MEMORANDUM TO ALAN LATOURELLE

HARVEST OF HYPERABUNDANT MOOSE AT CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK

(Timelines)

(For Decision)

Your decision is requested by October 21, 2014 in order to meet scheduled timelines for a proposed First Nations harvest as early as December 2014. According to Mi'kmaq harvesting guidelines, removal of moose cannot be conducted from January 1 to August 15.

PURPOSE

To seek your approval to proceed with the reduction of hyperabundant moose within Cape Breton Highlands National Park (CBHNP) as early as December 2014, by means of a First Nations harvest.

SUMMARY

- In 2014, CBHNP received approval for a 4-year Conservation and Restoration (CoRe) Project to improve forest health, in part by harvesting at least 90% of moose from a 20 km² area to restore forest regeneration.
- CBHNP conducted stakeholder consultation regarding management of moose within the pilot area on North Mountain, CBHNP in late September. There was general consensus that moose are hyperabundant in the area and lethal removal is the most feasible management option.
- A controlled moose harvest by the Mi'kmaq First Nations, managed by the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) is being proposed.
- Two public information sessions in the neighbouring communities of Pleasant Bay and Cape North, along with proposed local media pitches are scheduled in the next few weeks.
- A proposed consultation and communications plan, and media lines have been developed.
- Your approval is requested to move forward with this approach, with harvesting of moose occurring as early as December 2014, pending approval of a Hyperabundant Moose Management Plan for North Mountain.

CONTEXT AND CURRENT STATUS

CBHNP is ready to propose a harvest of moose at North Mountain led by the Mi'kmaq First Nations in Cape Breton. This represents approximately 30 moose in year one, plus additional removals in the four year period to maintain the target.

The harvest would be conducted in full accordance with the PCA directive on hyperabundant wildlife management (PCA 4.4.11) and be the subject of a plan approved by the CBFU FUS.
A Hyperabundant Moose Management Plan limited to North Mountain area was proposed after consulting the National Resource Conservation Branch. A park-wide plan will be developed over the course of the project.

There is ongoing discussion with UINR on moose management, including options and logistics for conducting the harvest.

CONSIDERATIONS
Stakeholder consultations held in September 2014 included government, not-for profit and environmentally oriented organizations, local hunters and guides and Mi’kmaw representatives.

Consultation is required as per the Directive on Management of Hyperabundant Wildlife Populations in Canada’s National Parks (PCA 4.11.1).

Parks Canada has clear ecological evidence that moose are damaging the forest ecosystem in CBHNP and that moose in CBHNP meet the criteria of hyperabundant under the directive (PCA 4.11.1). Moose numbers are very high (> 2 moose/km²) in many areas of Northern Cape Breton and some of the worst areas the forest has been transformed into grassland, representing some 11% of CBHNP.

Since 2000, CBHNP has been collaborating to manage the entire moose population in Northern Cape Breton through the Moose Working Group, involving the Province of Nova Scotia and the Mi’kmaw of Nova Scotia.

Aboriginal consultation is already well established for this project at local and provincial levels.

The 2012 interim agreement signed by Parks Canada and the Mi’kmaw of Nova Scotia requires Parks Canada to offer the Mi’kmaw the first opportunity to harvest hyperabundant wildlife.

Northern Cape Breton is currently and historically been part of annual hunting activities for the Mi’kmaw people of Nova Scotia.

CBHNP is in ongoing contact with Gros Morne and Terra Nova National Parks regarding their approach to moose management initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION
I recommend you approve the reduction of hyperabundant moose within CBHNP, as early as December 2014, by means of a First Nations harvest.

NEXT STEPS
- Hold public information sessions in the neighbouring communities of Pleasant Bay and Cape North, NS to seek feedback on the proposed harvest on North Mountain.

CEO wants to see draft before it goes out to stakeholders and the public.

20/10/14
• Pending FUS approval, finalize the plan and proceed with a Mi’kmaq/UNIR-led hunt, currently planned as early as December 2014.

Approved by/

Carol Sheedy
Vice President of Operations
Eastern Canada

☑ I concur

COMMENT ON PAGE 2.

☐ I do not concur

☐ Please discuss

Alan Labourelle

OCT 20 2014

Date: Oct. 14, 2014