.

A CRA member is worried about how the land use plan might affect local initiatives such as the "Ndoho Istchee" project being carried out in Waswanipi to balance the Crees' wildlife harvesting practices with forestry operations. The member hopes that the Québec government will take all these local initiatives as well as the rights guaranteed to the Cree people under the JBNQA into account.

A CRA member acknowledged that the objectives of the PLUP are commendable, but doubts that the context is right for this work. In light of the initiatives already being carried out, she thinks that the government should put off preparing the PLUP and PRDIRT; otherwise, too many planning initiatives are conducted at the same time and partners cannot get involved in every one. Moreover, there are still

significant knowledge gaps in land uses and this knowledge is needed in order to plan initiatives.

Guy Hétu acknowledged that the challenge is enormous, and went on to say that the MRNF is completing the shift to regional governance at the same time. Normally, the PLUP must be adopted first and then all other planning initiatives are built on it. Instead, this work will be carried out at the same time. However, Mr. Hétu said he was reassured to see so many local people getting involved. He reminded everyone that preparing a land use plan is a long-term process. He figures that the government will be able to make a progress report on implementation of the Northern Plan, the new forest regime and the PLUP in 2018.

10. INFORMATION SESSION ON THE DIRECTIONS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PROTECTED AREAS IN JAMES BAY, FRANÇOIS BRASSARD AND CHRISTIANE BERNARD (MDDEP)

François Brassard gave some background to this information session: the Québec government pledged to protect 12% of the territory of Québec by 2015, which means an additional 65 000 km² designated as protected. The MDDEP is holding a public consultation to identify public priorities for expanding Québec's protected areas network.

Mr. Brassard underscored the considerable work done since adoption of the protected areas action plan in 2002. So far, 8% of the territory of Québec has been designated as protected; by doing so, the government has ensured conservation of representative samples of biodiversity in each of Québec's 11 natural provinces. The MDDEP will be releasing a detailed portrait of the protected areas network in early 2010 to launch the International Year of Biodiversity.

Mr. Brassard said that the government has pledged to withdraw 50% of the territory of Northern Québec from industrial development, 12% of which would be assigned "protected" status. The remaining 38% would be reserved for recreational tourism development (outfitters, tourism, etc.). According to Mr. Brassard, conserving representative samples of biodiversity poses a challenge: will it be possible to create a network of protected areas that are representative of the North's biodiversity and conserve biodiversity under the planned development projects?

He explained that creating an effective network of protected areas is another significant challenge because it requires establishing core areas of conservation that meet the needs of threatened or vulnerable species. Options include creating two other large protected areas north of the commercial forest or creating core areas of conservation to protect woodland caribou in managed forests. In this regard,

connectivity among protected areas is also an issue, as it makes it possible to control the human footprint in corridors connecting existing protected areas. On the other hand, consolidating the network would make it possible to expand areas already under protection.

The MDDEP hopes to use the consultation to measure the importance given to climate change, notably protection of ecosystems and species that are vulnerable to climate change.

A number of issues are more socioeconomic in nature, such as the contribution of protected areas to diversification of regional economies, particularly in areas affected by the forestry crisis. In addition, the MDDEP wants to determine to what extent the creation of protected areas needs to be harmonized with regional planning by the regional land and natural resource commissions (CRRNT).

Lastly, the MDDEP must determine what role the communities and general population will play in the formulation of new protected area proposals. Where Aboriginal communities are concerned, it's a matter of assessing the contribution of protected areas to protection of Aboriginal people's cultural values.

Questions and comments

A member for the CRA wanted to know if James Bay communities submitted any protected area proposals. François Brassard said the MDDEP received at least 20 proposals. The members brought up the recommendation formulated by the JBACE in February 2008 regarding the proposed Waswanipi Lake aquatic reserve. A CRA member asked if it would be possible to send the JBACE a copy of the protected area proposals for the James Bay territory. Christiane Bernard will check and see.

A member for the CRA pointed out that protected areas not only protect Aboriginal cultural values, but they also protect the way of life underpinning those values.

On the matter of climate change, a member for Canada asked what measures are planned for sensitive areas that are under stress from current development projects; for example, eelgrass beds, which are feeding sites for waterfowl and have been adversely affected by the La Grande hydroelectric project. François Brassard said that proposed measures include protecting sites with large potential for releasing carbon, such as forests and peatlands. However, Mr. Brassard pointed out that "protected" status does not necessarily protect an ecosystem against the impacts of climate change. According to a member for Québec, the protected areas network needs to be adapted with a view to climate changes 20 years from now, when some ecosystems will have been altered.

The JBACE secretary pointed out that the James Bay territory overlaps four different natural provinces. Since the target of 12% applies to each natural province, is there a danger that some regions, such as James Bay, will end up with less protected area than others? A Québec member said that while the objective is to protect 12%

of the territory, we must not lose sight of the true objective, which is to protect ecosystems that are representative of the territory's biodiversity.

According to François Brassard, strong economic concerns may make it difficult to protect 12% of the James Bay territory. A CRA member thinks that economic pressure should not determine what or how much area is protected. Otherwise, only proposed protected areas that hold no energy, forestry or mining interest would be designated as protected. The member thinks that the government has a chance to protect huge swaths of Northern Québec before they are affected by development projects.

Christiane Bernard said that the MDDEP has received many protected area proposals, but there's no way all of them can be approved. That's why the MDDEP is holding a consultation to determine the priorities of interested groups and the public. Would they prefer to protect large wilderness areas or small rare ecosystems? Do they want to place emphasis on connectivity, that is, corridors connecting protected areas? To support the consultation process, the MDDEP has prepared a priorities grid that interested groups and individuals will be invited to fill out before January 29, 2010.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next JBACE meeting will be held on February 24 and 25, 2010, in Rouyn-Noranda.



Marc Jetten
Executive Secretary
March 9, 2010