

## Co-management role play

### Objectives

Students should be able to:

1. Understand that North America's largest caribou herds are managed cooperatively by governments and local residents who use the caribou.
2. Understand some of the different viewpoints and perspectives held by different members of co-management boards.
3. Identify social and ecological considerations where human land-use conflicts with wildlife habitat needs.
4. Understand the importance of rational land-use decisions.

### Method

Students play roles of different members of a caribou management board and make a decision about a key management issue.

### Background

Co-management is a process that brings local resource users and government representatives together to share the management responsibility for local or regional resources. It is an alternative approach to managing local resources that has been gaining increasing support throughout Canada. The cooperative approach to management can involve government wildlife and fisheries staff, wildlife boards, First Nations, community hunters and trappers associations, and others. These groups work together, using both scientific and traditional knowledge to manage resources.

Co-management has been used particularly with respect to Indigenous land claims. In Indigenous settlement claim areas, co-management boards are made up of both Indigenous and government appointees, working to effectively manage wildlife populations and their habitats. This approach has provided opportunities for Inuit and other Indigenous people to participate in resource management decision-making, a process from which they had largely been excluded in the past. Co-management regimes that have been established as a result of land claims are providing a new level of power sharing in resource planning and management.

There are many co-management agreements that take a variety of forms and address a range of issues. For example, the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq and Porcupine caribou management boards focus on migratory caribou that cross several jurisdictions. Other co-management boards have been created as the result of land claim settlements such as the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*, which created a variety of co-management boards at local and regional levels. Another example is the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, which is composed of several stakeholders including

#### Age

Grades 6 – 12

#### Subjects

Social Studies, Science, Language Arts

#### Skills

Analysis, application, discussion, evaluation, public speaking

#### Duration

Two 45-minute periods

#### Setting

Classroom

#### Materials

Role cards (photocopy masters on page 76)

Indigenous, non-Indigenous and government groups. Co-management groups work together to meet designated needs and responsibilities, making decisions, conducting and commissioning research, and sharing recommendations and information.

In this activity, students will act as members of a caribou co-management board, representing a variety of stakeholder organizations. These representatives must work together to make decisions regarding caribou management. The activity uses a role-play strategy that illustrates the complexities of decision-making when people with different points of view are involved.

In this fictional situation, the students are members of a co-management board that works on issues relating to a relatively remote northern caribou herd. The herd ranges close to the students' community during its fall migration, and winters in forested areas near the town. A mining company has discovered valuable silver deposits in an area 50 kilometres from town and proposes to open a mine in this area. The proposed site is in a relatively rarely used part of the caribou's winter range. However, the company wishes to build an all-weather road linking the community with the mine. The road cuts through the main migration route of the caribou. The road could disturb caribou, thus affecting the number of caribou in the area and the length of time they stay near the community. It may disrupt the caribou's migration pattern and give local community hunters easier access to the caribou. Many people in your community depend on caribou for their winter meat supply. The mine and associated workers would bring economic growth to the community and provide jobs for locals. The co-management board must make a recommendation regarding the mine. The board may recommend against it, for it, or propose guidelines or modifications to the company's plans.

### **Procedure**

1. Photocopy the role cards on page 76, one set for each group of students, and cut them up.
2. Familiarize the students with the concept of co-management as described above or as it applies to your community. Tell the students that they are going to act as members of a co-management board. Read aloud the fictional situation that will be discussed.
3. Divide the class into groups of approximately five students. Place a stack of role cards in the centre of each group.
4. Have each group member pick a card from the stack. Each student must debate the issue from the viewpoint of the person described in the role card.
5. Have one student in each group take notes on the discussion. Encourage each group to come to an agreement using co-operation and compromise.

6. At the end of the allotted time, have one student from each group read the group's recommendations. If the group has not yet reached consensus, have the student explain to the class what issues held the group up and why they were so difficult to resolve. Remind students that it is not always possible for everyone to agree.
7. You may wish to do the activity several times, giving the students a chance to play various roles. Afterwards, have the students discuss what they learned from the activity. Did playing a role affect their own opinions on the issue?

### Variations

1. Use dilemma cards from the "Caribou dilemmas" activity (page 77). Debate the issues described on the cards using the students' roles as members of the co-management board.
2. Have students think up their own caribou management issues and discuss them while playing the roles of members of the co-management board.
3. Have students think up their own roles to play in the management scenario. Or have students play themselves, writing a brief description of what influences their viewpoint in a format similar to the role cards.

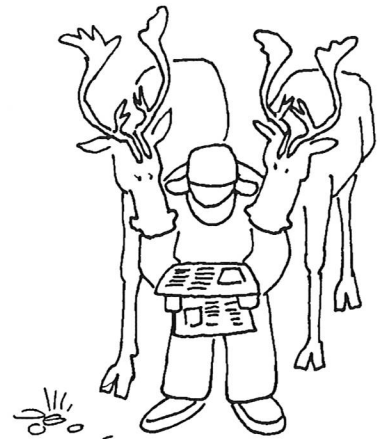
### Extensions

1. Have students or groups of students research a co-management board in Canada, describing its history, purpose, members and activities.

### Evaluation

Discuss with students:

1. The concept of co-management.
2. Why co-management might be necessary or useful in the management of caribou herds.



**Role cards: Members  
of the Caribou  
Co-management Board**

**Jake or Josie Armstrong**

*Construction worker representing the local labour union*

You and your fellow union members would be employed during road construction and also possibly in the mine. You are also an avid hunter who has supplemented your winter food with caribou for many years.

**James or Janie Wilson**

*Wildlife biologist representing the government*

You are 25, a new biologist to the area. You are not totally familiar with local issues, but you are concerned that adequate research and wildlife surveys have not been done.

**Jim or Janine James**

*College student representing the local First Nation*

You see the possibility of jobs for yourself and your friends if the mine opens, yet you are worried about the effects of the road and mine on the caribou. Your family depends on caribou meat for food. The caribou is an important part of your culture.

**Elmer or Elma Friesen**

*Trapper representing the local trapping association*

You have lived on the land for many years, trapping local fur-bearing animals. You are now in your 60s. You worry about the mine's and the road's effects on the land. You must speak for other trappers, yet you are near retirement age and might consider moving south if reimbursed generously for your trapping rights.

**Larry or Louise Willis**

*Elder representing the local First Nation*

You fear the changes the mine will bring to both the community and the natural environment, yet you know that the mine may provide good jobs for members of your community.

**Fred or Freida Lewis**

*Business owner representing the local chamber of commerce*

You own a gift shop in the centre of town. You know that new development will bring more customers to town and more money into the community and local businesses. You are also an avid skier and use trails that would be disrupted by road construction.

**Heather or Harold Hakamoto**

*Writer representing the local environmental group*

Your organization wants to protect the caribou from habitat destruction and overhunting, but you also see your community suffering from unemployment. You know the road may increase wildlife viewing and thus tourism opportunities.