



Gwich'in Tribal Council

# newsletter



## Gwich'in Tribal Council Celebrates 25 Years

The Gwich'in Tribal Council celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement in April. Celebrations were held in all four Gwich'in communities the week of April 19-22. Activities included cook-outs, fashion shows, t-shirt and hat giveaways, treaty payments (for Band members) and of course, jigging lasting into the night.

Each community also received a special-edition 25th Anniversary flag to display in their DGOs/community meeting spaces. These were presented during opening remarks. The GTC Executive and staff travelled to the communities and assisted the DGOs in putting together the celebrations.

"We chose the expression 'Yi'eenoodai' Yeendoo Gwizhit Gwitee'ah/Long Ago Will Be The Future', which came out of an Elder's Forum held in Inuvik in 2013, because it pays tribute to our past while keeping open the future", says Diane Baxter, Associate Director of Intergovernmental Affairs.



# Gwich'in Values

Respect = yinjí'khadhoh'ee

Honor = yinjí'gwitchilee

Love = ch'if'agwiiniidhan

Kindness = zhookhadidich'uu

Laughter = ohglaa

Strength = f'aih

Teaching = ga'oonaatan

Our Stories = gwandak

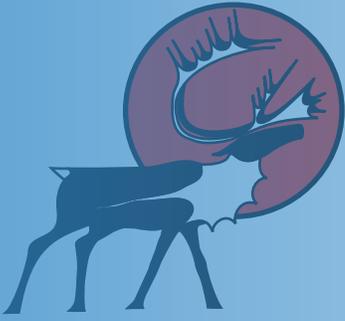
Dance/Song = oodzoo/igidlii

Spirituality = ch'anuh

Sharing & Caring = nihtat'indaii ts'àt nihk'atrìnahtii

Honesty & Fairness =

ch'igwijuu'ee fr'igwindaii ts'àt nihtat gwif'agwjj'ee gèhdanh



## Words from the Grand Chief/ President



**Drin Gwiinzii Shilakut,**

Happy Spring to all Gwich'in! It is great to see that many had the opportunity to get out on the land for spring hunting and some made it out for break up. Good to see reports of plenty of geese and ducks and also more muskrats back in the Delta. It's especially great to see most of the hunters are demonstrating traditional values of sharing their harvests with others. Some families are preparing foods and sharing it with others. I encourage all to continue to practice these values and teach the youth as well. Don't forget about family and friends in the South who would appreciate occasional care packages of Gwich'in foods and treats. Caring for each other is one of the values that make us Proud to be Gwich'in.

Since the last newsletter in January, I have made a few duty travel trips on behalf of Gwich'in Development Corporation (GDC) and Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) Business. I went to Vancouver in February for GDC board meeting. The GDC usually has 4 face to face meetings each year, but we have now cut that down to 1 and the other 3 meetings are by teleconference. This change will cost save a lot of money on travel and expenses. The annual face to face meeting will be in the Gwich'in Settlement Area so that the annual shareholders meeting with the Board of Directors of GTC can also take place.

From Vancouver I continued onto Ottawa to attend the LCAC (Land Claims Agreement Coalition) meeting. This is a forum that has a powerful voice for land claim groups in Ottawa. We are ensuring that we are involved in the forum and that our staff are involved in the working groups. We can benefit from this forum as a stronger force to implement the Gwich'in Land Claim and to ensure the Government of Canada is meeting its obligations to us as well as the Territorial Government. Change and progress needs to be seen in action and if not, then there is always the avenue of court to ensure our rights and interests are being honored and upheld. However, we will strive for progress without court. In the coming months the LCAC will be having a meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau along with 5 Federal Ministers. This will give us face time to address our issues and work to find resolve. We hope this will be a start to annual meetings of such leaders.

After 8 months in office, I took 10 days of annual leave in April and went on a family vacation. It was great to step away from work and just enjoyed quality time with my family. Work is important, but it's not as important as family. I encourage everyone who work long hours to always ensure you take time away for family too.

Upon my return from annual I went right into the communities in the Gwich'in

Settlement Area for the celebrations of the 25th Anniversary of the Land Claim. It was good to see community leaders and residents come together for good food and dancing. The celebrations were planned in conjunction with the Annual Treaty 11 payments. This was done in accordance to the Land Claim and the efforts to implement what it entails.

It was brought to my attention that a few of our people were concerned that both our Vice President and myself had given ourselves new titles of Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief. I just want to clarify that we didn't give these titles to ourselves, but they were titles that were agreed on and approved by motion in a past Annual General Assembly. All we are simply doing is putting motions into place and acting on them. There are many motions that need to be acted on, this is one example. We hope to have some action made on all outstanding motions before the Annual Assembly in August.

Since last newsletter, an internal policy review was done on the Executive Salaries and bonuses and recommendations were made to the Board of Directors. One recommendation was to reduce the bonus down to 8%. The Board of directors haven't made any decision yet. The board is aware that I don't personally agree with bonuses so even if they do agree to the recommendation of 8%, I still wouldn't accept a bonus and would encourage that to be removed from the policy. In my opinion, the bonus amount can be better spent elsewhere in much needed services for our people.

In May I attended a workshop and blanket exercise in Inuvik on Indian Residential Schools in Canada and the many impacts still being felt today. We will work towards finding more funding to provide more healing and wellness programs to our people. There is so much healing needed in individuals and families and communities. I believe we can help empower each other to stop the cycles and reclaim back what was lost in these systems; culture, language, values, skills etc. we can help each other rebuild what was torn apart, including our people and values.

I continue to be involved in the Implementation Committee meetings along with our staff from Intergovernmental Department and folks from the Government of Canada and Territorial Government as well. The Vice President/Deputy Grand Chief and myself had also met with the Chief and Council of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and attended the annual Caribou Days celebrations in Old Crow, Yukon. We had our first bilateral meeting with the GNWT Premier and Cabinet also in May here in Inuvik. I continue to try help participants with a variety of issues that they contact me with. Many of the services required



are the responsibility of the Territorial Governments so in most cases I will advocate for the individual and help them to access the right people to assist them. We do our best to provide what we can through the Gwich'in Tribal Council Departments as well.

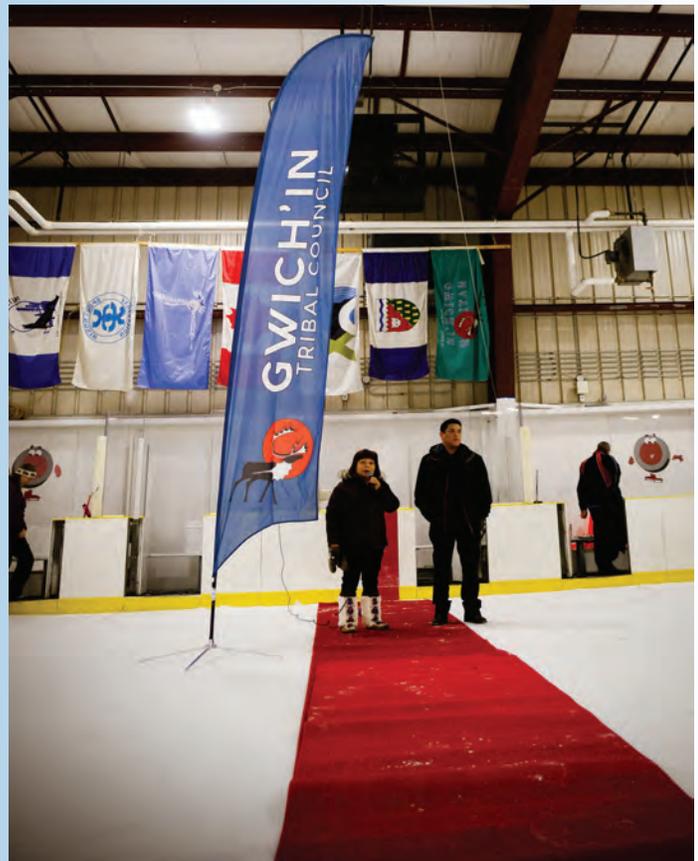
Some events I have spoken at since the last newsletter update include the Regional Youth Council Meeting in Tsiigehtchic, the Next 40 Academic Conference in Inuvik, the Life Skills Workshop in Inuvik, Inuvik Aurora College Learning Centre completion ceremonies, 25th Anniversary Celebrations of the Land Claim in Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson and Inuvik, Landsat Technical Working Group Meeting in Inuvik, Inuvialuit Day, Governor General Leadership conference participants in Inuvik, the East Three Secondary school graduation in Inuvik as well as Moose Kerr School Graduation in Aklavik. I am also scheduled to speak at the Grad in McPherson at Chief Julius School later in June and at the Arctic Energy Conference in Inuvik.

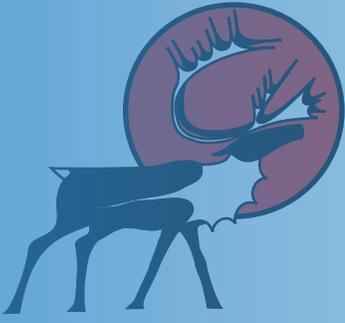
We encourage people to stay informed and ask questions. Don't go on rumors, but go on facts and you get facts by asking questions, researching and seeking information. We sometimes get calls from people who are misinformed by the rumors they hear. My advice is to give us a call directly and we will give you the facts. It is each person's responsibility to be informed, so please ask questions and it is part of our role as your leaders to provide answers. Because most matters are for Gwich'in business only, we can't report too much details over social media (Facebook, websites etc.) as it is for Gwich'in information only and not the whole world to know. So please if any Gwich'in participant would like more information on any matter, please give us a call or send a letter or email to us and we will respond.

This is a very demanding job and there are times where stress is high and we are faced with a lot of negative factors. This is to be expected though and with a good support system including lots of prayers we will continue to see progress and positive results. Mahsi Cho to all who continue to support and pray for each other. I am honored to represent the Gwich'in. Take care of yourselves and each other and may K'agwaadhat (creator) continue to protect and guide us all to prosperity.

Mahsi Cho,

Bobbie Jo Greenland-Morgan  
Grand Chief/President





## Deputy Grand Chief/Vice President Message

### Drin gwiinzii,

Greetings to all of you, it's great to see so many of you make it out on the land and practice the traditional forms of self-determination. It's now been ten months since being sworn in as Vice-President and we have been progressing many files at the GTC. As reported in my last newsletter address, the board, the executive and our many staff continue to work hard on implementing the land claim.

Since January's newsletter, I have made a number of duty travel trips for some of the files that fall under my portfolio. I continue to meet with our community leaders, government officials in the NWT, Yukon and in Ottawa to bring opportunity and collaborative approaches to solving some of the issues that we all face in our communities. It is integral, that we continue to work together with our Designated Gwich'in Organizations (DGO's). We as the collective, under a collective claim, need to ensure that we hold each other up, give each other the support that we all need and work together. In unity comes strength and the power to do so much more for all Gwich'in.

As relationship building has been at the forefront since we have come into office, we continue working towards educating all organizations and governments that we work with about the Gwich'in, our land claim, DGO's and GTC.

### Self-Government

Self Government continues to be the most active file that I have under my portfolio and the most educating as you learn so much going through the entire process of consulting, research, discussions and negotiations. We continue to hold consultation meetings and other forms of supports to our DGO's, Bands and participants. Since January, we have offered funds to the DGO's and Bands to conduct internal reviews of the draft AIP but only the Nihtat Gwich'in Council took up this offer.

Household visits will continue in Inuvik and Fort McPherson as the direction we have received is to consult all Gwich'in on the draft Agreement in Principle (AIP). We also held a meeting with staff and have received many great questions and ideas that help us think through clauses in the AIP and outside the box thinking around where we are going, I believe that our staff can be educators for ensuring participants are well aware of self-government but to also ensure that our staff are educated as well.

Myself along with our technical staff had met a number of times with the Government of Canada, Government of Northwest Territories and Yukon government. Meetings that dealt with legal & technical reviews and pursuing a mandate to negotiate with Yukon over our trans-boundary primary and secondary lands.

The GTC self-government team met a number of times, internally and at main table negotiations. These meetings are made up of primarily dealing with legal & technical recommendations on the AIP and to pursue changes that we feel need to be made. We met in Whitehorse from May 29-31 and had our team of David Krutko (Tetlit), Grace Blake (Gwich'ya), Eugene Pascal (Ehdiitat), Phillip Blake (Chiefs rep) and Jozef Carnogursky (Nihtat) couldn't make the meeting.

We will continue consulting and will not close this door as all voices are important to ensure that we can come up with the best Gwich'in agreement. We take our direction from the people and the Gwich'in annual general assembly which represents the communities and that we need to ensure we are transparent about the decisions we make.

As the work on this file continues, we need to continue the education needs of all gwich'in to understand the regional approach with community Gwich'in governments. This approach has been the direction for over 10 years, and with the current approach much of the jurisdiction and delegation authority will stand with the communities which will allow better service of programs to Gwich'in, in the communities.

### Meetings and Conferences

I have been involved in a number of meetings in the Yukon, Ottawa and Yellowknife. We continue to pursue a mandate from the Yukon government to negotiate a self government agreement over the lands in the Yukon. I continue to go to the Council of Yukon First Nations leadership meetings which happen bi-monthly to ensure that we are apart of any discussions in the Yukon, which we continue to be involved with the Yukon forum and Intergovernmental forum as well.

I had also joined our lawyers, in Ottawa for our Legal, Technical Committee work on our Self-Government draft AiP which was a great learning opportunity to see how the committee works to ensure that we are pursuing the best agreement for Gwich'in. This work is very important to be able to make the best decisions possible at the main table negotiations with our team.

Bobbie Jo and I went over to Old Crow during Caribou Days and to meet with the Vuntut Gwitchin on how we can work together. The meeting went very well and will allow us to work together on common interests, specifically around lands, culture and language. Although we have not come to an agreement we have both made the commitment to ensure our technical staff and leadership will continue talking and meeting.

### Affiliates

As a board member of Gwich'in Council International, I am currently involved in a new project called Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy ARENA. This project is circumpolar based and gives us training around remote, off-grid energy systems, given that this is one of the biggest costs of living in the north it gives me an opportunity to work on energy solutions with our communities.

Gwich'in Steering Committee continues to pursue the protection of



the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and the calving ground of the Porcupine Caribou. The GTC has two representatives on the steering committee and I would like to commend their commitment to one of the biggest issues we face about our traditional harvesting and the relationship we hold to Caribou.



### 25 Years of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement

During the week of April 22nd, we celebrated 25 years of our land claim. We spent a full day in each of our communities and celebrated with dances, games and a feast. During our community visits I met with each of our DGO Presidents and Indian Act Chiefs to discuss self government and how we can improve approaches to self government. As we move forward in the coming months and years, we need to ensure that we are truly implementing the motions from our assembly and to adhere to our implementation plan. There has always been great direction from our annual assembly and we have been working to ensure that we are tracking and moving forward on this direction to ensure we are reporting back to the assembly on progress.

As a young leader, I have reflected many times about what we have accomplished since 1992 and the challenges we have faced over the years. It is integral that we include all voices to the conversations we have and that dialogue is a two way street in how we come up with solutions to the problems and issues we face at the personal and community level. We will continue to encourage that all leaders and participants have a voice at the table and that a collective approach is the way forward, as our past leaders that negotiated our land claim envisioned and saw the strength in numbers. Let's carry their vision forward with ours as it is certain to bring success in all that we do as we work towards greater well being for all Gwich'in.

Haii Cho  
Jordan Peterson  
Deputy Grand Chief/Vice President

# Chief Operating Officer Report

Vanh Gwinzii/Drin Gwinzii,

Carolyn Lennie vilzhii, Tsiigehtchic gwats'at ihllii. Inuvik danh gwihch'in. I have been employed with the Gwich'in Tribal Council as Chief Operating Officer since October 2016.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) is involved in many initiative in all effort to implement the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement with a great team of employees at the forefront of the work.

## **Human Resources**

In January 2016, the GTC Board of Directors passed a motion in support of establishing a Director of Human Resources (HR) position and in March, after 25 years, the GTCs very first Director of HR, Lynn MacKinnon, was hired to fill the position. Human Resources is a huge part of any organization, our hope is that we will establish a solid HR division at GTC, develop a 10 Year HR Strategy in preparation for Self-Government, building capacity within the organization and assist the Designated Gwich'in Organizations (DGOs) in each of the four Gwich'in Communities.

## **Organizational Structure**

Since 2015, the GTC has been conducting a review of the organizational structure in accordance with the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA). In April, the GTC Board of Directors passed a motion approving the presented organizational structure which includes changes in position titles to reflect the work assignments, reporting of positions to supervisors, and creating new positions. The additional positions at the GTC are Economic Development Specialist, Language Revitalization Specialist, Transboundary Specialist, Senior Self-Government Advisor and an Administration/Reception at our Yellowknife office.

The Economic Development Specialist established under the Gwich'in Services department will be assigned to implement GCLCA Chapter 10 Economic Measures, Government of the NWT Contracting Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), maintaining the Gwich'in Business list and most importantly to assist Gwich'in Businesses to maximize business/economic opportunities.

One of the goals over the next four years is to make the Gwich'in Language a priority, the first step was to conduct a review of the existing operations and incorporate new approaches. The Language Revitalization Specialist will be located in Inuvik reporting directly to the Chief Operating Officer and is meant to be the person that takes the lead on all Gwich'in Language initiatives, obtaining external funding, oversee the language centers, support the language programmers in the schools, and work closely with the communities and Gwich'in Participants in all efforts to teach and learn the language.

An additional position to the Department of Lands and Resources is the Transboundary Specialist. This position will be involved in all transboundary matters of water, land, animals, etc. with Governments of the NWT and Yukon, Aboriginal Governments: Inuvialuit, Vuntut, Na-Cho Nyak Dun, Tr'ondek Hwechin, and Sahtu, and other First Nations groups such as Council of Yukon First Nations, Dene Nation and Assembly of First Nations. The GTC deals with many issues that overlap into other jurisdictions, it is important that we represent Gwich'in rights and interested in all aspects of the land claim.

# Chief Operating Officer Report

The Senior Self-Government Advisor position is an addition to the Department of Intergovernmental Relations and is tasked with the Self-Government file. This will ensure that over the long term we have a dedicated staff member to lead the file and ensure that the time and attention is given to one of the most important files that requires additional resources to meet the needs of GTC, the communities and Gwich'in Participants.

## **Budget 2017/2018**

During the months of January to March, the GTC Department Directors and Staff worked with our finance department to prepare the budget for the 2017/2018 fiscal year. The first task was to understand where all the GTC funding comes from and what expenses are required to operate and provide services. Although the GTC receives a capital distribution from the Gwich'in Settlement Corporation and Federal Government Implementation funding, majority of the GTC funding is received through proposal driven contribution agreements prepared by staff.

In April, the GTC Board of Directors passed a motion approving the 2017/2018 budget with a six month review. I am happy to report that the budget was developed to meet the requirements of implementing the claim and where possible reduce costs.

## **Board Appointments**

Since October 2016, the GTC Board of Directors have been reviewing requirements to appoint Gwich'in Participants to various co-management boards and other boards. We completed three call outs for interest in advertised boards and the Board of Directors have reviewed and appointed and/or nominated Gwich'in Participants to advertised boards. The requirements set by the Board of Directors for any board appointments is a resume and cover letter outlining a candidate's interest and experience in each board.

## **Policies**

Since the fall of 2016, we have undertaken the task to review policies and revise where necessary. The Policies under review include the Gwich'in Harvesters Assistance Policy, Human Resource Policy, Executive and Executive Compensation Policy, Finance Policy and many other operational policies. All policy revisions will be presented to the GTC Board of Directors for approval.

## **Annual General Assembly**

The GTC Board of Directors has scheduled the Annual General Assembly (AGA) dates for August 22-24, 2017 in Fort McPherson. Delegates are chosen by the Designated Gwich'in Organizations (DGO), please contact your associated community DGO if you are interested in attending the AGA.

In closing, this is just a snapshot of all that we are involved in at the GTC and we look forward to continued updates. I would like to wish you all a happy spring and an enjoyable summer.

Mahsi Choo. K'egwaadhat nakhwah vili'.

Carolyn Lennie  
Chief Operating Officer

## *Keeper's Leadership Program - Costa Rica*

by Anthony Kay

My name is Anthony Kay and I live in Inuvik, Northwest Territories. I am in grade 9 and go to East Three Secondary School. I moved here in July 2016. I used to live in Aklavik. My dad is Jim Kay and my mom is Savana Paul from Aklavik.



I have been participating in the Keeper's Of the Land Leadership Program for three years. This program was developed by the school in Fort Providence and brings youth out on the land. My first trip was a muskox hunt at Horn River. My second trip was a forest ecology camp somewhere outside of Hay River.

The third trip I did was a canoe trip from Fort Providence to Fort Simpson. There's about five to ten of us that did these trips. The students are all from the NWT. Some are from Hay River, Fort Providence, Aklavik and Fort McPherson. These programs are considered as Career and Technology Studies (CTS) credits in High School.

Four of us were invited to do the Costa Rica Trip this past March. We also met up with two other people from the NWT down there. To be eligible I had to have done the previous programs and needed to raise \$1000. I also had to get my passport. I left on March 10th and got to Costa Rica on March 12th.

## Gwich'in Youth Travel

It was a long trip and when we got there we had to take a 45 minute bus ride to the city of Santa Ana. We stayed at the United World College. It was really hot in Costa Rica. From March 13 to March 17th we did a Agents of Change Workshop. The workshop helps kids from different communities with school work. We had to do a presentation about where we're from to the students at the college. We also did a city tour. From March 18 to March 21st we went to an indigenous community



to volunteer. We painted desks for kids there. We also played soccer with the people from the community and our group went white water rafting. It was my first time white water rafting. I enjoyed it and was happy to cool off from the hot weather. While in that community we stayed at the school and a few of us played poker with lemons, rocks and pieces of poker cards. We left Costa Rica on March 22nd and flew to Ottawa.

From March 23rd to March 24th there was a Soaring Youth Conference and the Indspire Awards. We had lunch with the Indspire Award recipients and we had supper with NWT Member of Parliament Michael McLeod. We walked to the Parliament building and toured around Ottawa. We got to see performers at the Indspire Awards. We began traveling home on March 26th and I got home on March 27th. This program will count as a CTS credit.



During these trips we took turns writing in a blog. The blog is at:

<http://keepersleadership.wordpress.com>.

The blog has stories and pictures from all our trips. Jack Blake and I wrote a lot about day 3, 4 and 5 of the Costa Rica trip.

I'm thankful for this program. Its given me a lot of experiences. Thanks to the Fort Providence school for organizing this program and especially Nimisha Bastedo who was our chaperone. I also thank my mom and Karla Smith for fundraising. Thanks to Amy Amos for helping get all my paperwork together. Thanks to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the community of Aklavik and Moose Kerr School for supporting me.

Gwich'in Youth Travel



Gwich'in Youth Travelling and Working in Costa Rica

# Gwich'in Services

Gwich'in Services is responsible for a wide range of activities within the Gwich'in Tribal Council organization.

## *Education and Training*

### **Staffing Update**

Mariah Peterson will be returning as a Career Development Officer effective May 29, 2017.

### **Career Development Services-Partnerships**

GTC and IRC will be collaborating to co-deliver a series of career development workshops to client groups. Collaboration will serve both organizations needs to build capacity for less experienced staff as well as to plan joint initiatives.

The Manager of Education and Training will be meeting with ECE to discuss piloting an ABE initiative as identified in the 2017-2018 ASETS Annual Operational Plan.

*Activity 6 - Adult Basic Education - To support participants who possess ABE 140 levels and who require two semesters of upgrading to obtain completion of ABE Levels 150 (Math, English and Sciences) so that they can meet university or college entrance requirements to pursue post-secondary studies. Participants will receive instruction through Aurora College community learning centres, in their home communities.*

The intent of the initiative is to have clients move forward and become eligible for Post-secondary programs after 1 year of ABE/Upgrading. ASETS to provide additional "Top Up" funding supports as an incentive.

### **ASETS Communities-at- Risk (CAR)**

GTC has received approval of carry over funds to continue with programming under the Communities at Risk programming. GTC plans to deliver one week on the land activities followed up by one week of career planning in each of the three communities (Fort McPherson, Inuvik and Aklavik). Dates and activities will be confirmed very soon.

### **Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF)**

The GTC was conditionally approved for \$4.6 million for the Taii Trigwatsii "Breaking Trails" project. The Director of Gwich'in Services, Project Coordinator and the Manager of Education and Training have concluded the collaboration process with Service Canada and gave final submission May 25, 2017.

The project will see approximately 8 months of preparation (curriculum development, office set up, staff training, program set up). If approval is timely, the 191 week project will commence July 31, 2017.

The first delivery will take place in Aklavik starting October 23, 2017 with an intake of 20 participants. The program will be 34 weeks and will tentatively consist of the following:

- Life Skills
- On the Land Cultural Programming
- ABE
- Intro to Essential Skills
- Workplace Essential Skills
- Entrepreneur and Safety Training
- Career Planning
- Work placements/Training on the Job

## Gwich'in Services

Update

### *Resolution Health Support Program*

The RHSW program is busy for the upcoming YOUth Matter Conference taking place here in Inuvik from August 14-17, 2017. This year's conference is open to the NWT region due to interest from last year. The conference theme is "Mind, Body, and Soul". A committee has been formed with partners from IRC, ECE, Inuvik Youth Centre, Ingamo Hall, Town of Inuvik and Aurora College. Prepping is coming along, but a few logistical items need to be completed.

Ellen Smith contacted the Wellness department to work with her in doing a presentation to students and elders in Aklavik May 16th, 2017. Patricia and I attended as support and how our department can assist in future presentations. Ellen talked about how Indian Residential School affected her upbringing and the changes she see's today. Ellen talked about the Intergenerational effects it has on our society today and how we can make changes. Next presentation was held at the Band office with 12 elders in attendance. The presentation was emotional for a few and support workers were on site to provide support to the elders. A light lunch was provided and enjoyed by all. Some community members stopped in to chat with Patricia and me regarding information on Dementia, Old age, Elder abuse and counseling referrals. Will contact the Community Health Reps to work with them in doing presentations to community members.

May 23-26 I attended the Back to the Trail Youth Gathering in Yellowknife at Camp Connections. 57 km outside of Yellowknife. A total of 50 youth attended. This gathering focused on health topics and what changes the youth would like to be in school such as Tobacco, Bullying and Sexual Health. Four elders were in attendance to provide support to the youth and for guidance. Participants stayed at the camp during the 3-day event.

May 29-June1/17: I attended the SPOR Unit meeting in Yellowknife. This Project overseen by Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox focuses on Research study with community representatives input. This meeting was held at Aurora Village. Breakout sessions held in tipis during the two-day meetings.

Our department is busy working with other community agencies to do presentations in the communities on mental health topics during the summer and fall.

### *Language Revitalization*

The Gwich'in Language Center in Ft McPherson remains closed until a decision is made on staffing. We are waiting for the report from Tania Granadillo who was in the region during the week of May 15th. We met with many individuals in the community and also contacted others in the communities of Aklavik, Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic. Overall, there was broad support for Language revitalization. There were many suggestions for improvements on how we deliver language programming.

There was a lot of support for doing different activities to encourage the use of the Gwich'in Language but the main suggestion was for "Immersion" programs on the land or even in the classrooms by having an elder present and speaking only the Gwich'in language to the children. Tania will provide a report on the discussions and

# *Gwich'in Services*

## Gwich'in Services

### Update

suggestions we heard and will offer suggestions based on her experience working in Language revitalization.

There was an announcement by GNWT on additional funds that they will receive for languages. We have received the new allocation amount and will need to determine how these funds will be used.

I have been in contact with the DGO in Tsiigehtchic to start discussions on the use of the Culture and Heritage office in Tsiigehtchic for the new Language Center staffed by a half-time Programmer.

I will be meeting with the Director of the Aboriginal Language and Learning Secretariat Director Angela James to discuss Aboriginal Languages and specifically the NWT Aboriginal Languages Framework, the New federal funding for aboriginal languages and the increase in funding we will receive for language programming and also discuss the multi-year funding we will receive for the next three years up to March 31, 2020.

Now that we have received the information on the funding, we will need to review and approve the new Contribution Agreement and review the Language Proposals we have received from the DGO's for their language programs they would like to deliver over the next fiscal year.

### *Economic Development*

There has been no activity under this file. HR is completing the recruitment of an Economic Development Specialist and once the position is filled, we will establish an office to start providing support to the Gwich'in Communities.



# *Gwich'in Services*

## Corporate Services

Update

# CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services has been quite busy since the last newsletter helping to plan a number of upcoming initiatives and as always, enjoy working closely with all departments at the GTC:

### Website

We officially launched our new website the first week in March to a very receptive audience. Initial feedback has been very positive, with more than 7000 visitors over the first 3 months. Advertising the switchover was primarily done on Facebook, and we expect another uptick when we formally re-point the new site to our old URL. To access the site, we will be able to use [gwichintribal.ca](http://gwichintribal.ca), [gwichintribal.com](http://gwichintribal.com), and [gwichin.nt.ca](http://gwichin.nt.ca).

Due to the functionality of the new website, we are updating both Facebook and the website in realtime – as intended. The efficiencies realized will allow us to utilize the web and social media even more effectively while shaping our messaging going forward. Starting next month, we hope to begin sharing analytics with the Board which will give all a better insight into our online reach.

Some of the highlights include: real-time updating – giving us the ability to post new information automatically – both to the website and to Facebook; a Self Government portal with all of the current information, papers, FAQs available for download; comment boxes throughout the site – allowing Participants and members of the public to comment, ask questions, bring up concerns; embedded video and audio files; a photo gallery; and social media buttons/twitter feed widgets.

The March launch was the first phase of the project. Later this summer we will be releasing the second phase, which will include an interactive scrollable History Timeline – highlighting the achievements of Gwich'in Participants over the years. We are quite excited for this function.

### Facebook

The GTC was forced by Facebook rules to give up its status as a 'person' on Facebook – which gave us better abilities to communicate directly, and one-on-one, with our audiences – and turn over into an organizational 'page', which will provide us with some great analytics but takes away from some of the work we have done over the past few years to build our presence. This said, we are fully marketing the new look and feel of our online presence, and remain diligent on being able to update our audience in realtime. You can find us at [www.facebook.com/gwichintribal](http://www.facebook.com/gwichintribal).

### The Next 40 Academic Conference

Corporate Services, working closely with Intergovernmental and our interns, played a key role in the planning and delivery of the 2017 The Next 40 Academic Conference which was held at the end of March. It was a strong team effort that pulled together a nationally-recognized conference in only a few weeks.

### Peel Appeal – Supreme Court of Canada

The GTC hosted an advertised livestream of the Supreme Court of Canada Peel Watershed Appeal case on March 22 at the MSC in Inuvik. About 15 members of the public, Participants and staff attended. Our event was linked through with those hosted throughout the Yukon, including with Nacho Nyak Dun, CPAWS and CYFN.

## Corporate Services

Update

### 25th Anniversary of the GCLCA

This year marks the 25th year since the signing of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement in 1992. Celebrations were held in the four GSA communities and each DGO was given a commemorative flag to celebrate the milestone. T-shirts and ball caps were also given out at the community celebrations which included community cook-outs, speeches and Old Time Dances.



### Passport/ID Photos

We have been busy working with the communities to offer passport and ID photograph services to Participants. We have had over 150 requests for photos over the past six months and will be going into the communities late summer and fall to offer the service directly. In the meantime, should any Participants wish to have photos done, they should call the GTC Office at 777-7900 to book an appointment.

It's been a busy spring season so far, with great direction and strong ideas from the Executive. We are looking forward to the launch of many projects over the next few months. I would like to commend my staff for diligently working on behalf of our Board and Participants.

Mahsi,

Tony Devlin  
Director of Corporate Services

CORPORATE

SERVICES

# Cultural Heritage

## **COPE Stories – Finalize and Publish Stories in Digital and Print Formats**

In the 1960s and 1970s, when Nellie Cournoyea worked as an announcer and station manager at CBC Inuvik she initiated a project to tape Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and North Slavey Elders telling their stories and legends on the CBC radio program, "A Long Time Ago." The Elders were taped from approximately 1963 to 1979. Nellie concluded the taping project when she was elected an MLA in 1979. During the 1970s the Committee for Original People's Entitlement (COPE) was assembling information for land claim negotiations. Many of the stories now known as the COPE stories, came from this radio program plus interviews carried out in the communities for land claim and other purposes. The stories and legends told by Gwich'in Elders eventually came under the purview of the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, now the Department of Cultural Heritage of the GTC. Over the years, many interested individuals from the Gwich'in communities, along with researchers and other people, have asked for a copy of the COPE legends and stories. For this reason, and to continue our work promoting Gwich'in culture, the Department of Cultural Heritage is currently editing the volume of COPE stories and legends. It will be published digitally in 2017 and the department is currently reviewing publishing options for a hard-copy book.

## **How To Make a Drum** by Elijah Andrew

This is how I make a drum. I go out into the bush and find a good piece of willow or birch. A long piece is good to work with. I take it home, clean the bark off, and with a sharp knife, I cut away most of the wood. I cut until there's only a thin slab that is nice and smooth. I work at it until I can bend it easily into a circle. This is then fastened together with a strong piece of twine. Babiche is better to use. Now that I have a circle, I find a thin piece of untanned caribou hide cleaned of hair and anything lumpy. I stretch this over the frame. I find that the thinner the skin is, the better the drum I make. The skin is tacked on with small tacks. I do not know how it was done before we had tacks to use. Probably it was fastened onto the frame with Babiche, too. Now I need something to hold the drum with, so I take babiche again and string it onto the bottom side of the drum. I also put three across the top. This produces a beautiful sound when it is played. Another important part of the drum is the stick with which you hit it. This should be a small bent piece. Again, this is to make a good sound. If not, you do not produce too good music. Now when this drum is played, it should produce a nice rich sound. While playing it, if you know it starts to sound off, you simply splash some water onto the skin and rub it in until you get it nicely dampened. This is all it needs to start it sounding better again.



# *Mahsi!*

I am happy and at the same time sad to announce the retirement of two employees – Ingrid Kritsch and Alestine Andre – from the Department of Cultural Heritage (formerly Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute). Their last day of work will be September 8, 2017. They will be remembered for their hard work, commitment and dedication for the last 25 years to their work. They leave behind a hard trail to follow in terms of high standards in their work ethics. I would like to wish them the best of luck on their journey in their retirement.

–Sharon Snowshoe, Director, Department of Cultural Heritage.

# Cultural Heritage

# HUMAN RESOURCES

Drin Gwiinzii,

I'm excited to have joined GTC. I began in early March as Director of Human Resources, a new position for GTC. Our HR team currently has two members – Sheena Snowshoe, Human Resources Officer, and myself.

The Director of Human Resources (HR) role is responsible for developing and leading GTC's HR programs and processes. This includes HR planning, recruitment and retention, on-boarding (orientations), HR policies and processes, training and development, performance management and performance reviews, employee relations, HR records management and reporting, workforce and succession planning, HR compliance and risk management, organizational design, and compensation and benefits. Overall, my position works to ensure GTC's compliance with internal policies, HR best practices, and labour standards.

## Growing the Team

It is an exciting time for recruiting and hiring at GTC. We are currently in the process of finding candidates to fill three positions that are new. These positions will help support GTC's objectives by increasing the focus on the important areas of: language revitalization, advocating for and pursuing Gwich'in rights on transboundary lands, and offering services that support Gwich'in businesses and individuals wanting to pursue business opportunities. These positions are:

- Community Gwich'in Language Programmers – Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson
- Transboundary Specialist – Inuvik
- Economic Development Officer – Inuvik
- Senior Self-Government Advisor - Inuvik

Competitions for these positions were advertised broadly, with a closing date of June 11th or until filled. Interested Gwich'in Participants are encouraged to make contact with us for more information:

[jobs@gwichin.nt.ca](mailto:jobs@gwichin.nt.ca) | 867-777-7913 (phone).

## Gwich'in Internship Pilot Program

This Internship program launched in 2015 and is focused on capacity building, providing development opportunities

## **GTC Human Resources**

### Update

for Gwich'in Participants, and preparing for Self-Government. Participants complete three one-year work terms as part of the program: one with GTC, one with the Government of the Northwest Territories, and one with the Federal Government. Participants receive mentorship, career coaching, development opportunities, and diverse experience to prepare them for the next steps in their careers.

GTC is currently preparing for the third and final intake for this pilot program. The competition closed April 14th, and three new participants will be selected in the coming months.

See our website for a video testimonial by current Intern, Patricia Louie:

<https://gwichintribal.com/about-gtc/media-library/gwichin-internship-pilot-project-overview>

### **Human Resource Projects**

A main reason for filling a Director of HR position was to have a dedicated resource to build out GTC's HR programs and processes. As a result, this is the priority for the coming year and each day continues to be busy.

I am honoured to work with the Gwich'in. It's amazing to see the progress that is being made in so many areas and to be part of it all.

Mahsi,

Lynn MacKinnon  
Director of Human Resources

# HUMAN RESOURCES

# GTC LEGAL

## **Peel Watershed Litigation at the Supreme Court of Canada**

The long and winding path of the Peel Watershed litigation finally made its way to the Supreme Court of Canada on Wednesday, March 22nd. It was a frigid day in Ottawa, but dedicated supporters and defenders of the Peel gathered outside the court house for a ceremony, and then packed the courtroom and gallery during the hearing. Among the attendees were representatives from Yukon First Nations, as well as Yukon Premier Sandy Silver, and Assembly of First Nations Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde. In attendance from the GTC was Vice President Jordan Peterson, GTC General Counsel David Wright, as well as guests Robert Alexie Sr. and Dakota Koe.

Thomas Berger made the first submissions of the day on behalf of the Appellants (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, Na Cho Nyäk Dän, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, CPAWS Yukon, and the Yukon Conservation Society). Mr. Berger emphasized that the Trial Court's decision should be upheld in its entirety, including treating the Commission's final recommended plan as the final plan and setting aside the Yukon Government's alternate plan that was unilaterally imposed late in the process. Berger emphasized the importance of the court interpreting the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) in a manner that achieves this, which would mean not returning the process back to the much earlier stage suggested by the Court of Appeal (11.6.2). As those who watched over the Internet would have noted, the Justices asked many challenging questions to Berger as they tried to get to the core of the issues.

The GTC, represented by Jeff Langlois of JFK Law (who made oral submissions) and David Wright, submitted that the SCC should grant a remedy that deters governments from doing what Yukon did (unilaterally imposing its own plan late in the process) and encourages diligent and honourable engagement by government in collaborative processes under modern treaties. The GTC emphasized that the Gwichin are deeply affected in this matter, given that the Peel Watershed is an area of tremendous importance in a number of regards. To give the court some comfort in ruling that the process not be sent back for just 'more talk' (that would essentially grant Yukon a do-over and reward Yukon's breach), the GTC explained for the court that there are future review and amendment opportunities for the final plan.

The Council of Yukon First Nations went next as intervenor and emphasized similar points to Berger and GTC. They explained to the court that interpretation of the treaty and the court's remedy must be consistent with the Honour of the Crown and the spirit and intent of the treaty.

The Yukon Government's lawyer made oral submissions after a brief court recess. As expected, Yukon acknowledged that the government had breached the provisions of the UFA. Yukon then argued, as expected, that the process should be sent back to the earlier consultation stage so that the full views of the Yukon (on behalf of the public) could be incorporated into the proposed plan. Yukon argued that this would be the best interpretation of the UFA and would best serve the public interest. Similar to Berger's experience, the Justices put many hard hitting questions to the Yukon's lawyer, including asking why Yukon should be able to "benefit from its own breach".

## GTC Executive

### Legal Update

The Attorney General of Canada was next, simply submitting that interpretation of the Treaty must uphold the Honour of the Crown but that the UFA was a sophisticated negotiated legal agreement, the text of which must be closely adhered to by the court.

The final submissions of the day were from Thomas Berger in his five-minute reply (the Supreme Court of Canada is tremendously strict on time, and only allows five minutes for this final reply) where he emphasized that Yukon had already had its opportunity to modify the plan earlier in the process and that letting Yukon benefit from its breach (i.e. granting a do-over) would be problematic and onerous for First Nations. These final statements were persuasive and articulate.

The situation now is a waiting game. The court's decision is not expected for six months or more. Try as many do, it is difficult to speculate or predict the outcome. Whatever decision the court comes to regarding land-use planning for the Peel, the broader benefit will be further clarity on how to effectively interpret and implement modern treaties, including the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement.

Haii!

David V. Wright  
General Counsel



# GTC LEGAL

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

## Self-Government Update

Since the last newsletter the staff of the Intergovernmental Relations department have wrapped up the Draft Agreement in Principal (AiP) consultations with Gwich'in Participants in the four communities. This was done through a combination of:

- community workshops
- door to door visits
- field workers
- presentations to DGO's; and
- Information packages were sent to every Gwich'in Participant in and outside the GSA.

As well, information was available on the new GTC Website, through a dedicated e-mail address and, of course, Participants could always call the office on the Toll Free phone line. at 1-866-414-4670

Toward the end of 2016, the GTC technical staff began compiling input and results from the consultations and synthesizing it into a consultation report to present to the Team Members and GTC BOD's in a way that would highlighting key concerns and points learned from the consultations. Once discussed at that level, then it will be conveyed to the main table.

It should be noted that, consultations will continue and will probably increase during the next phase of negotiations.

## GTC Academic Conference

The Intergovernmental Relations Department and other GTC staff organized and facilitated a week long Youth Conference on education, The Next 40 Academic Conference! With the theme "Culture, Language and Spirituality" From all accounts this conference was well received by those who attended. Congratulations to GTC Staff who once again provided opportunities for Gwich'in Youth.



## **Intergovernmental Affairs**

### Update

#### **25th Anniversary Celebrations & Treaty Payout**

Staff from the Department along with other GTC staff assisted with the planning of the 25th year signing celebrations of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA). Celebrations were held in each community with the support of the local DGO's. In addition to celebrating the GCLCA, the Gwich'in Tribal Council worked with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, DGO's and INAC Bands to deliver Treaty payments to Status Gwich'in Participants and non-Gwich'in Status Band members.

#### **Sage 50 Advanced Training**

GTC worked with Crowe MacKay a certified accounting firm out of Yellowknife to bring in an instructor to do a 4 day Sage 50 training course with GTC and DGO financial employees. Not all DGO's could part take due to year end requirements however there's a possibility of scheduling training for the 2017/18 fiscal year. Topics covered were Productivity Tips and Tricks, Bank Reconciliation, Budgeting, Inventory, Projects, Payroll and Year End Procedures. The course was very beneficial as the group left with a better understanding of the many new short cuts and updates about the system.

#### **Gwich'in Harvesters Assistance Program**

Another spring has assisted Gwich'in Participants with the semi-annual disbursements made to the DGO's and RRC's to deliver the program in assisting harvesters with their spring hunts and or fishing. Along with this is updating the Policy and Procedures Manual that has been in draft since 2015 that is currently being updated with input and changes being made from the DGO's and RRC board members so it can be approved by the BOD in August at the AGM. Once approved, it will be used thereafter as the guideline for the DGO's to use in administering the program.

#### **Staffing Changes**

Recruitment is currently underway for a couple of positions at GTC. David Reid has resigned as Director, Intergovernmental Relations. As well a position of Senior Self-Government Advisor has been advertised as Diane Baxter has taken on the role of Senior Implementation Advisor. Carolyn Lennie, will assume the duties of Senior Self-Government Advisor until the position is filled.

As this is my final article for the Newsletter, I want to take this time to thank the Gwich'in Tribal Council for the opportunity and privilege of working in such an exciting and dynamic environment. There is much still to do with regards to achieving Self-Government, it will only be achieved if everyone is pulling in the same direction and working for the betterment of all Gwich'in Participants. I wish the Gwich'in Tribal Council the very best as they move forward as an organization.

David Reid

Director, Intergovernmental Relations

# **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**



## GWICH'IN PARTICIPANTS: FLY AND SAVE WITH FIRST AIR!

### GWICH'IN PARTICIPANTS / FIRST AIR 2017-2018 AGREEMENT

*First Air is proud to announce the renewal of their agreement with the Gwich'in Tribal Council for Gwich'in Participant travel for 2017 and 2018*

First Air is pleased to offer competitive discounts for travel system-wide within the First Air network. Please see full booking details below:

- \* Valid on First Air operated flights only. Not applicable on 7F700-799 or 7F1811-1812
- \* Available for registered Gwich'in Participants - proof of eligibility (Gwich'in ID) will be required. Failure to produce valid identification upon request at time of check-in may result in an upgrade to available fare.
- \* Not valid on any other promotional offers including seat sales
- \* Reservations can be made by contacting the First Air Customer Contact Centre at 1-800-267-1247 or online at [www.firstair.ca](http://www.firstair.ca). Please call Cheryl Wright, GTC Enrolment Officer at 867-777-7916 for the discount code.
- \* Valid for travel through May 31, 2018



**Gwich'in Tribal Council**  
*Gwich'in land, culture & economy for a better future*



*Slides from the 1960s Otto Tucker Collection*





On May 11, the eight Foreign Ministers of the Arctic States – including U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Christina Freeland – will meet in Fairbanks, Alaska. At that meeting, Gwich'in Council International, through its status as Permanent Participant, will be at the table and will have the opportunity to speak directly to these leaders. We will use this opportunity to urge the Arctic states to continue to take significant action toward addressing climate change, both within the Arctic and globally. The meeting will also mark the conclusion of the American chairmanship of the Council with Finland taking over the Chair.

While the opportunity to speak directly to the Foreign Ministers of eight Arctic states is an exciting opportunity, the “real work” happens in the Arctic Council’s six Working Groups.

Over the next two years, we’ll be involved with the following Working Group projects, where we’ll contribute knowledge from our region and learn from the experiences of other Arctic countries, Indigenous peoples throughout the Circumpolar Arctic, and leading experts and researchers:

- Arctic Renewable Energy Futures Toolkit: GCI is leading this initiative to provide online and print resources for community energy planning to facilitate getting communities off costly and environmentally damaging diesel power generation. This will facilitate communities to take advantage of opportunities offered by the territorial and federal governments’ current interest in renewable energy investments in the North by learning from the experiences of other Arctic states who have set ambitious renewable energy goals. Finland and Sweden, for example, have both commitment to generating 100% of their electricity from renewable sources.
- Best Practices in Arctic Environmental Impact Assessments: The objectives of this project are to: (1) ensure that environmental considerations specific to the Arctic including social and health aspects, are explicitly addressed and incorporated into the planning, design and decision making of large-scale economic projects; (2) Identify existing good practices through sharing and learning with the aim of developing good practice recommendations for EIA in the Arctic; (3) Promote meaningful practices of public participation, especially the participation of indigenous peoples, and the integration of traditional and local knowledge in EIA within the Arctic; and build a viable network of Arctic EIA actors.
- Arctic Renewable Energy Network Academy (ARENA): focuses on sharing knowledge and establishing professional networks related to microgrids and integration of renewable energy resources for remote Arctic communities. Check out the webinars at: [www.arena.alaska.edu](http://www.arena.alaska.edu)
- Arctic Energy Summit: taking place in Helsinki, Finland September 18-20, 2017 it will address energy in the Arctic as it relates to small and off-grid community energy solutions; oil and gas development; renewable energy; regulation and financing; and transportation and transmission.
- Arctic as a Food Producing Region: aims to increase food production in the north for the north through legal analysis of food-production regulations and a value chain assessment to identify economically-viable opportunities to increase food production in the Arctic.

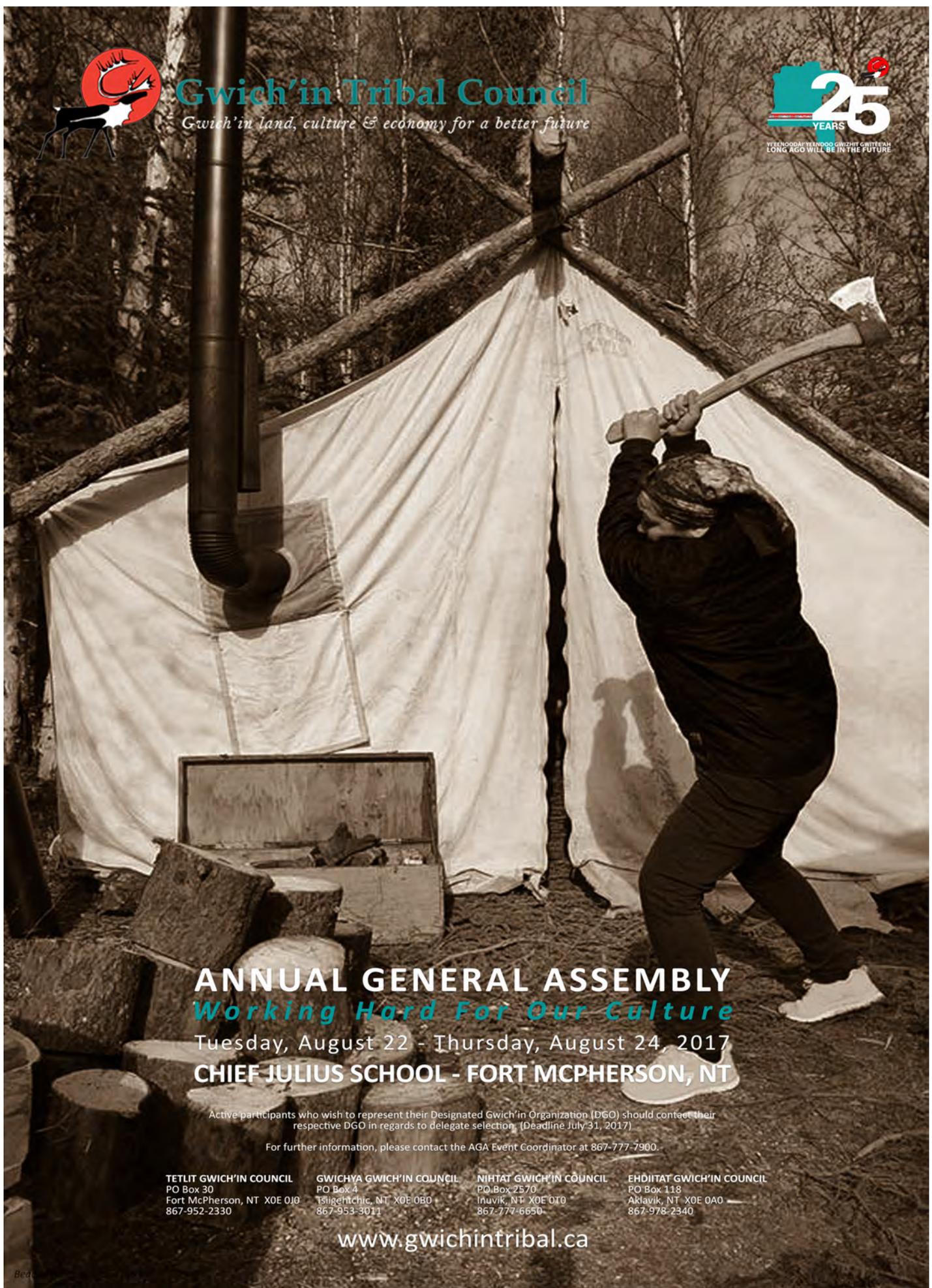
We look forward to sharing with you the results of these projects over the coming two years.





# Gwich'in Tribal Council

*Gwich'in land, culture & economy for a better future*



## ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*Working Hard For Our Culture*

Tuesday, August 22 - Thursday, August 24, 2017

**CHIEF JULIUS SCHOOL - FORT MCPHERSON, NT**

Active participants who wish to represent their Designated Gwich'in Organization (DGO) should contact their respective DGO in regards to delegate selection. (Deadline July 31, 2017)

For further information, please contact the AGA Event Coordinator at 867-777-7900.

**TETLIT GWICH'IN COUNCIL**  
PO Box 30  
Fort McPherson, NT X0E 0J0  
867-952-2330

**GWICHYA GWICH'IN COUNCIL**  
PO Box 4  
Tsiliehtchic, NT X0E 0B0  
867-953-3011

**NIHTAT GWICH'IN COUNCIL**  
PO Box 2570  
Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0  
867-777-6650

**EHDIITAT GWICH'IN COUNCIL**  
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