

Customary and Traditional Use Worksheet:

**Chisana Caribou Herd, GMU 12, Upper Tanana–White
River Area**

Prepared by

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Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Subsistence

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Division of Subsistence



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Weights and measures (metric)

centimeter	cm
deciliter	dL
gram	g
hectare	ha
kilogram	kg
kilometer	km
liter	L
meter	m
milliliter	mL
millimeter	mm

Weights and measures (English)

cubic feet per second	ft ³ /s
foot	ft
gallon	gal
inch	in
mile	mi
nautical mile	nmi
ounce	oz
pound	lb
quart	qt
yard	yd

Time and temperature

day	d
degrees Celsius	°C
degrees Fahrenheit	°F
degrees kelvin	K
hour	h
minute	min
second	s

Physics and chemistry

<i>all atomic symbols</i>	
alternating current	AC
ampere	A
calorie	cal
direct current	DC
hertz	Hz
horsepower	hp
hydrogen ion activity (negative log of)	pH
parts per million	ppm
parts per thousand	ppt, ‰
volts	V
watts	W

General

all commonly-accepted abbreviations
e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc.

all commonly-accepted professional titles e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc.

Alaska Administrative Code AAC
at @

compass directions:

east E
north N
south S
west W

copyright ©

corporate suffixes:

Company Co.
Corporation Corp.
Incorporated Inc.
Limited Ltd.

District of Columbia D.C.

et alii (and others) et al.

et cetera (and so forth) etc.

exempli gratia (for example) e.g.

Federal Information Code FIC

id est (that is) i.e.

latitude or longitude lat. or long.

monetary symbols (U.S.) \$, ¢

months (tables and figures): first three letters (Jan.,...,Dec)

registered trademark ®

trademark ™

United States (adjective) U.S.

United States of America (noun) USA

U.S.C. United States Code

U.S. state use two-letter abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA)

Measures (fisheries)

fork length	FL
mid-eye-to-fork	MEF
mid-eye-to-tail-fork	METF
standard length	SL
total length	TL

Mathematics, statistics

all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations

alternate hypothesis H_A

base of natural logarithm e

catch per unit effort CPUE

coefficient of variation CV

common test statistics (F, t, χ^2 , etc.)

confidence interval CI

correlation coefficient (multiple) R

correlation coefficient (simple) r

covariance cov

degree (angular) °

degrees of freedom df

expected value E

greater than >

greater than or equal to ≥

harvest per unit effort HPUE

less than <

less than or equal to ≤

logarithm (natural) ln

logarithm (base 10) log

logarithm (specify base) log₂, etc.

minute (angular) ' ,

not significant NS

null hypothesis H₀

percent %

probability P

probability of a type I error (rejection of the null hypothesis when true) α

probability of a type II error (acceptance of the null hypothesis when false) β

second (angular) "

standard deviation SD

standard error SE

variance

population Var

sample var

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AREA**

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INTRODUCTION

Proposal 18 for the March 2010 Alaska Board of Game (BOG) meeting in Fairbanks requests the establishment of a joint federal–state drawing permit hunt for the Chisana caribou *Rangifer tarandus* herd in Game Management Unit (GMU) 12 (Figure 1), starting in fall 2011. However, prior to opening this hunt and pursuant to Alaska Statute 16.05.258 (subsistence law), the BOG will need to consider the 8 criteria in 5 AAC 99.010 to determine whether the herd is associated with customary and traditional uses (e.g., 5 AAC 99.025), and if so, establish regulations that provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses of Chisana caribou. This worksheet has been developed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to assist the BOG in making a customary and traditional use determination prior to considering Proposal 18.

THE EIGHT CRITERIA

CRITERION 1: LENGTH AND CONSISTENCY OF USE

A long-term consistent pattern of noncommercial taking, use, and reliance on the fish stock or game population that has been established over a reasonable period of time of not less than one generation, excluding interruption by circumstances beyond the user’s control, such as unavailability of the fish or game caused by migratory patterns.

Caribou hunting in the north Wrangell Mountains is a well documented component of the annual harvest cycle of the Ahtna and Upper Tanana Athabascan people of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The economic life of the Upper Tanana centers around the caribou. Not only does the animal constitute the source of food for the natives and their dogs, but also it supplies the material for their clothing, shelters, and boats as well as netting for their snowshoes and babiche and sinew for their snares, cords, and lashings. (McKenna 1959:47)

The Nutzotin Mountains were the historical caribou (*Udzih*) hunting territory of the Chisana and Upper Nabesna bands of Athabascan Indians (who were called *Ddhal Tot in* or “Among the Mountain People” in their local Native language). Inter-regional cooperation between Upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna bands of Athabascans was an important safeguard against food shortages (Haynes and Simeone 2007:25; see also Strong 1972, 1976). For example, “The people from Tanacross/Mansfield Lake, Tetlin, Northway/Nabesna and Chisana would come to the Upper Copper to fish for salmon in times when food resources in their area were poor” (Strong 1976:74). The Upper Chisana/Upper Nabesna band hunted and trapped in the basins of the White, Nabesna, and Chisana rivers” (Figure 2). “Members of the band and their descendants now live in Northway, Mentasta, and Chistochina” (Haynes and Simeone 2007:10).

The caribou was the most important food animal in the Upper Tanana before the coming of the non-natives and resultant disintegration of the original nomadic patterns. Twice a year, tremendous herds of caribou passed between the heads of the White and Chisana Rivers. (Vitt 1971:147–148).

Beginning in 1898, gold prospecting brought new settlements and change to the local economy. Native residents began supplementing their seasonal hunting and fishing with mining-related activities such as freighting and supplying gold camps with fish and game. Thus, a mixed subsistence–cash economy was in place by the early 20th century. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development estimates that 9 people still live in Chisana (ADOL 2008) ¹.

Residents in Upper Tanana and Copper River basin communities continue to be active in caribou hunting. Northway caribou hunters have been documented to travel south to the Mentasta and Nutzotin mountains

¹ Uncertified estimate from 2008.

(Case 1986; see also Goldschmidt 1946:51). ADF&G research conducted in 1980s (Figure 3) documented caribou hunting areas by Northway residents during the period 1974–1984 (Case 1986). Northway residents hunted caribou from the Chisana herd and the Fortymile herd during this time period. Northway residents also hunt Fortymile caribou north of the Alaska Highway and along the Taylor Highway (Marcotte 1991). In 1987, an estimated 49% of Northway households attempted to harvest caribou and an estimated 64% used caribou; Northway residents harvested an estimated 32 caribou (Marcotte 1991).

During an ADF&G study conducted in 2004–2005, researchers observed that caribou continue to constitute an important subsistence resource for the community of Northway as well as for other residents of the region. Respondents reported that the resource was predominately harvested from the Fortymile herd during this time period, primarily due to the unavailability or reduced availability of caribou from other herds, such as the Chisana, Macomb, Nelchina, and Mentasta herds. Caribou harvests by Northway residents represented an estimated total of 4,133 edible pounds of meat, or 16 pounds per person, from an estimated 41 harvested caribou (Figure 4). An estimated 32% of Northway households attempted to harvest caribou and an estimated 32% reported using caribou. This use of caribou accounted for approximately 10% of the big game consumed by Northway residents in 2004–2005.²

There have been no reported harvests of Chisana caribou since 1993, and the hunt has been closed since 1994 (Table 1). From 1981 through 1993 Alaska residents' harvests have ranged between 6 and 17 with GMU 12 resident harvests ranging from 0 to 3 as a subset of that resident total, depending on the year. However, data on hunter residency and harvests are unavailable from 1984 through 1989.

CRITERION 2: SEASONALITY

A pattern of taking or use recurring in specific seasons of each year.

Historically, the Chisana and Upper Nabesna bands of Athabascan Indians hunted caribou primarily from October to December and from April to June (Table 2; e.g., Guédon 1974; Marcotte 1991; McKennan 1959). People traveled from Batzulnetas on the Upper Copper River to Jacksina Creek, a tributary of the Nabesna River, to hunt cooperatively with relatives from Upper Tanana villages in Cooper Creek and Chisana (e.g., Strong 1976:74). Also, Vitt (1971) writes that

Caribou killed during the mid-May migration were dried to ensure proper preservation. Those killed prior to winter, or during the winter, were cut to manageable chunks and frozen to be stored in high caches. (Vitt 1971:148)

In some cases, a hunting party would follow the caribou to the calving grounds and secure a number of calves for use in light-weight summery clothing. (Vitt 1971:150)

ADF&G research conducted in 1980s documented caribou hunting areas by Northway residents during the period 1974–1984 (Figure 1) (Case 1986). Northway residents also hunted caribou from the Chisana herd and the Fortymile herd during this time period. Contemporary use has been governed by regulation during the month of September. Currently, however, there is no open season for the Chisana herd. ADF&G research conducted in 2004–2005 provides contemporary information on Northway caribou hunting locations (Figure 2).

CRITERION 3: MEANS AND METHODS OF HARVEST

A pattern of taking or use consisting of methods and means of harvest that are characterized by efficiency and economy of effort and cost.

² Koskey, M. *In prep.* Subsistence resource use among ten Tanana river valley communities, 2004–2005. Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence draft technical paper, Fairbanks (hereinafter cited as Koskey *In prep.*; see also the ADF&G Division of Subsistence Community Subsistence Information System (hereinafter cited as CSIS), on-line at <http://www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us/CSIS>

Historically, caribou were taken by groups of Upper Tanana residents along caribou fences and in corrals and primarily with the use of snares during the two great annual migrations in spring and fall. One fence was located near Chisana, and others were placed in the Nabesna River drainage. “A well-made fence with yearly repairs had a life expectancy of many generations” (Vitt 1971:149). Guédon (1974:48) noted that the small caribou fence at Chisana also was used for moose *Alces americanus*.

Caribou were also pursued individually on snowshoes during winter by hunters using bow and arrow (McKenna 1959; Vitt 1971:146). “Next to the caribou fence, the bow and arrow was the most important implement in the taking of big game animals” (Vitt 1971:72).

Firearms were in regular use in the area by the 1920s. In 1988, hunters from the Upper Tanana and Copper River basins reported using aircraft, off road vehicles, or boats to access hunting areas. Historically, access to Chisana caribou was often by foot (Marcotte 1991).

CRITERION 4: GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

The area in which the noncommercial, long-term, and consistent pattern of taking, use, and reliance upon the fish stock and game population has been established.

Historically, the Chisana and Upper Nabesna bands of Athabascan Indians occupied most of the north side of the Wrangell–St. Elias Mountains (Figure 2). Caribou hunting took place in the Mentasta and Nutzotin mountains. Guédon (1974:52) noted that fluctuations in wildlife sometimes affected the entire population of the Upper Tanana region, such that one band of people might move south, from their traditional hunting grounds in the Fortymile caribou herd range to the area around Mentasta, Nabesna, and Chisana (see also Strong 1972, 1976).

ADF&G research conducted in 1980s documented caribou hunting areas by Northway residents during 1974–1984 (Case 1986). Northway residents hunted caribou from the Chisana herd and the Fortymile herd during this time period (Figure 3).

Contemporary caribou hunting was reported by Northway residents in the Mentasta Mountains, which were accessed by river as well as along the Nabesna Road. Between 1973 and 1977, most of the local hunting by Northway residents occurred near Beaver Creek, or near Nabesna River drainages, or in the Mentasta Mountains. Use of the Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve within GMU 12 was documented for Upper Tanana and Copper River basin communities in 1988 (Marcotte 1991). A majority of households in several area communities have reported using these GMU 12 areas, which are within the Nabesna and Chisana drainages. Specific results of the 1988 study documented that 3.5% of Upper Tanana households with a history of use of the Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve hunted for caribou in the Chisana area, which included 3.9% of Tok households with a history of park use (Marcotte 1991:149,153).

Contemporary use has been governed by regulation during the month of September. Currently, however, there is no open season for the Chisana herd. ADF&G research conducted in 2004–2005, however, provides contemporary information on Northway caribou hunting locations and demonstrates that caribou hunting still occurs near the Chisana caribou herd range (Figure 4).

CRITERION 5: MEANS OF HANDLING, PREPARING, PRESERVING, AND STORING

A means of handling, preparing, preserving, and storing fish or game that has been traditionally used by past generations, but not excluding recent technological advances where appropriate.

Historically, caribou were used primarily for food, although their skins were also used for clothing and tents in small settlement areas (Marcotte 1991; McKenna 1959; Vitt 1971:70,98).

Caribou killed during the mid-May migration were dried to ensure proper preservation. Those killed prior to winter, or during the winter, were cut to manageable chunks and frozen to be stored in high caches. (Vitt 1971:148)

After the arrival of non-Natives in the region, clothing styles changed. “Gloves, patterned after those sold by the trading posts, were made of caribou skin and used not only in the cold weather months but also during the summer as a protection from mosquitoes” (Vitt 1971:71). Caribou and moose hides were also used as boat covers, to carry heavy loads, or to cross rivers, but would last only for a year (or less) because the hides were prone to rot in damp conditions (Vitt 1971:105).

Today, most caribou meat is typically used fresh, or is frozen for later use. ADF&G research conducted in 2004–2005 documented that much of the animal is often used: the nonedible parts as well as the meat. Among Northway caribou hunting households, for example, an estimated 95% made use of the meat, 79% made use of the antlers, 63% made use of the hides, 47% used the heart, 42% of households used the liver, 53% used caribou fat, and 37% used the bones. As many as one-fifth of reporting households made use of the kidneys, stomach, sinews, hooves, and the head. Some individuals and households reported that their preference for certain parts of the caribou (as well as other animals), for food or other uses, provided impetus for them to acquire these parts at a greater rate through sharing. In Northway, 95% of households using caribou froze their meat, although 63% of households also processed caribou into sausage, and 32% of households continue to dry caribou meat for storage (Koskey *In prep.*)

CRITERION 6: INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, VALUES, AND LORE

A pattern of taking or use that includes the handing down of knowledge of fishing or hunting skills, values, and lore from generation to generation.

Historically, mobile camps comprised of families were considered the basic subsistence economic unit of production. The camps were typically associated with the geographic areas identified in Figure 2. Knowledge of hunting resources was shared within this family context through direct participation, through observation of hunting and processing practices, and through storytelling, which was often limited to winter in the Upper Tanana area (e.g., Guédon 1974:200).

Robert McKennan, who conducted anthropological research among the Upper Tanana Athabascan Indians in 1929, stated:

...At an early age the boy is given tiny toboggans and bows and arrows as playthings. When but five or six years old he is taken on hunting trips by his father. Often such trips mean that the father must carry the child in his arms. It is on such excursions that a boy learns the habits of the animals and the taboos associated with them. During the long winter evenings he listens to the stories told by his father and the older men, and thus imbibes the lore, the taboos, and the beliefs of his people. (McKennan 1959:117; see also Vitt 1971:114–115)

Some of the lore and values of the Upper Tanana involving caribou hunting stories from the Chisana area are provided in Appendix A.

Ramon Vitt, who conducted anthropological research among the Upper Tanana Athabascan Indians in 1970, documented through working with Native elders that:

Groups of youths would hold target practice and when they became good in the use of the bow and arrow the elders would set aside a day to evaluate their proficiency. A series of birch bark plates were placed together at a given distance, usually about 100 feet. They youths that showed a great degree of accuracy and were able to penetrate a certain number of the bark plates were thought to be ready for actual participation in big game

hunting. Those that needed more practice were instructed to continue until all were able to pass the test. (Vitt 1971:115–116)

Vitt (1971:124) also documented that in historical times, the heads of moose, caribou, and sheep were not to be fed to dogs because this would bring bad luck to hunters. Heads were to be buried, or cached high in the fork of a tree. Heads could also be eaten, by men, as long as the bones were cached away from the dogs.

CRITERION 7: DISTRIBUTION AND EXCHANGE

A pattern of taking, use, and reliance where the harvest effort or products of that harvest are distributed or shared, including customary trade, barter, and gift-giving.

Historically, caribou meat was widely traded among Upper Tanana bands.

Sharing of big game within the group was and is customary among the Upper Tanana. It was commonplace for an entire camp to move to a kill site where a moose or caribou was killed and stay until it was consumed. A hunter, after making the kill, would send up smoke signals for those in the hunting party and/or camp to come to his assistance. Everyone received meat for his efforts. (Vitt 1971:111)

One family of four to six people required a minimum of ten to twelve caribou each year to insure against starvation and to have sufficient materials for clothing and other necessary household items. However, since the meat of animals killed was divided among the members of the camp, a successful provider might end up with less than the required safe amount. (Vitt 1971:148)

The caribou that were killed by using the fence-corrals method were divided according to set rules. The fence owner was usually a chief or headman in his own right, and received ownership rights to a certain number of caribou. The remaining kills were distributed to everyone who participated in the hunt as well as those members who, through age or disability, were not actively participating. (Vitt 1971:148–149)

After 1898, when gold camps were established in the area, local Natives engaged in supplying fresh meat to miners. “A gold strike in the Chisana area in 1913 led to the establishment of a community of about 300 people within a year” (Reckord 1983a; see also Reckord 1983b). In Chisana, where a small number of current residents participate in a guiding and outfitting operation, extra meat from nonlocal hunters is widely available.

Area residents continue to share caribou among community households. In 1987–1988, for example, 64% of households reported using caribou, 49% reported attempting to harvest caribou, and only 20% of households actually reported harvesting them (CSIS). The fact that a significantly greater proportion of households used caribou than attempted or successfully harvested them is testimony to the importance of sharing in area caribou harvest and use patterns. In short, more than one-third of Northway households obtained caribou through sharing (Marcotte 1991:122).

In the Upper Tanana area, as in the Ahtna area, traditional foods, which include caribou, are highly valued at potlatches and other ceremonial events.

CRITERION 8: DIVERSITY OF RESOURCES IN AN AREA; ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND NUTRITIONAL ELEMENTS

A pattern that includes taking, use, and reliance for subsistence purposes upon a wide variety of fish and game resources and that provides substantial economic, cultural, social, and nutritional elements of the subsistence way of life.

A wide variety of wild resources is used by households, as indicated in Table 2 in the Upper Nabesna–Chisana area (Guédon 1974:49). In a 1988 survey of Upper Tanana community households, for example, over 84% of households in each Upper Tanana community were estimated to have harvested wild resources. In addition, there was an average estimated harvest of 7 different resources per household and an average harvest of 569 usable pounds of wild resources per household. Average per capita harvests in 5 Upper Tanana communities ranged from 114 to 278 pounds per person, with an average of 183 usable pounds per person (Marcotte 1991).

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1.–Chisana caribou harvests 1981–1994.

Year	Alaska resident hunters	Alaska resident harvests	Local hunters (GMU 12)	Local harvests	Nonresident harvests	Total harvests
1981	23	14	3	2	9	23
1982	21	10	6	2	11	21
1983	22	17	5	3	9	26
1984	–	–	–	–	–	31
1985	–	–	–	–	–	65
1986	–	–	–	–	–	41
1987	–	–	–	–	–	49
1988	–	–	–	–	–	34
1989	–	–	–	–	–	30
1990	27	12	7	3	21	33
1991	17	8	0	0	13	21
1992	17	6	2	2	10	16
1993	17	11	4	2	8	19
1994	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note Dashes (-) indicate that hunter residency data are unavailable.

Source ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation WinfoNet.

Table 2.–Upper Nabsena–Chisana annual cycle.

Resource	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Caribou												
Moose												
Sheep												
Rabbit												
Beaver and muskrat												
Ptarmigan and grouse												
Whitefishes												
Berries												
Fur trapping												

Source Guédon 1974.

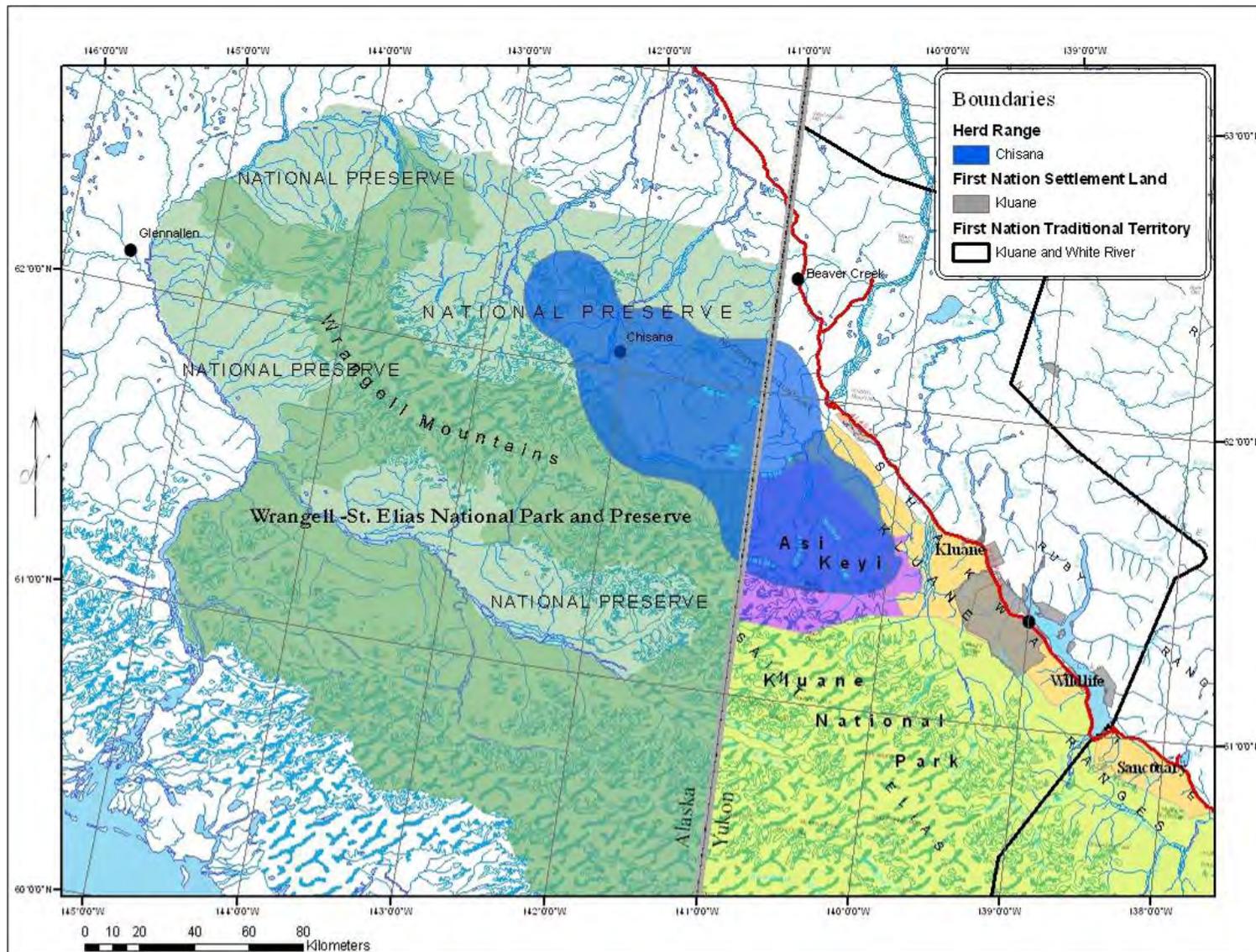


Figure 1.—Map of Chisana caribou range in relation to GMU 12.

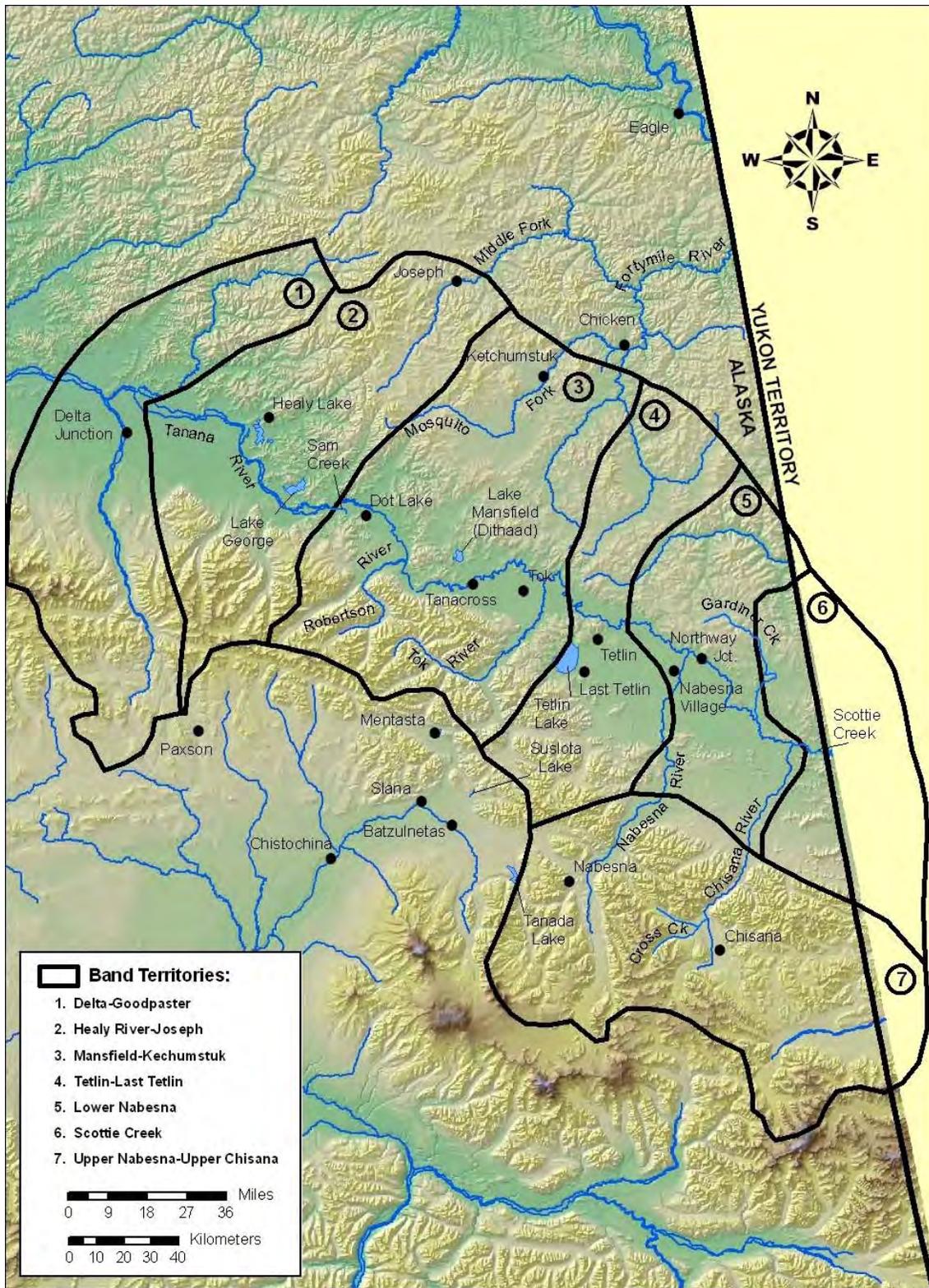


Figure 2.—Band territories and villages, upper Tanana region.

Source Haynes and Simeone 2007:9.

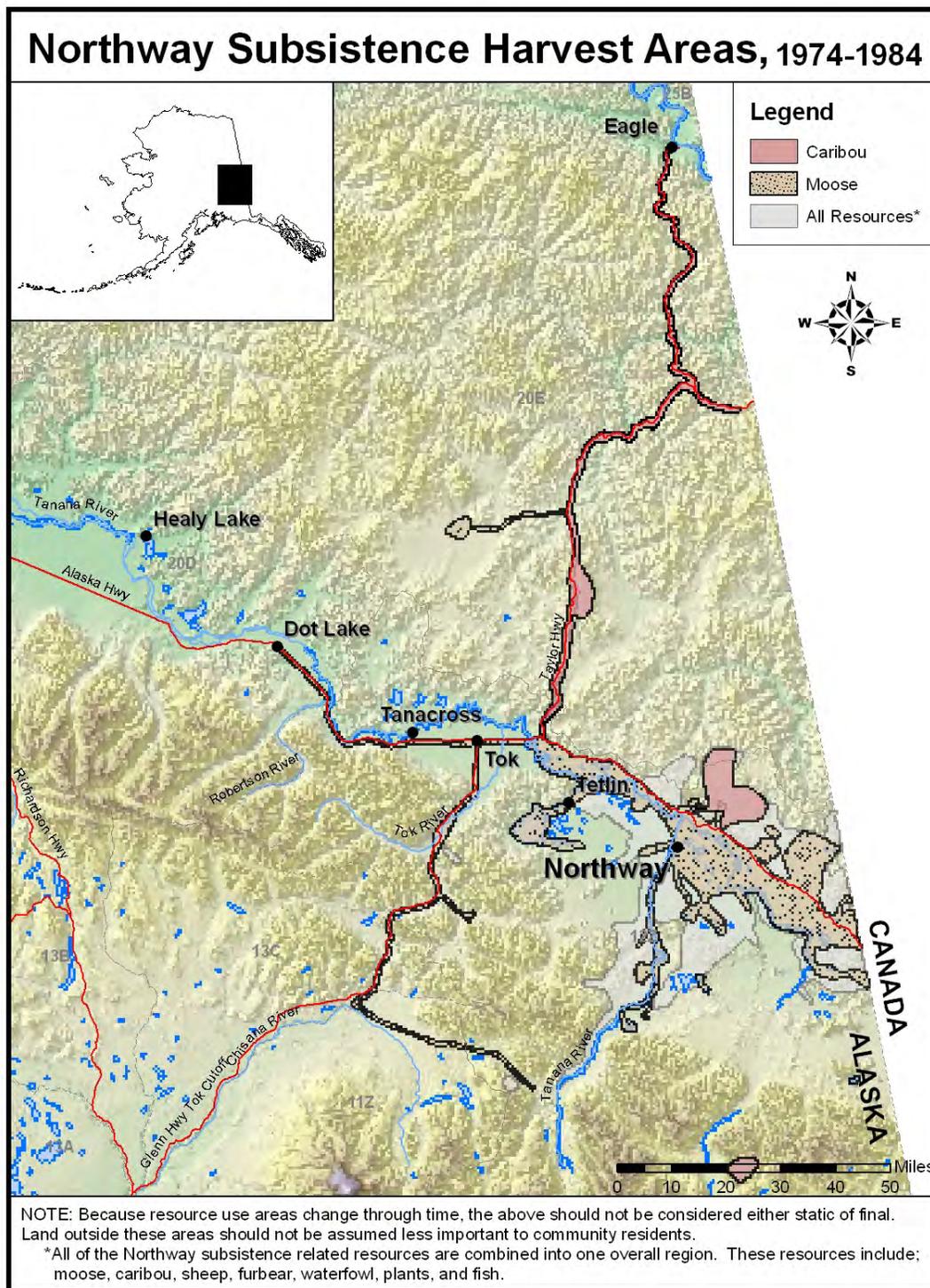


Figure 3.—Northway resident caribou hunting areas in the Chisana and Fortymile caribou herd ranges, 1974–1984.

Source Case 1986.

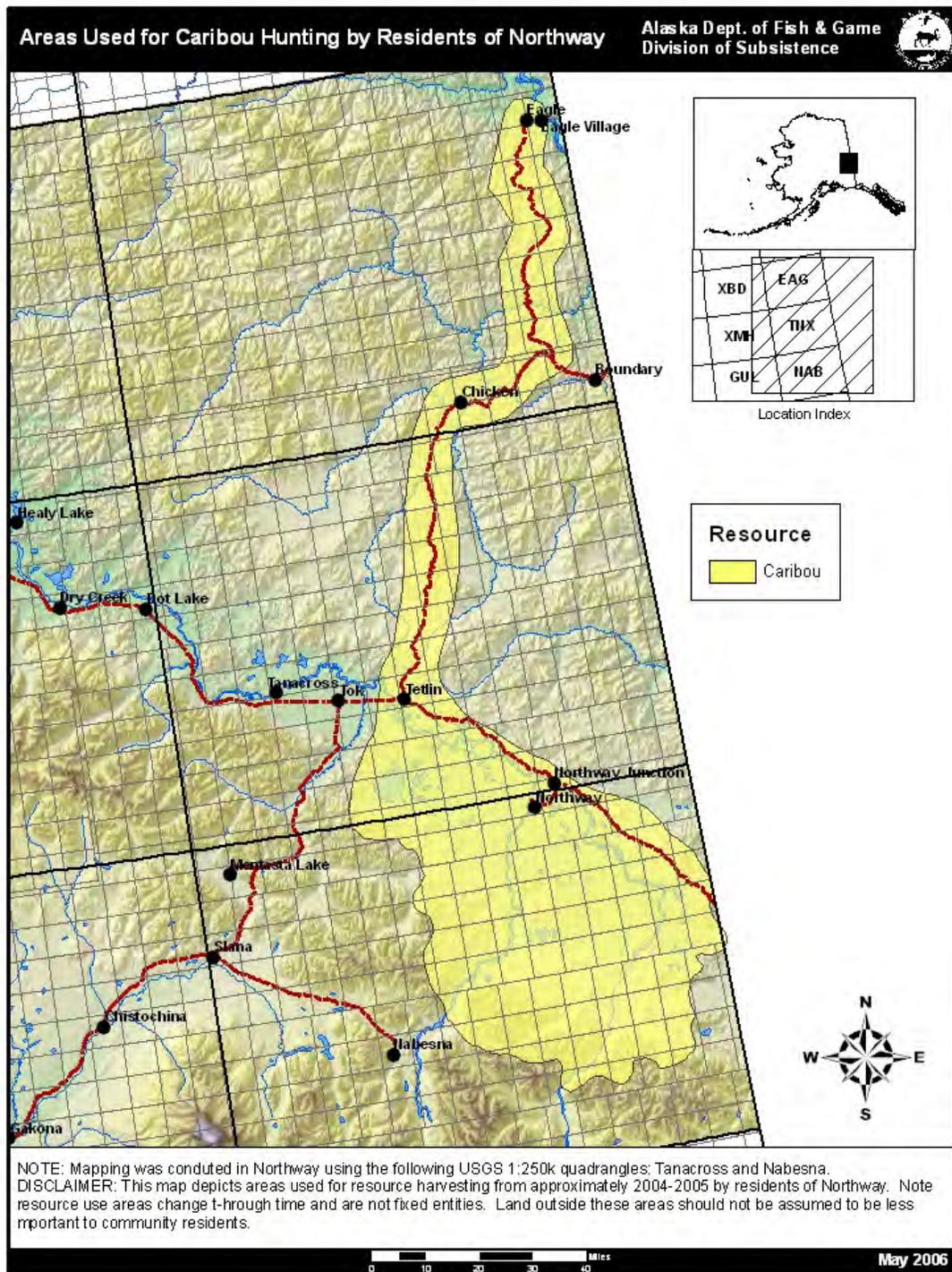


Figure 4.—Northway resident caribou hunting areas in the Chisana and Fortymile caribou herd ranges, 2004–2005.

Source Koskey *In prep.*

**APPENDIX A: UPPER TANANA LORE AND VALUES
REGARDING CARIBOU**

UPPER TANANA LORE AND VALUES REGARDING CARIBOU

Literature examining traditional Alaska Native cultures often reports that hunters frequently consulted medicine men or shamans in order to learn whether they would have luck and return with meat, especially caribou, for their families. One such example explained how a medicine man helped an entire camp keep from starving to death, which they would do without the caribou (Vitt 1971).

...The medicine man called together all the people in the camp and he made medicine for them. He sat down and instructed the people to cover him with a blanket of skins whereas he went into a trance-like state for 30 minutes or more. At the end of his visit with the spirit world, he came out of his blanket singing a magic song. He also brought back from the spirit world a fresh caribou pouch, and with it he sang and danced. When he stopped singing and dancing, he told the people "Tomorrow everyone must go out and try to find caribou tracks. If you find caribou tracks, you must not follow it but you must come home and tell everyone where it is and the direction it went." The following morning everyone in the camp did like the medicine man said. They went out in all directions to look for a caribou track. One man found an old caribou track maybe a week or 10 days old, and he hurried home to tell everyone about it and what direction it went. No one else found any caribou tracks. The one the man found was the only one in the whole area. The medicine man listened and then said to the people, "Tomorrow you must go out to where the one man found the track and you must all follow it. You will soon find a little caribou. It will be all white in color—do not kill this white one for it is a spirit sign. You must follow the little white one where it takes you and you will find many caribou there. These you can kill—kill them all but do not harm the little white caribou for he is a magic spirit and must not be harmed..." They all did like the medicine man said and followed the tracks. Soon they saw the little white caribou ... and they followed it when it walked down the trail. ... Over the hill they saw the spirit caribou in the middle of a herd of caribou—all fat. They killed all the caribou like the medicine man said to do but they did not harm the spirit one. Now the people had food to eat and did not starve anymore. Without the medicine man, many would have died. (Athabascan elder Oscar Isaac as cited in Vitt 1971:121–122)

McKenna(1959) documented a story from Chisana Joe about *Tson-shan*, the "Man Who Went to the Moon." This story demonstrates how storytelling transmits traditional hunting values, especially those focusing around caribou, from one generation to the next.

A group of Indians had a camp. One day while the men were away the women heard a baby cry. A young woman went out to look for it, but she could not find it. Soon it cried again. Another girl went out to look for it, but she could not find it. It cried again. This time a very old woman set out to locate the cry. In the middle of a hollow tree she found a tiny baby. She took it back to her camp, which was a moss house. She called it *Tson-shan* (He comes out).

The baby grew into a young man though he was always small. He was a great fun maker and was always playing tricks. The old lady decided to move on to another camp where she had many brothers and cousins. Before they moved *Tson-shan* dressed up in old clothes. He took a piece of skin and made a round mask, cutting out holes for eyes, nose, and mouth. At the new camp *Tson-shan* was always joking. People thought he was a little foolish.

One day a man came in and reported seeing a band of about fifty caribou. *Tson-shan* said, "I will go out and kill them."

Everybody laughed at him. The next morning he got up early and started out. He was wearing his old clothes and was using a worn-out pair of snowshoes. Nobody thought he would even get near the caribou. He went on. Pretty soon he saw the caribou, but he could not get near them on his old snowshoes. He stopped in the snow. He took off his old snowshoes; he took off his mask; he took off his old clothes. He laid them all out in the snow as if they were a man. Suddenly he was dressed in new clothes and was wearing new snowshoes. He went on and killed the caribou. Then he went back to camp and told the men, "I have killed all the caribou."

They did not believe him but they went out to see. Sure enough, there were the dead caribou, fifty of them. All the men started skinning and cleaning them. Tson-shan built a fire. He took some caribou fat and put it on the end of his snowshoe. He put the snowshoe in the fire, half burning it up, and cooked the fat. Then he ran about, laughing and joking, saying, "Here is some caribou fat. Eat it." Everyone thought he was silly.

Tson-shan told the men, "Save all the web fat and bring it to me. I want it."

But when they got back to camp no one brought him any of the fat. All he got was just one little piece. Tson-shan was much hurt. He cried and wailed all night. The old woman tried to comfort him but it did no good. About midnight he suddenly jumped to his feet. He held the little piece of bloody caribou fat high in his hand. He started to fly upwards. The old woman ran to stop him and caught him by the heel of his moccasin, which was attached to the leg of his trousers. Still he went up, leaving his trousers in the hands of the old lady. He flew on and on until he reached the moon.

Before he left he had killed everyone in camp. Only the old woman was spared. (Chisana Joe, as cited by McKennan 1959:195–196)

McKenna (1959) also documented a story from Nabesna John, "The Contest for Chieftaincy Among Moose, Sheep, and Caribou," which provides a general illustration of the place of moose, sheep, and caribou in the Athabaskan world view in the Chisana-Nabesna area.

Moose, Sheep, and Caribou all had a camp together.

Moose said, "I am the big chief, I am boss."

But Sheep said, "No, I am boss."

And Caribou said, "I am boss."

Moose said, "I am the biggest, I should be the chief. Caribou is next largest he will be little chief. Sheep will be last."

But Sheep said, "I am the smartest. I understand everything. I am the boss."

All were together in the timber. They wrangled and talked. Finally they decided to settle it on the basis of numbers. Moose said, "My number is as many as the hairs on my back."

But Caribou and Sheep said the same, so they decided to settle it on the basis of counting the hairs. In this, Sheep won, Moose was next, and then Caribou.

But Moose was not satisfied. He said, "I have the biggest bones."

But Sheep answered, "No, your bones are too soft. They break easily."

Moose said, "My legs are long. In the deep snow I can outdistance everyone."

But Sheep said, "No, in the winter I am wise. I do not go down into the deep snow. I stay up on top of the hills. Your bones are soft. Feel them, they break easily."

Moose felt them, and they were soft. So were those of the Caribou. Sheep's bones were hard, just like iron. Sheep still insisted on being chief.

Then Sheep said, "Tonight we will all go up on top of the hill. He who gets cold first and has to go down into the timber cannot be chief."

They all went up on a high, bald peak. A cold wind came up. Caribou had to go down to the timber. Soon Moose followed him. Sheep stayed there all night. The next morning he came down and joined the others.

He said, "Let there be no chief. It only makes trouble. Let us all be like brothers. I will be the oldest brother; Moose can be next; and Caribou can be the youngest."

Moose and Caribou agreed. So they all lived like brothers.

Sheep said, "My legs are short. I will stay high lest the wolves catch me. You and Caribou stay down in the timber."

Moose and Caribou said, "All right."

After that there was no more talk, and they got along fine together. (Nabesna John cited in McKennan 1959:210)