Breakout 4B: Co-management in Nunavut – unique challenges and opportunities

Chair: Tina Petawabano

Speaker 1: Jason Akearok

The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) was established under the Nunavut agreement to be the main instrument of wildlife management in Nunavut. Mandate includes harvest management, species at risk, marine and terrestrial. The board conducts workshops and public hearings.

Challenges include:

Meaningfully incorporating Inuit knowledge in NWMB decision-making. Board often faced with competing information.

Differences of opinion on interpretation of the Nunavut Agreement. E.g. disagreement on the meaning and calculation of the Basic Needs Level in fishery regulations.

Opportunities include: in-house research on Inuit knowledge, regional and local wildlife management organizations, working with partners to more meaningfully incorporate Inuit knowledge, management systems that reflect Inuit systems.

Speaker 2: Ryan Barry

Nunavut Impact Review Board conducts environmental assessments. It's members, once appointed, sit as independents. Board also conducts long term monitoring of approved projects. Mandate replaces CEAA and NEB in Nunavut.

Public engagement is critical, consistent with Nunavut Agreement principle of ensuring Inuit have a say in decision-making. Local knowledge – "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit" - is fundamental.

Speaker 3: Case Study Qausuittuq National Park

Cooperative park management committee is written into the Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement (IIBA) for the national park, with a view to bring management to the local level. IIBA is rooted in the objectives of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA). IIBA objectives include building relationship between government and Inuit in the context of the spirit and intent of the NLCA. IIBA includes details such as expenditure model, organizational chart. This is helpful but also limiting. There will be an opportunity to update this in the renegotiation of the IIBA after 7 years. Committee meetings are conducted in Inuktitut.

Challenges include: remote operations, consultation fatigue, allocating resources, and the fact that park operations began before completion of the park management plan.

Q&A

Thoughts on lessons learned that could be applied to co-management of Lancaster Sound marine protected area: early and frequent engagement, proper resources, and making good appointments to the board or committee (finding available people, getting the appointments through, filling vacancies).

How to foster dialogue between Inuit knowledge and other ways of knowing such as biology, law, etc? It is a challenge to speak the same language. A participant funding program would help. Summaries of large technical reports are very important.

Nunavut Impact Review Board uses local knowledge to establish baselines to assess cumulative effects. This is shared with other levels of government and other jurisdictions.