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Video recording by Pablo Saravanja

Detah, NWT

Goyatiko Language Society

Interpreted by Maro Sundberg

Video Footage taken for a Submission to Nunavut Planning Commission regarding the Nunavut Land Use Plan

Video Question: How do you feel about mineral exploration and development on the calving grounds of the Bathurst Caribou?

Fred Sangris: My friends in Nunavut. My name is Fred Sangris. I am a hunter and trapper and a leader of my community at one time. I am a member of the Yellowknives Dene here in Yellowknife. And I want to speak to you about the importance of caribou and wildlife that my people use for many many centuries as well as your people. Many many years ago our people use to have gatherings with Nunavut people at a place called Contwoyto Lake. In my language we call it **cogetti, in** Dene this means a place where the Dene and Nunavut people gathered and lived together many years ago. That is where they traded and shared their food and they hunted together. People from Cambridge from Bathurst and that whole area. My elders and my people still talk about the Inuit people that we used to gather in friendship many years ago. We shared many things even though we didn't understand each other, we had sign languages to communicate.

We exchanged food and gifts and peace and friendship and we still have that same kind of honour today and we still have that same type of relationship even though we don't have those gatherings at Contwoyto anymore. Our memories are still young. Our memories tell us that we had a good relationship.

The message I want to pass on to you is that the Elders you see in the photographs behind me are the Elders who used to meet with your people in Nunavut in Contwoyto Lake. They tell me that the last gathering that they had was in 1950 and I truly believe that our people and your people had good relationships in the past, good practices and good cooperation. So today I want to ask the Nunavut people, that the importance of us speaking to you from our hearts and minds is that we do have grave concerns for caribou. The Dene on this side, the Yellowknives have survived on caribou for many many generations and that is why we are here today. We are still here and we are still using the caribou, We might not use it as much as we did before but the caribou is very important to us today. It is how we live in our community, it how we raise our children and its how we keep our culture alive. We have a treaty relationship with Canada. This treaty relationship guarantees our constitutional rights to wildlife that we use, including caribou even within Nunavut borders and beyond. We have our

We have an overlap settlement with Dene people here and the Nunavut leaders know that.

through the TFN boundary many years ago in the 1990s when we talked there is an overlap which means that our people use the land over in Nunavut as well. For many reasons culture, food, travel, history. It was part of our land many years ago.

Today we have grave concerns for the welfare of our caribou and the welfare of many many calves of caribou that are in trouble today. I understand the Nunavut people need to have their economies and explore their lands for survival as well. I would ask the Nunavut People to think about caribou and how we can save the caribou. Through your LUP, identify the caribou calving grounds.

As Dene we want to be able to protect the caribou calving grounds so that many generations of caribou will continue to live into the far future. I truly believe if we don't save the caribou or the caribou calving grounds they will become extinct and they will disappear from this earth.

If it was within your hands and it is with your careful planning that I ask you to protect the caribou calving grounds. The Nunavut Land Claim Agreement also says that Nunavut will plan and protect the calving grounds for the future. If you are implementing the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement, protect those calving grounds for my peoples' future and children and also for your peoples' future and your children. Generations must survive and learn about the caribou that roam the land and they should continue into thousands of years without interference from exploration, mining activities.

Today we live in a very difficult world, the world of industry, technology, mining and from all those we see lots of impacts, all over Canada. The north where you live is very important. It is where many of the caribou go to have their young and to go have their calves.

I believe that Nunavut people will do the right thing and try to save the caribou calving grounds for the future. It is the last hope for caribou and that is why we voice our concern and we ask the Nunavut people and their leaders to do their best in their land use plan to protect the caribou, so that our people and your people are able to survive and are still able to see the caribou roam on the hills.

As I said before, many years ago, Nunavut people and my people would go to a place called Contwoyto Lake where they would live side by side and they would trade, share food and laughter around the campfires, and share the hunting. Every year they would depart. Year after year they would come together. Many of the Nunavut Elders know this history have this story and I'm sure they will tell you. But we don't have those gatherings anymore. The last gathering we had with Nunavut, I believe was in 1950. Maybe someday we will have those gatherings there again.

For now, through your planning, careful planning, and within good management, I ask that you, that the calving grounds are protected, forever. Do your best. Your friends here the Dene are with you and your land use plan if it's a good plan. I ask that Nunavut will honour and respect the Dene here whose livelihood is at the very edge because the caribou are declining.

Today there are only 16000 maybe less Bathurst caribou. How many calves are going to be born this spring? We don't know. If the calving grounds are protected, guaranteed that they will grow in big numbers without development, exploration or mining activity in there. They will grow in big numbers.

Because of that I ask Nunavut, land use planning, to do the careful planning because here, your friends, brothers and sisters on this side really need your help. I ask you Nunavut to protect those calving grounds for the future.

We are friends in kinship. We had many gathering before, lots of laughter, and we hunted together in the past. We had good kinship and relationship. I ask that we can continue this far into the future if we work together in the management of caribou and wildlife. Both our people used this area and the wildlife and it is very important to us. When you do land use planning, I ask you to make the right decision, that the caribou calving grounds should be protected. Mahsi, my friends, mahsi..

Jonas Noel: My name is Jonas Noel. We live to send you a message of importance about our caribou. We want to make sure you protect the caribou for us. We used to live in the Contwoyto areas. Right now there is a lake of caribou in our area and we need to protect this animal. The calving ground is very important to us. We also know that there is mining coming up in most areas. So we are asking you to have protection of this animal. If we do come together we will have caribou. That is why we are talking about this animal and we can talk about this animal.

Charlie Sangris: My name is Charlie Sangris. I live in Yellowknife, Dene. I go hunting at Mackay Lake towards where all the caribou come. Around here we educate and teach our hunters what to kill, like bulls and not cows. We pass it on to people around here. On your side [Nunavut] they should teach them what to shoot as well. More caribou that way instead of shooting all the females when they are on the calving ground, in the spring time. So on this side we try to teach the hunters what to shoot and take enough to each, for your family, only take what you need instead of slaughtering a whole bunch. Like 5 not 10 or 20. Educate all hunters what to shoot. That way we save more for the future.

Modeste Sangris: I am sending this message because caribou is very important for our people. I have been to Contwoyto Lake lots of times. My father was a hunter and trapper and a leader, exactly what Freddie's message was, we have to be respectful of the caribou, only take what you need. It is your land and we understand that mining is starting in that

area. It is your right to say no to mining in the calving grounds. I am sure of the importance of caribou to our ancestors and your ancestors as well. We are all related somehow and when we gather we treat each other with respect. When we had meetings, you came to the meetings as well and you said please protect the caribou because they are very important to us as well.

Peter Sangris: My name is Peter Sangris from Yellowknives Dene. The caribou, as Dene people, is the most important animal for us in the NWT. We used to have caribou in the Yellowknife area in the early spring. Ever since the mining started in the barrenlands we haven't see caribou. In the area of Contwoyto Lake it is in your land and we understand there is a mine interested in starting in the calving ground area. We don't want the caribou to decrease so take good care of the caribou and for future generations. When they want to start in your area, say no to them. Caribou is important and one day the caribou may not go to your area just like us. It is important to our people, it seems like we are out of food because we don't have caribou in our area anymore. You are like our friends and we are asking our friends to protect the calving grounds. If we stand together we can do it.