

# Vuntut Gwitchin Government

SPRING 2018  
NEWSLETTER

K'OH DAGAII  
DOK

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Chief Bruce Charlie                                | 2 & 3 |
| Councilor Marvin Frost Jr                          | 4     |
| Councilor Dana Tizya Tramm                         | 5     |
| Kathie Nukon - Justice<br>Chaleigh Charlie - Admin | 6 & 7 |
| William Josie Natural Resources                    | 8-19  |
| Lindsay Johnson Education                          | 21    |
| Recreation   | 22    |
| Government Services                                | 24    |
| Pictures   | 26    |



## In Tribute

### "CHIEF" JOE LINKLATER

It is with heavy hearts that the Vuntut Gwitchin Government mournfully acknowledges the passing of our beloved Leader Joe Linklater. Joe was a bright light and a source of positivity for the Vuntut Gwitchin, and for many, many more across the entire world. He served as chief for 12 consecutive years, and 15 years total. He was indeed one of our greatest leaders in our rich history, but more than that, he was a dear friend, mentor, beloved relative, and a kind hearted soul to all who were blessed by his presence. His big bright smile and warm heart soothed the spirit of many. It is in fact, the most amazing thing about him, that even though he was such a prolific leader and naturally talented person, he was also kind and generous and brought happiness to the people around him. He will be sorely missed but we must all remember his resolve; he never gave up and he was unafraid to face grief and other obstacles with strength and courage. We should all honor him by doing the same.

*Joe Linklater, VGG General Assembly 2017*



"Chief Joe Linklater's heart and soul were in the community of Old Crow. His hard work and commitment to the future of Vuntut Gwitchin are his legacy.  
- Bruce Charlie, Chief

"I had the chance to serve with Joe in his role as Chief. He spoke strongly for our community and with guidance from our elders he set self-government in place for our future. When advocating on behalf of our Government, he always carried great respect for Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. Communication to the community was one of his main goals, ensuring that everyone was on the same page. His office door was always open and he genuinely listened to all for advice and guidance. Mahsi Choo Joe for all the hard work you have given to the Vuntut Gwitchin. I am thankful to be your friend and my family.  
- Esau Schafer, Deputy Chief

"If you want to  
be more powerful  
in life, Educate  
yourself"  
-Unknown

## Bruce Charlie Chief

Welcome back, it's been a while since the last public update from the Chief's office. We are excited to deliver some on-the-land cultural projects within our traditional territory. I hope everyone gets an opportunity to get out to one of the camps.

Here is an update on the re-occurring meetings that I take part in:

**Implementation** of our modern day treaty is going very well. I attend meetings along with other self-governing First Nations. Issues at hand for VGG:

- FTA Continuation Agreement for Fiscal Year 2018-19. This agreement was supposed to be completed at the end of the 2015 fiscal year.
- FA Amendment for Aboriginal Language Initiative Program Funding Enhancements. This agreement will amend the existing FTA to enhance the funding we currently receive for the ALIP.
- FTA Amendment for Health Canada Program Funding Enhancements. This amendment will amend the existing FTA to enhance the funding we currently receive for the following Health Canada Programs effective April 2018: FASD, Home and Community Care, National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy and Mental Maternal Child Health.
- Draft FTA Amendment for YESA funding increase. This agreement will amend the existing FTA to increase the amount we receive to support our participation in development assessment activities under YESAA. WE currently receive approximately \$130,000 for this every fiscal year through our FTA and with the amendment, we will see that amount increase by approximately \$60,000 to a total of approximately \$190,000.

In the new FTA we will be looking to increase our transfer to better address the areas of housing, infrastructure, cultural language and heritage, and social programs. We're also looking to get side agreements to the FTA that would give us a share of federal tax revenues and direct access to federal funding (instead of having to go to Yukon asking for federal funding dollars).

**Land Claims Agreements Coalition (LCAC)** - Formed in 2003, the LCAC has membership representing all the Inuit, First Nation and Metis Modern Treaty organizations and governments in Canada. The objective is to ensure that Modern Treaties are fully implemented in spirit and intent, and to work closely and collaboratively with the Government of Canada and our other partners to bring this about.

### **LCAC Leaders meet with Prime Minister Trudeau**

**Assembly of First Nations** - Two meetings a year: The annual General Assembly in July and the Special Chief's Assembly in December. The AFN is an assembly modelled on the United Nations General Assembly of First Nations (Indian Bands) represented by their Chiefs. It emerged from and replaced the Canadian National Indian Brotherhood in the early 1980's. The aim of AFN is to protect and advance the Aboriginal and Treaty rights and interest of First Nations in Canada, including health, education, culture and language.

The AFN is a national advocacy organization representing First Nation citizens in Canada which includes more than 900,000 people living in 634 First Nation communities and in cities and towns across Canada.

AFN is now setting up an office



**Yukon Forum and the Intergovernmental Forum** – Yukon Forum happens 4 times per year when the Chiefs and YG Ministers meet and report and update leaders on the current affairs of the Territory and Federal Government. The Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan is the result of the collaborative work being done at the Yukon Forum and direction from Yukon First Nation and Government of Yukon leaders as committed to in the Working Together Declaration. The goal of the Yukon Forum is to foster reconciliation, develop strong government-to-government relations and collaborate on priorities by the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations.

### **Federal Budget**

On February 27, 2018 the federal government released its budget plan for fiscal year 2018-19 ("Budget 2018"). Budget 2018 contains two significant announcements directly relevant to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation ("VGFN")

#### **Negotiation Loan Forgiveness**

Budget 2018 announced that the Federal government is ending its policy of requiring the use of loans to fund Indigenous participation in the negotiation of modern treaties. Starting in 2018-19, Indigenous participation in modern treaty negotiations will be funded through non-repayable contributions.

With respect to those who have already settled negotiation loan debts incurred in the negotiation of their comprehensive land claim, such as VGFN, Budget 2018 indicates that the Federal government will engage those affected on how best to address forgiveness of loans.

Joe Wild, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, confirmed that the Federal government will engage on how best to repay Indigenous groups such as VGFN and indicated it may require a repayment schedule rather than a lump sum refund.

#### **Collaborative Fiscal Policy Process Support**

Budget 2018 announced that Federal government will provide \$189.2 million in 2018-19 to begin the implementation of fiscal policy reforms that VGFN and other self-governing Indigenous governments (SGIGs) have been developing in the Collaborative Fiscal Policy Development Process.

SGIGs had made proposals for Budget 2018 to begin the implementation of fiscal policy reforms related to governance funding enhancements, infrastructure, housing and culture, language and heritage totalling approximately \$600 million.

Joe Wild, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, indicated that access to the \$189.2 million will be determined at the Collaborative Fiscal Policy Development table. Wild also indicated that a carve out for SGIGs from the \$11 billion for housing and \$4 billion for Infrastructure announced in Budget 2017 is currently being worked on and these monies could potentially be used to supplement the \$189.2 million in Budget 2018 for implementing fiscal policy reforms.

While announced in the context of the Collaborative Fiscal Policy Development Process, VGFN has an opportunity to access Budget 2017 and Budget 2018 dollars to implement fiscal policy reforms related to governance, infrastructure and housing within the new Financial Transfer Agreement currently under negotiation.

#### **Labour Market Training Agreement**

Budget 2018 announced \$1.1 billion over five years, and \$235.7 million per year ongoing, available to First Nations (including SGIGs) to support the creation of a new Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISETS) program which will replace the existing Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) program.

Joe Wild, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, indicated that a portion of these ISETS program funds may be available for SGIGs to include in a Labour Market Agreement separate or as part of the Financial Transfer Agreement.

VGFN and the Self-Governing Yukon First Nations fiscal caucus have been in ongoing discussions with Employment and Social Development Canada regarding ISETS (formerly ASETS) and the potential for a Labour Market Agreement that may be included within our Financial Transfer Agreement, or alternatively, as a separate funding arrangement.

VGFN will continue to pursue options to access ISETS funding so that VGFN can provide increased opportunities for citizens to get labour market job training. The days are getting longer and warmer as winter comes to an end. I wish everyone good luck out on the land and a safe and enjoyable time. Take good care of yourself and one another. God Bless everyone





Deputy Chief Esau Schafer, Chief Bruce Charlie, Councilor Marvin Frost Jr, Councilor Dana Tizya-Tramm and Councilor Paul Josie

“Stay close to the land and listen to what others have to say”

-John Joe Kyikavchik

Marvin Frost Jr., Councilor

Health and Social Programs Standing Committee

Good day

It's been a challenging few months since I got into leadership. I've learned a lot from council and I would like to thank them and others for their guidance and for helping me along the way as well.

I've got a couple things on the way right now regarding Health and Social programs that are coming to Old Crow. Healing camp through Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman. (MMIW). Still a work in progress right now; in a few months we will know the location and much more. I'm also working on a Youth Conference sometime in mid-May. We will need a coordinator for the event; the Youth Conference will be dealing with Mental Health and Suicide prevention and Aboriginal Diabetes initiative/ education health activities. I would like to thank Health and Social programs for funding for the conference. If there's any more I'll keep the community updated. It's very unfortunate that we lost some employees in the Health and Social department, Gladys Netro as the health and social manager, Kyla Ross as the family social Support Worker and Martha Many Grey Horse as the Director of the Health and Social. On behalf of VGG I would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication to the department for these positions. Jobs will be posted as soon as possible. As I said it's been challenging, and I want to thank Randall Tetlich and Mabel for their hard work over the Christmas holiday.

Also I want to thank my wife as well for being there though the rough days I had. Thank you

Alright have a good spring my fellow community!!!!!!

Dana Tizya-Tramm, Councilor  
Heritage and Natural Resources Standing Committee

It's been an incredible year. There is so much work to do that it can be hard to take a moment to look back and recognize the progress already made. I appreciate this opportunity to update my community on the many movements of the Caribou file, and the steady progress of projects within Heritage and Natural Resources. Mahsi' cho to the hard-working staff who push our Government forward every day.

During the last week of February I attended strategic meetings in Washington DC that involved many of our long standing allies in the US. The current politics in the US is pushing the Coastal Plains of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge further through unclear processes and closer to development. VGFN is a catalyst in bringing together historical partnerships in Canada and it is important that we partake in both US and Canadian meetings. We have the opportunity to influence one another; make one another stronger and more knowledgeable; and bring stakeholders together to assist in our pursuit of the total protection of the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou.

These meetings fared well, however a recent significant and unforeseen push to have the first lease sale within the calving grounds accelerated has changed the landscape of this issue. There are teams of lawyers who are studying, and quickly trying to understand what this may mean for these lands and how we can stop or slow this process. On March 27 and 28 I was in Anchorage to attend meetings designed to regroup our efforts in the state most affected: Alaska. Here I will be networking with ENGO's from across the States to discuss and strategize our legal and political options. All of this work informs a larger strategy. This is the tip of the iceberg and in response we are currently developing a Caribou Coordinator position to help coordinate and improve our efforts.

Currently, language programs are being developed and delivered by the Heritage department with more programming to come. We had the acclaimed author Lawrence Hill in our community whom I was honored to introduce and fascinated by his talks.

The Council and ED met with Chance Oil & Gas (COG) (formally Northern Cross) on February 22<sup>nd</sup> to begin discussions on a working partnership that will benefit us all. We made good progress and we will work to ensure a productive partnership that will lead to productive, responsible outcomes. The NR Department is currently working on documents that will guide this process. Please come by the office to pick-up COG Permit Maps and 1-page information chart on COG new structure in the foyer of our Government building.

With federal monies coming down for Language, Culture, Climate Change, and more it's important that we position ourselves on a political level to take advantage of the many changes coming down from the Federal Government. This is the time to meet these trickle-down adjustments and connect with our ground-level community and nation's best interests in mind.

I was happy with the changes to the Navigable Waters Act restoring many protections taken from Stephen Harper as well as putting a first nations focus on them. How will our government work to ensure progress in both the Territorial, and Federal governments in a time of reconciliation? How will the Federal changes to the Indian Act and others benefit us? How will we all work together to strike the balance needed today that will benefit us all in the future? These are questions that should guide us in our daily movements and multi-year strategies; these are questions that face us in all of our work. I give thanks to the staff and nation and ask for prayers for our caribou, and our nation.

Mahsi' Choo

Dana Tizya-Tramm



“Educate the  
young; preserve  
our culture. Live  
in harmony with  
the land &  
animals”  
-Johnny Abel

## Kathie Nukon,

### Justice Coordinator/Indigenous Court Worker

It is a privilege to present this report for the spring edition of the Vuntut Gwitchin Government newsletter.

#### **Community Justice**

From August to November 2017 this program was for the most part inactive due to the acting position I was in for the Health and Social Department. There are plans for more activities in the new fiscal year. There will be more community feasts, and a justice gathering, for which there is a draft plan.

#### **Indigenous Court Worker (Adult Court)**

The title of this position is changed from Aboriginal Court Worker. This half-time position is combined with the Justice Coordinator position.

If clients wish to speak with the probation officer or lawyer you have the opportunity to call from the justice office. Funds for fines are kept in a safe place until the court circuit comes to Old Crow, at which time the money is handed over to the Clerk of the Court. You will then be provided with a receipt. Since January 2018 many out-of-court services were delivered.

#### **Yukon Territorial Court**

The court circuit will be on April 10, 2018 at the Old Crow Community Hall at 10:00 a.m. Postings are at the Health Center, the Co-op, the College, and the Sarah Abel-Chitze Administration Building. Individual letters are mailed to each client with the time, date and place of court. On March 27<sup>th</sup> there was a pre-circuit court to go over each matter. After this teleconference the lawyer or his assistant will give the date and time clients can call him in Whitehorse. If a lawyer cannot attend court in Old Crow an alternate agent will attend on his behalf. The number for adults, who attend court, will fluctuate. At the moment there are seven clients. The court dockets, which are public documents, are faxed from Whitehorse. The next court circuit, after April is June 5, 2018.

#### **Justice Committee**

This committee is still in need of members. If you are interested in sitting on this committee, please come forward. There is room for up to seven members to form this committee. The committee will work with the Justice Coordinator.

#### **Training, Conferences, and Meetings**

The week of January 8, 2018 a representative of Yukon Territorial Government Community Justice assisted with the completion of some reports. The funders of both programs are Justice Yukon, Justice Canada and the Vuntut Gwitchin Government.

On a monthly basis all First Nations justice coordinators and indigenous court workers take part in teleconferences, which is hosted by YTG Community Justice. Each teleconference the topic is different. In the most recent call we heard from the Crown's office on the process of diversion. Diversion is used if a client meets the criteria. After a client has been diverted the committee and the coordinator will decide on diversion choices.

On February 6, 7, & 8, at the training for justice and court workers we heard from Legal Aid and from a Crown Prosecutor on what legal aid is, who is eligible, and how to apply for this service. We heard from a judge and a lawyer on court processes, the RCMP on pre/post diversion. There was a presentation on probations and justice wellness. Council of Yukon First Nations presented on the role of indigenous court workers. At the end of the three-day training there was a World Café. At these round-table best practices for individual communities was discussed. Yukon community needs are similar. We deliver under the same programs.

The YTG Coordinator, Restorative Justice Conference Program is available to do restorative justice meetings, or conferences in the communities and in schools. An invitation will be extended for April.

On April 5 & 6 EXPLORING JUSTICE: **OUR WAY** is being held in Whitehorse. Some topics to be discussed are Access to Justice, First Nation Reintegration Programming, Reality of our Justice System and Restorative Justice. A vision will be created for what we can do to benefit our people who are affected by the justice system. The justice conferences, training, meetings, or workshops often have room for two delegates. From this date, all information on workshops, training, and conferences will be posted. If you are interested in attending please let me know.

**Prevention**

Alcoholic's Anonymous meetings are every Saturday at the Safe House from 7 to 8 pm. AA Materials are being prepared to hold proper meetings. For the first meeting a sharing circle was held. Materials for Al-Anon and Alateen meetings also are being gathered. Al-Anon is a support group for people who are affected by another person's drinking. Alateen is a fellowship of young people (mostly teenagers) whose lives have become affected by someone else's drinking. Teenagers would support teenagers in similar situations. Anyone is welcome to start Al-Anon, or Alateen.

**Other**

One hundred brochures are designed and ordered for the Justice and Court work programs. These glossy card stock brochures will have information on both sides.

When citizens are incarcerated at the Whitehorse Correctional Center it is the responsibility of the court worker to visit the jail. One elder is welcome to come on a visit being planned for August, or September. This visit will occur, if we have any citizens at the WCC.

Please feel free to call, or visit the office for a discussion, or if you have any questions, or suggestions.

From family to family and from friend to friend a blessed Easter and a Happy Spring to you all!



**Chaleigh Charlie**  
**Administrative Assistant**

Since I have started here I have been reporting to the Director of Health and Social, processing any paper work my co-workers need done. (PO's, cheq reg's, postings.. etc)

I am also in charge of processing Social Assistance for the community.

Health and Social Dept-

Good day, on behalf of the Health and Social Department we just wanted everyone to know that within the next couple weeks

we will be planning on doing more events/activities in the community and continue to focus on bringing counselors so that the community will have someone to talk to in their times of need. We will soon have updates and schedules for upcoming events. Thanks.

*"In the Fall when we went rabbit snaring, the men went over the land, I remember. They went to the steep banks across {the river}; sometimes they wouldn't kill any meat and would come home with nothing. When they killed meat, they came home with meat. When they came home without meat it was bad. Us at home, what [ever] we caught, we lived on. All our lives we never had a rest."*

Ellen Bruce

William Josie

Director Natural Resources & Heritage

Drin gwiinzii shilak kat.

It's good to have the sunny weather back after a long winter. At the recent Annual Harvest Meeting (AHM) in Dawson City on Feb 13 and 14, 2018, the harvest situation is in the green zone, so not restrictions, and the Porcupine Caribou Herd (PCH) population is at 218 000 animals.

With the implementation of the North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan (NYRLUP) remaining on track, and the other two planning process, ramping up the Dawson Regional Land Use Planning (DRLUP) and the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan, (PWRLUP) it will be a busy spring and summer.

The Old Crow Contaminants Biomonitoring Projects will commence in August or September with blood, hair, and urine samples. We are looking for contaminants in our people that may come from wild food

The Yukon River Panel (YRP) is meeting at Anchorage, AK right now, and the outlook for the 2018 season looks much like the 2017 season.

We are planning to enact our proposed "Lands and Resources Act" this year, and then begin the same process for the "Fish and Wildlife Act".

Natural Resources & Heritage Dep't (NR&HD) will begin taken water samples again with our partners at the Yukon Gov't (YG) Water Resources Branch.

Ah, the Solar Project, this has taken up a lot of Rosa's time, and I am happy to report that the project is under way, and will continue this year, and into next year.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate our people, and Government for 25 years of Self Government. We had challenges, and we also had successes.

What follows are reports from the NR&HD staff.

Be careful out there in this thawing weather.



William and the Solar PV Panel Test Array

Rosa Brown  
Lands Manager

Old Crow Solar Project

It has been a busy year for the Old Crow Solar Project. With federal government funding support (Northern REACHE Program, CanNor, POLAR Knowledge Canada) the Natural Resources Department worked closely with our technical consultants to complete energy modeling, a grid impact study and the final design of the project.

Additionally, we were able to purchase the solar panels and racking, and the on-site electronics building that will house the inverters and other electrical components.

Negotiation of an electricity purchase agreement with ATCO Electric Yukon is going well, and we hope to have an agreement in place by the end of April. The electricity purchase agreement will establish the price ATCO will pay VGFN for the electricity produced by the solar panels, and the contractual terms of the partnership.

With funding support from Yukon Government's Strategic Industries Fund, VGG worked in partnership with Solvest to install a solar panel test array in Old Crow last summer. The test array compares the efficiency of panels mounted on a solar tracker that follows the movement of the sun throughout the day vs. panels on a fixed mount, and bi-facial panels that can generate electricity from the sun striking either side of the panel vs. standard, single sided panels.

Results showed the panels mounted on solar trackers were significantly more efficient than fixed-mount panels. Unfortunately one of the trackers broke down within weeks of being installed, demonstrating this technology is probably not a good solution for such a remote community as Old Crow.

The final design of the Old Crow Solar Project is based a 900kW configuration with panels generating 450kW of electricity facing east and panels generating 450 kW of electricity facing west. The east/west orientation, with the production of electricity distributed throughout the day, is better suited to long summer days of the north than a more typical south facing orientation. This design also significantly reduces the foundation requirements and their cost.

When fully operational, the Old Crow Solar Project is expected to displace 150,000 Litres diesel/year, reduce greenhouse gases by 525 Tonnes/year (avoided combustion and fuel transportation emissions). If all goes as planned, the diesel generators could be shut off 17% of the time, and the solar energy penetration to the electrical grid will be 24% (of 2.6 GWh/year).

Construction of the solar array is planned for this summer, with ground work beginning early spring. The battery energy storage system and micro-grid controller will be installed early spring 2019, and the system should be fully operational by the summer of 2019.

The Natural Resources Department gratefully acknowledges technical consultants Dr. Alex Vigneault and Nick Hawley, Dr. Michael Ross and his team of technical professionals at the Yukon Research Centre, and VGG legal counsel Sarah Ciarrocchi (Mandell Pinder).

Robert Kaye  
Game Guardian

Hello to all out there hope all had a good trapping season this winter .

Not much for caribou around this year a few people getting moose . Made trail to Blue Bluff around Mar 26th very rough trail on the river and water at David Lord Creekan and Blue Bluff here and there on the river .

We have some boys going out to Crow Flat with Jeremy the muskrat man doing some Monitoring on the land ,Climate Change Monitoring camp all spring good job for someone who like being out on the land doing some work with Jeremy .There is some caribou around head of Pine Creek south of us a few moose on the river and the winter road .

Good to see some people out on the land enjoying the sun . NR has been hiring boys to go out hunting for the community getting some caribou and moose . Would be nice to go out again for some caribou for caribou days coming up in May .

Well hope all have a good spring enjoy the sun good to have it back . Thank you have a safe spring

Darius Elias

## Fish &amp; Wildlife Manager

“Chan sreendit neegwidadhaa aii geenjit gwiint'oh shoh ihhlii.”

Spring time is coming again and for that I am happy!

As your Fish & Wildlife Manager I would like to say we are moving forward on many files in our traditional territory and our partners appreciate our community's involvement and guidance.

To begin, I would like to point out that our traditional territory encompasses 55,548 km<sup>2</sup> and we have 56% of that protected! Very impressive. The country of Switzerland is 41,285 km<sup>2</sup>.

Vuntut National Park ~ 4345 Km<sup>2</sup>

Fishing Branch Territorial Park & Habitat Protection Area (Ni'iinlii Njik) ~ 6500 Km<sup>2</sup>.

Fishing Branch Ecological Reserve & Settlement Land R-5A & S-3A1 ~ 169.1 Km<sup>2</sup> and 138.4 Km<sup>2</sup>.

Old Crow Flats Special Management Area ~ 19,000 Km<sup>2</sup>

New Whitefish Wetlands Habitat Protection Area (Ch'ihilii Chik) ~ 468 Km<sup>2</sup>

New Bell River Summit Lake ~ Proposed Territorial Park (Daadzaii Van) ~ 1525 Km<sup>2</sup>

Settlement Lands ~ 7744 Km<sup>2</sup>

**Some exciting things to report:**

The chum salmon incubation project has been very successful so far, we did a tour with the students in Whitehorse and have the school project going as well.

We are in the final stages of approving a Native User Agreement for the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Basically means the allocation and management of caribou to the communities if the herds population is ever in the orange and red zones.

We will begin the final stages of signing off the new Ch'ihilii Chik whitefish wetlands Habitat Protection Area management plan.

We have begun the drafting of the Daadzaii Van Territorial Park management plan.

I've been appointed to the Peel River Watershed Land Use Planning process as a Senior Liaison Committee member to conduct the final consultation protocol across the Yukon to achieve a final plan.

We are participating in the new wild salmon policy implementation plans and new Federal Fisheries Act implementation.

Continuing to develop the Porcupine River drainage local and traditional knowledge salmon management plan.

Renewing the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Mater and Yukon / NWT bilateral water agreements.

Beginning to renew the North Yukon Fish & Wildlife Management Plan.

Presently reviewing the Conservation Plan for Grizzly Bears.

Finalizing the Vuntut Gwitchin Oil & Gas engagement policy.

Mosquito Control Program will occur in May.

Managing and applying for monitoring projects that put our people to work and help our natural environment.

It's important to recognize that in Natural Resources we work to keep pace with other Yukon, Federal and First Nation governments processes with a very small staff. So thank you to our Natural Resources department for all the work you do and to the community that is so engaged and helps us along.

I believe having an optimistic outlook for achieving my Fish & Wildlife tasks is important so I can move forward with confidence.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me:

Email: [fwman@vgfn.net](mailto:fwman@vgfn.net)

## Sophia Flather Language Coordinator

It has been an exciting couple of months putting the *Gwich'in 1* textbook and methodology into practice for the first time with a group of adults. There have been successes and challenges, but we have had a lot of fun in the classroom throughout. Some say I am too strict in the class, others say I am too lenient! Whatever the case, I am proud of the work done by the students. I really commend the students who have stayed engaged in the course as it is a big commitment.

In other news, I have been working on developing the following textbooks, *Gwich'in Stories 1* and *Gwich'in 2*. *Gwich'in Stories 1* is made up of 16 stories, mostly traditional stories from our oral history. *Gwich'in 2* will be a more intensive textbook of vocabulary and grammar. So we will be doing more editing with fluent speakers to complete these projects, as well as reviewing *Gwich'in* verbs.

We just held an Illustration Workshop with artist, Rhoda Merkel. It was held in the school and for the community in the evenings to illustrate a *Shanaghàn* (old woman) story, adapted from a Sarah Abel story. The paintings from the community workshop will be used in the *Gwich'in Stories 1* textbook. And the students created a story blanket, which is currently displayed in the John Tizya Centre. We will be looking for ways to create more illustrations for some of the other stories in the *Gwich'in Stories 1* textbook as well. Let me know if you have any ideas!

We also plan on posting a Language Assistant position sometime this year to help out with teaching, curriculum development, language data collection and organization, and recording and editing audio. I look forward to bringing in a new person to strengthen our language program to offer more classes and resources for the community.

This spring, I am filled with hope about language. I have been very focused on delivering the first course of *Gwich'in 1*. The students will be graduating from the first class in May. I feel good about moving forward and seeing where we can get in our language learning!

Mahsi'!



“In the summer time we kill a lot of caribou so we have to make a lot of dry meat. The woman also [snared] gophers, then they dried them. Girls your age clean gopher guts, they dry it all. To dry it they poke a stick through it [to keep it spread open], this is so it will dry properly. Their mothers put [the gopher guts] in a caribou tripe bag for them. [those] gopher guts. When they cache mat underground they also out the gopher guts in with the caribou mat, that’s how they moved forward. By then winter is coming, [around] the month of August, those who own a caribou fence travel back to it. That’s when they travel back to the fence. In august thers lots of cribou so they set snares [in the caribou fences]. That is how they carried on when they did things in the summer. It was slightly difficult.”

**Myra ‘Choo’ Kaye**

"It's like this: That's why from the beginning of time, they took the kids around [on the land]. It would be a big help. Long ago, our fathers told us all this. They went with us children on the land; we travelled all around. That's how we know the land...

From there people would go in all different directions to the different lakes. There were lots of people. In May, on hard ice, they would visit [each other], they would have a good time. Way over there is a long lake. In 1930 Peter Moses sold little stuff here. He would go down through that valley to Shingle Point (on the coast of the Arctic Ocean) for trade goods. From there he would go to Fort Yukon [Alaska] for trade goods. That's how hard our elders long ago worked so we could live well."

- John Joe Kyikavichik

## Heritage Branch

### Newsletter Report Spring 2018

Here are the Heritage updates and reports from Heritage staff for the spring.

**CROW FM** had funding for the Station Manager Lyle Charlie until March 31, 2018. We have applied for additional funding through National Aboriginal Broadcasting for 2018-19. More community involvement is needed to make the community radio successful. Deetru' Gwinews Radio Society is now in good standing under the Societies Act and can be used for fund raising.

**Yukon Forum Heritage Priority** meetings are proceeding according to the Yukon Forum action plan. YFN Heritage reps have regular caucus meetings and have produced a draft document to outline the relationship between YG and YFNs in relation to Heritage. The caucus is currently reviewing a draft Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference.

**Heritage Stewardship Guide** work continues on this guide to document all YFN Heritage activities and advise future heritage workers in all areas of heritage stewardship. Graphic design was completed by Pat Halladay and the Guides have been printed and will have an online version.

**Land Information System Needs Assessment** through funding from the Indigenous Community Based Climate Monitoring program consultants from Animikii were contracted to conduct the needs assessment and produce a final report that will provide options for VGG to move forward with developing a land information system.

**Crow Flats Monitoring Camp** project with Jeremy Brammer is progressing, funded by the Indigenous Community-based Climate Monitoring Program. This project established the Crow Flats monitoring camp and provided a basis for future monitoring projects and multi-year funding applications. Part of this project was a well-attended full day facilitated community session to identify community research priorities.

**Palaeontologists visited to Old Crow** March 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> to catalogue the fossils collected in 2017. Alberto Reyes and Grant Zazula did community presentations on fossil forests and Giant Bison. Summer field work will include collecting fossils on the Crow and Porcupine rivers and working with a documentary film company from Germany.

**LaPierre House** 6 interpretive panels were reviewed and finalized for fabrication. Installation could take place in the summer 2018 provided fabrication is completed and water levels are high enough.

**Historical Lifeways Project** continues this summer with helicopter funding from Polar Continental Shelf Project. Focus areas for Elder and youth connections will be north of Caribou Bar Creek toward King Edward Mountain, an area of major Gwich'in travel routes between Rampart House, Crow Flats and Arctic Village, AK; and, upper Johnson Creek between Driftwood River and Black Fox Creek, which features access to 5 caribou fences and 3 routes to the Arctic coast.

**Navigation Systems** work this spring was limited to one trail breaking exercise on the trail between Old Crow and Crow Flats, via Schaeffer Mountain. Three trail breakers were hired to travel and document the trail. They successfully navigated to Johnson Creek but did not have enough time to locate the river crossing.

**Gwaandak Theatre** has applied for funding to continue working with the community on creating play scripts for Gwich'in stories. *Unplugged*, a Gwaandak theatre production will be performed in Old Crow on May 10, 2018.

**Our World Film Workshop** will take place April 23 - May 8, 2018. Facilitators will be in Old Crow to work with the Grade 7-9 class and other community members to produce films. The films can focus on ANWR and the story of this issue to the Gwich'in. Our World film crews have developed a close relationship with the community over the years and have facilitated film productions in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and now 2018.

**Fort Yukon Gwich'in Place Names Atlas** communication has taken place and place names will be shared across the border, enhancing GIS place names databases on both sides.

**Lawrence Hill**, author in residence at Burton House in Dawson spent most of the week of March 7<sup>th</sup> in Old Crow with his wife and did a presentation at the John Tizya Centre.

**Human Health Project** conducted traditional food diet surveys in the community Feb 19<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018. This project will follow up with bio-monitoring samples to determine contaminant levels among community members.

**Traditional Knowledge Initiative** YG/VGG meeting took place on January 31, 2018 in Old Crow attended by Joe Linklater, Mary Jane Moses, Brandon Kyikavichik and Megan Williams with Anslie Ogden and Shirley Dawson, YG Executive Office. Direction was provided on how YG can proceed with their TK policy, processes that work and sensitivities around TK. YG will continue to work with VGG Heritage to move forward on the initiative.

**National Film Board and APTN** partnered to screen the film *Mohawk Girls* in Old Crow March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and the film maker, Tracey Deer attended as well to talk about the film and answer questions about her community and film making. Tracey also spent time with the Grade 7-9 class to talk about filmmaking and finding the stories only they can tell.

**Media** interest has heightened due to the recent developments in the US. Peter Mather is coordinating a major media push with 8 different stories for large and small media organizations. There are three journalists interested in observing the fall hunt in 2018.



# VADZAIH



"In the springtime, they go to Whitestone and live around there and kill moose. They dry moose meat. The women prepare the skins for making of moose skin boats. They get everything ready, and make the boat, they all load up in the boat and come down. Down at Ch'ihillii chik they land. There the women tan the skin of the boat. All that, they prepare and get ready...

Around there, our grandfathers made a foundation for us. I don't mean, that they made it with nails. Their language is strong, that's the kind they made. That is how we continue to live our tradition in our community. People, when they're not like that, sometimes gwiintsal hanaatth'ak. [fall to pieces] That's what we use today so that how we are to live. All that, what they spoke about, today, we live that way...

Since then how our grandfathers lived, that's how we are living. We try; that is how we are strong.

- Alfred Charlie  
(Tetlich)

Drin gwiinzii. Sreendit gwats'at nakhwah gweedhaa geenjit gwiintl'oh shoh ihtii.

[Good day. I am really happy that we are approaching spring.]

February was a busy month for me, travelling here & there for workshops, meetings & events. That's the best part of my job when I get to go places. In early February I attended at the Museums workshop called "Care of Objects in Indigenous Cultural Centers" in Whitehorse at the MacBride Museum where facilitators from Canadian Conservation Institute gave us information on topics like "Why do objects deteriorate and recognizing deterioration, we identified materials/objects from a museum setting and examined them for the different types of wear & tear and the reasons behind the wear & tear of objects. We looked at the ten agents of deterioration, a) Physical forces such as earth quakes, bumping, vibration, breaking; b) Thieves & vandals, theft, destruction of items, cause damage; c) Fire, scorching, smoke damage can lead to loss of entire collections; d) Water, damage by basement flooding if collections stored there, water sprinklers, stains, swells, corrodes, shrinking materials; e) Pests, rodents such as mice and insects can damage collections by leaving excrements or eating away at materials; f) Pollutants, indoor & outdoor gasses, liquids, grease, chemicals, dust, salt; g) Light damage, can cause fading or darkening of surfaces, materials; h) Incorrect temperature, temperature may be too high, causing materials to disintegrate and too low temperatures cause materials to become brittle, may lead to fractures; i) Incorrect Relative Humidity, can cause mould & stains, corrodes metals, discolors organic materials, shrinking, warping, splitting of items in collections; j) Dissociation, loss of cultural value when mishandling of items, care not being taken to preserve collections.

On the second day we examined ways to reduce deterioration of heritage collections, why objects are still with us? Handling objects, Proper storage of collections, Basic requirements of preventative conservation of collections, Group exercises, table talks of objects brought from an actual museum for teaching purposes, introduction to risk assessment and protecting objects on display.

On February 12, I attended to a Porcupine Caribou Management Board meeting in Dawson. I presented to the Board on how VGFN Heritage incorporates traditional knowledge into our work. I also showed a slide show and a short film. My presentation was well received and it was an honor to be invited to speak to the Board. I spoke about our work in Heritage, how inclusive the elders, community knowledge holders, youth are an integral part of our oral history projects. TK is always evolving and doesn't stay the same. The community people are our key people on the ground, they have traveled the land, have heard the stories from their parents, grandparents, elders of the past. We take them to the land for interviews where their memories come alive, where they share their stories with us and it is documented. This has been one of the key successes to our projects is taking our people back to the land. TK has to always be passed down along with all other teachings. The culture, traditions, identity all go hand in hand. If we want to see change we walk together side by side encouraging each other. The kids of today need to grow up proud of who they are as Gwich'in. Our old people left their marks on the land, so we could know how hard a life they had however a happy life on the land. Sometimes we have to make that big effort to connect with the land, we have to do that in order to move forward, take the teachings from behind and move forward in unity, our kids, grandkids need that direction.

February 18-23, once again back in Dawson, this time presenting at a Myth & Medium Event with the focus on Food-Culture-Identity and one of the first "Appetizer" speakers on the opening night. I spoke on how caribou is a whole part of me, for most of my life it has sustained me, that is what I grew up on and today I still rely on it for food. I also spoke to the aspect of sharing food, how it was done long ago and if you were taught to share food growing up, you still continue that practice. We're very fortunate in Old Crow to have the caribou come close by our community, some years we miss out but it doesn't happen that often unlike the Dempster Highway where the Tetl'it Gwich'in have had no caribou for many years on a steady basis. However we need to be grateful for the opportune times that we have that access to caribou and with climate change happening at a faster rate, one of the many questions to ask is "What will become of the caribou?" Some of us we haven't seen caribou since last August. How do we adapt to the climatic changes? How do we adapt/cope with having no caribou?

On the following morning I again spoke on "The land that sustains us" on how we as Gwich'in rely so strongly on the caribou from way back in time. How the land and animals sustain us and our reliance on this cycle of life, why it is so important that we continue to respect the land, the animals and all that Mother Nature provides. How we must take care and take only what we need?



Conserving our resources, this happens in the four seasons. How we were taught growing up, that is what we pass to the future generations, those are strong values, traditions that we must never forget. Our ancestors shared information in their stories handed down so that it could be continually shared with the community, passed down to the young people for them to use. The strong teachings from the past are provided for us so that we can find meaningful balance in our existence with the land and animals which provide for us. We all come from strong lineages, were raised with strong values, we have a strong culture and identity which we all need to explore more and be proud of and continue to practice, get out on the land more, teach the youth, pass the teachings on. The youth need this direction in order to be strong leaders for tomorrow.

The land, the environment and ecosystems that we live in and adapt too is just as important as our food sources. We are all connected in this one big circle of life. When we go on the land we are able to breathe fresh air, de-stress, eat good, sleep good, and exercise more and all the goodness that we need for our bodies & mind to function properly. The land is the best medicine, the land is a healer.

Spring is coming and it's such a blessing after a long hard winter. We're always grateful for nice warm weather, one of the best times of the year to be on the land. It doesn't cost anything to be on the land, you just be grateful with offering of prayers that way up here the land is still so peaceful, Nanh tsineedah goo'arii. The land is our best teacher, respecting the land and animals is a big part of our Gwich'in culture. We have to continue to be good stewards of the land and animals so they in turn take care of us.

Lastly, it takes big commitment to connect to the land. To get away from town and to go back to the land where we feel good inside, where we can cry and let it all out, where we can eat good and again as I said before, it's good medicine for the soul.



One of the highlights for me at Myth & Medium 2018 in Dawson was being able to cook with two elders, my older sister Dorothy Alexie of Fort McPherson and elder Peggy Kormandy of Dawson, we cooked with "Art Napoleon of APTN's Moosemeat & Marmalade" cooking show. It was fun to cook outdoors on an open fire with him, a celebrity TV host cook and we cooked traditional foods, caribou, sheep, rabbit, grouse, Dawson garden veggies, rhubarb, cranberries in caribou stomach, the end products, delicious food ever and enjoyed by onlookers afterwards. Before we began cooking, my sister said "He doesn't know he's going to be cooking with professionals" I told Art about that and he was amused. Thank you Trondëk Hwechin Heritage dept. for the invite and a fun-filled week of activities around the theme of Food-Culture-Identity.



I'm looking forward to spring and hopefully real soon I'll get to go out to the Climate Change Monitoring Camp that is set up at Drown Lake. One of the lead persons for this camp is Jeremy Brammer - Muskrat Jeremy and the crew of men that have already set up camp. This is an important camp that will monitor environmental changes with land and animals over a period of a few years. So this is an important worthwhile funded project to get people back on the land monitoring changes now while we still have land, with land erosions, land slumps happening at a fast pace, we need all eyes on the land, any little observations are worth noting. If you have your camera handy start taking pictures of changes observed. Mahsi'

Mahsi' choo. Gwiinzii adik'anohtii [Thank you, take good care]

Mary Jane Moses

## Brandon Kyikavichik Heritage Interpreter

"On the mountain too, we go up by walking. All over, in the winter too, we hunt different directions by dog teams."

*Alfred Charlie  
(Tetlich)*

"...My uncles, when they teach me, my grandfather, they always tell me what's smart, all what I'm to learn. You have to really try, learn about everything, then [intelligence] is going to come."

*- Charlie Peter  
Charlie (Tetlich)*

### **Gwaandak Theater**

In October 2017 We held the "Long Ago Stories Session" with Gwaandak theaters. This was a fun and fulfilling event as usual. We continued the edits on the stories that we are writing into plays, we also had elders there telling stories the entire workshop and at the end we held a "Long Ago Stories Session" where anyone from the community could come in and eat some good food and tell stories. These events always bring us a good laugh and are also a great tool for remembrance. We continue to work on writing some of our older Gwich'in stories into plays for theater. Mahsi' choo to Leonard Linklater and Patty Flather for doing such a great job organizing these fun events, as well as trying to help us get our stories heard and visualized on a different platform.

### **Gwich'in Teacher Training**

I also completed the "Gwich'in Teacher Training Program". This doesn't mean I can go and be a Gwich'in teacher today, but I learned some valuable tools that will be very useful to me in future endeavors in language programming. Keduka Jack did a terrific job as the instructor and I'm sure Sophia Flather will take what she has learned from this program and do an excellent job.

### **Joel and I**

Shoo'ii (my matrilineal uncle) Joel Peter and I spent the months of November and January working on one of the greatest Gwich'in stories ever told: Ko' Ehdanh (Without Fire - the hero in the story is commonly referred to as "Man Without Fire"). We actually did two versions of the story. We did Sarah Abel's version of the story and Johnny Kay's (McPherson) version. Both versions were transcribed into the Van Tat Gwich'in dialect. Johnny Kay's version came from the COPE collection from Inuvik. After we did uncle Johnny Kay's version Joel and I decided to go through the COPE collection and we found a real gem. The story of Vizriiniintsaih Ti', who was known to John Bell as "Painted Faces Father" in 1839 when Bell ascended the Peel River to its source looking for a suitable spot to build the "Peel River Fort" (Fort Macpherson). Joel transcribed Vizriiniintsaih Ti' for me as "Father of Ochre On the Side of His Face". Painted Faces Father was the chief of the "Peel River Indians" (Teet'it Gwich'in) in that fateful year of 1839 and he worked closely with John Bell to establish the first Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trading post in Gwich'in territory. John Bell is the first traveler into Gwich'in lands that I can find that used the term "Kutchin" (Gwich'in). He was the first HBC employee to reach the Yukon River via the Bell/Porcupine River route. It is not known how long Painted Faces Father was chief of the Teet'it Gwich'in but we do know that his grandson Tok Tsal (Little Suckler - named because he had to survive by suckling caribou breasts when his mother died during his birth) became chief in 1865 and remained chief into the early 1890's when his grandson Francis Tsik took over. Tok Tsal's other grandson Julius Salu took over for Francis Tsik and remained chief until 1948, making the succession of chiefs from one bloodline over 109 years and probably closer to 120 years or more. The story begins in Painted Faces Father's early years and continues on through the whole process and reasoning behind the picking of the spot for the Peel River Fort. The story was told by William Nerysoo and we got some very valuable information, and insightful anecdotes out of it. Once again, we took this story from the Teet'it dialect and transcribed it into the Van Tat dialect. Joel and I will continue to write as many Gwich'in language interviews into the modern orthography as we can. There's something about being able to read these interviews word for word and analyze them repeatedly, it is one of the main reasons I am able to construct a framework for the structure of the language, and the consistencies throughout the language. The most important aspect of this project with Joel for me is "hearing" the language. There is no better way to learn than to "hear" the language being spoken on a consistent basis, to be able to hear what I refer to as the "song" of the language, the rhythm that the old timers spoke the language with, there is absolutely no substitute for it, only if you hear the language on a consistent basis, will you ever learn it properly. I feel so blessed to have this experience, I will cherish this for the rest of my life and I would like to thank Joel Peter, the Heritage Department, the Heritage Committee, and of course, the community for supporting me through this and allowing me the freedom to use my skills to the best of my ability, without this flexibility, I would never have been able to accomplish many of the things that I have accomplished in this job.

### **Radio Show**

I haven't been able to do my radio show as consistently as I was hoping but there were a lot of issues around travel dates and leave from work that made it difficult to do the show consistently. Since the establishment of our radio station I have done five episodes. What I do is I read the stories that Joel and I complete in Gwich'in with the English translations. On the first show I did "Fast Runner and the Grizzly Bear Woman". The second show was Sarah Able explaining the Ch'eewał Ti' bloodline in great detail. The third show was the Vah Srigwehdli' (Lone Survivor) story, one of the great Gwich'in survival stories I've ever heard, as a survival story it is surpassed only by Ko' Ehdanh in my opinion.

The fourth show was Myra Kaye Stories on how people survived when they lived only off the land and didn't have any goods coming in from outside yet, this story was so detailed we got a wealth of information out of it but even more importantly, we got some very insightful sayings out of it as well; sayings like "ndoo tr'eedaa gogoontrii, ndoo tr'eedaa t'oonch'uu" (we move[d] forward it was difficult, we move[d] forward that's how it was) and "t'lyah niniint'aii kwaa dai', Gwich'in naii tthak, khetak nih'it t'igiinch'uu" (Back when there were no borders, all Gwich'in people were like they were as one). I've also done an episode where I wrote an ANWR news clipping which was just taken verbatim from a Globe and Mail news clipping on the internet, Joel and I transcribed the news clipping into Gwich'in, which was much, much more difficult than it sounds, I also read from other things that Joel and I have worked on. Everything I read from is read in Gwich'in, followed by the English translation.

### Research and Presentations

I continue my research into the earliest years of contact as well as the oral history stories that predate contact in combination with the archeological records, and Archdeacon Macdonald's journals in my attempt to construct the best understanding I can of the pre-contact existence of the Van Tat Gwich'in. I incorporate a lot of the research that I do into my tours and when combined with my research into many other ancient and indigenous cultures that I do on my own time, I can incorporate many different insights and anecdotes into my tours. I get many requests to do speeches and presentations around the Yukon and some in the NWT. Only some of the requests pertain to my job as it is set out in my job description. I did a presentation for Yukon Tourism in early December called a "pechecucha", this was a fun way to do a presentation and it seemed like people liked it.

### Vadzaih Tthat - Caribou Fences

I continue my research into the caribou fences and the people that owned and operated them, including the Gwich'in names of the families that were tied to each connected system of caribou fences. If we start on the modern day border of Alaska in northwestern Crowflats, we have the "Domas Fences", there are two in total and these ones were owned and operated by the late Charlie Thomas' grandfather, "Old Domas", who was from the country around K'aiiyeendak (Canyon Village) in the lower Porcupine River region in modern day Alaska. Each system of caribou fences had villages running them, the Old Domas village ran two caribou fences. It is not known exactly which families were tied to this village but according to Charlie Peter Charlie, his grandfather Charlie Tetlich (also known as Chichi' Viti) was orphaned as a young man and was taken in by Old Domas to work on the caribou fence. It is probable to assume that since Old Domas was the only caribou fence owner to live at his caribou fence village year round, it would have been quite usual for him to take in orphans and most likely widows as well as a part of his labor force. The Thomas Creek caribou fence village is documented as the last caribou fence village to be in operation which was dated at 1894. Next we have the Timber Creek Fences, there are two in the area, the village seems to have been run by "Old Chisson", he was from Neets'aii Gwich'in country, it is unknown which families would have had ties to this caribou fence village. My guess is that these fences worked symbiotically with the Blackfox Fences. Which is the perfect Segway into the next system of fences, the Blackfox Fences. There are three fences that have been found in the river valley near the source of the Blackfox river, all fences are over three kilometers in length and the largest is 8 km. These fences were Van Tat Gwich'in owned and operated at the time of the end of the caribou fence era. One of the fences was called the Dizhah (Tizya) Fence, and another was the Nili Kak Ti' (John Blackfox) Fence. There was also a K'i' K'avihchik (Kyikavichik) Fence. Exactly which fence was built by who is not known (although it is most probable that all three men supervised the building of all three Blackfox River fences). The families that would have operated this fence were the families that our Van Tat Gwich'in names derive from today. Archeologists found two villages straddling the farthest eastern ridge of the British mountain range, east of the Blackfox fences. The families that were tied to these caribou fence villages were the Nehtruh (Netro), K'i' K'avihchik (Kyikavichik), Dizhah (Tizya), Gwaht'ah Ti' (Kwatlatyi), Nili Kak Ti' (Meat On Top - also known as Blackfox), as well as other Van Tat family names that sadly, have long since been forgotten. Next we have the Driftwood River Fences and the Berry Creek Fence. In the Driftwood region we have three fences run by one village, the Ch'eewat Ti' village, which was later to be known as the Driftwood Village. This village continued long after the fences fell into disuse and was made up of the extended family of Ch'eewat Ti'. The Driftwood fences would have been run mostly by Van Tat Gwich'in families in combination with the Dagoo (Tukudh) families. Ch'eewat Ti' it seems, was from somewhere around the Black River region (Chalkyitsik) in modern day Alaska. After the death of Ch'eewat Ti' around 1894, the duties of the head of the family was passed on to his first born and thus, his name sake, she was a very elderly lady (by the time of the fall of the Ch'eewat Ti' village) named Ch'eewat, the last of the Van Tat Gwich'in ladies to have the old style tattoos on her chin. This village sadly disbanded after a starvation incident killed off many of its inhabitants sometime between the years 1900-1903. Ch'eewat moved to Rampart House and continued to live for many years after the incident and even adopted an English name (Matilda). According to Lazarus Sittichinli, the Driftwood village was taken over by the Kyikavichik family sometime around 1912, and it continued to be a homestead for many well into the late 1920's, decades after the fall of the caribou fence system. The Driftwood fences worked symbiotically with the Berry Creek fence. The Berry Creek village was run by a man named Geh Ts'eh (Rabbit Hat), Archdeacon Macdonald gave him the English name of "Henry Venn", Geh Ts'eh was Dagoo Gwich'in and was Archdeacon Macdonald's first pupil and Gwich'in language teacher as well. The families tied to these caribou fences would have been a mixture of the families that identified as Dagoo as well as a few Van Tat Gwich'in. For the Dagoo we know of the Ahre family, Robert Ahre was the father of Persis Geendii (Kendi) from Old Crow, as well as Sarah Malcolm from Eagle Alaska (who's first husband was one of the sons of Geh Ts'eh), and Mary Hager from Mayo Yukon. They were all kind of like royal sisters, as Robert Ahre was the last recorded chief of the Dagoo people. The K'ashii (Kassi) family and the Ch'idzee (Chitze/Itsi) family also have ties to these fences, both families descend from Ch'eewat Ti'. It is also possible that families like the Nagwan (Nukon), Vitreekwaa (Vittrekwa), Alexie, Ross, Snowshoe and Josie families had ties to these fences in ancient times as well. It sounds to me from the oral history transcripts that the large, complex "Summer Fences" worked together almost like a manufacturing system, if a fence isn't producing in an operating season (late July to middle of October), they shut it down and move to the nearest fence in operation that "is" producing, and they combine their workforces to get the maximum yield, it was simple, and very effective. I was taught by my grandfather and other elders from his era that we come from strong, self-sufficient, intelligent people, and I continue to find proof of this truth everywhere I look.

## Land Monitoring Camp - Crow Flats



**Robert Kaye, Muskrat Jeremy Brammer,  
David Maxwell, Joseph Kaye, Joseph Bruce**



## Land Monitoring Camp - Crow Flats



Donovan Frost, Phillip Bruce,  
Gordon Frost, Nate Schafer  
and Clifton Nukon.





NHL Alumni Jason  
Simon and Tiam  
Kassi

*“Education is not  
the learning of  
facts, but the  
training of the  
mind to think.”  
-Albert Einstein*

## Lindsay Johnson

### Acting Education Director

High enrollment at CZGS in Old Crow and various schools in Whitehorse; many VGFN citizens pursuing Post-Secondary Education and a variety of training opportunities; and several exciting programs and projects on the go has kept everyone in VGG Education quite busy!

Spring means the completion of another Hot Lunch program at CZGS and Thanks goes to cook Tammy Josie for keeping the kids and guests well fed 3 days per week from December to March, Darrel Charlie for stepping up when Tammy was away, and the recreation team and CZGS staff for serving and supervising the kids!

Spring also means Culture Camp. Led by coordinator Frances Ross and ESW Stanley Njootli Sr. the students at CZGS are heading out to Fish Lake for activities and teachings based on this year's theme of Tradition, Arts & Trades. The Grade 4-6 class will be at camp April 3-6, followed by the 7-9 class April 9-12, and 1-3 class from April 16-19, with the Kindergarten kids joining for a day trip April 18. This year marks the 9<sup>th</sup> year the camp has taken place at Fish Lake and wraps up the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of rotating camp themes. Discussions about some changes to camp location and content moving ahead are taking place out of respect to land use traditions and maintaining student engagement.

The Education Department partnered up with Yukon College, Alice Frost Campus, to deliver the Early Learning and Child Care course here in Old Crow. This comes from the identified need to have more community members trained and ready to take on roles at the school and in the Day Home. Participation and feedback from the first part of the course, which ran in February, was good and we look forward to seeing these students complete the 2<sup>nd</sup> part in May. We are focused on capacity building training opportunities as many exciting Capital Projects move ahead within the community this year. We are also very happy to be supporting the Gwich'in Language program passionately headed by Sophia Flather this upcoming fiscal year.

I would like to take the time to acknowledge all the efforts that have been made by department staff to support VGFN students near and far, and keep things running smoothly.

I would also like to give big Mahsi' Choo for the support given to me during my time as Acting Education Manager. It has been a busy 8 months and a great experience learning more about VGG operations and the diverse programs and services offered to Beneficiaries and residents of Old Crow. It has also given me a broader perspective of the challenges and opportunities surrounding the youth and the ways in which I can continue working hard to help forge bright paths for these young people.

I would like to welcome Cheryl Charlie back to the department and look forward to working with her as she makes the transition into the role of Education Director this spring!

Mahsi' Cho!

Lindsay Johnston

## Heather VanBibber

### Education Administrative Assistant

The VGG Education Department provides financial and administrative support to our two Education Support Workers (ESWs), the Family Day Home in Old Crow and the VGG Recreation Department.

#### High School Students in Whitehorse

The VGG Education Department helps support VGFN students that are attending High School in Whitehorse through programs such as the Winter Clothing program, monthly food vouchers (Porter Creek), bi-weekly snacks (F.H. Collins), School Supply Subsidy, Hot Lunch Program, and Student Monthly Allowance. Gadzoosdaa Residence fees and Home Subsidies are also funded for students from Old Crow. Education provides further support and funding to students through the William "Bill" Ferguson Memorial Scholarship (for graduate applicants), purchasing Canada Games Centre passes, coordinating Post-Secondary Tours, Graduation Ragila & Prom, Graduation Gifts, and the annual Year End BBQ.

**ESW-Whitehorse**

Our Education Support Worker (ESW) in Whitehorse is Glenna Tetlich; she helps to administer all the above programs for our high school students in Whitehorse. On top of that Glenna provides much support for the students, coordinates trips & activities, chaperones students, liaises with parents or guardians & community members, organizes meetings, attends Education training and conferences, and maintains the VGFN Van.

**ESW-Old Crow**

Our Education Support Worker in Old Crow is Stanley Njootli Sr; he is involved with running the 16 week Hot Lunch program, Culture Camp, Tutor program, School Supply Subsidy, the William "Bill" Ferguson Memorial Scholarship (for graduate applicants), Fall Hunt, as well as driving school bus from time to time and helping to maintain vehicles.

**Recreation**

VGG Education Department provides administrative support for the Recreation Department and assists with making booking arrangements, and coordinating purchases for programs and events such as Spring Break Camp, Paddle Trip, Rock Camp, T'oo K'at Camp, Canada Day, Native Hockey Tournament, Arctic Winter Games, Halloween & Christmas party, Tae Kwon Do with Derrick Kapuschak, the Father Mouchet Loppet Event, monthly groceries and program supplies, and vehicle and building maintenance.

**Family Day Home**

The Trinin Tsul Zzeh Family Day Home also gets support and funding from the Education Department through the purchase of day-care materials and supplies, new toys and shelving units, playground equipment, sanitation equipment, and as well as maintenance costs. Education Department helped to coordinate some upgrades on the Family Day Home which will be completed this spring including the septic system renovation will be completed in spring, which will open up more space inside the Family Day Home, and adding sand to the playground making the new equipment safe and usable.

**Post-Secondary Tour 2018**

*Vancouver & Victoria from March 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>/2018*

*Izzabella House  
Shae Garrett-Charlie  
Richard Gill-Blake  
Serena Scheper-Schafer  
Alice Frost-Hanberg*

**Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Graduates 2018****Whitehorse**

*Elijah Woods-Charlie  
Alice Frost-Hanberg*

**Old Crow**

*Cheyenne Kapuschak  
Willow Frost  
Shaylene Andre-Josie  
Janelle Schafer  
Tyrone Kyikavichik  
Jeremy Woodhouse*

**Candace Blake**

*PSE/ASETS Coordinator*

Currently there are eighteen Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation students attending colleges, universities and undertaking training. Four upgrading students who are taking courses to be accepted into a specific educational field; thirteen Post-Secondary students and one student in the training field. Some of the degrees, diplomas, and certificates that are being studied/achieved are as follows: Bachelor of Social Work, Office Administration, Carpentry, Nursing, Law, Arts, Heavy Equipment etc. As it is the end of the school year, I would like to say Congratulations to all the students for achieving another year of working towards your educational goals.

## RECREATION DEPARTMENT



NHL Alumni Lori Boschman and Allan Benjamin

*“The body heals with play,  
The mind heals with laughter,  
And the spirit heals with joy.”  
-Proverb*

As always we are busy being active and having fun over in the Recreation Department!! Spring is always an exciting time for us with camps, outdoor activities and renewed energy bringing more people out. Snow pants and sunshine truly make a perfect combination!

The Winter Olympics in Pyeong Chang inspired us to have our own Old Crow Olympics this February. We split ourselves into 4 different countries (teams) and competed in a variety of sporting events over the course of 2 weeks. We had a blast with events such as Speed Skating, Biathlon, Bobsledding, and Snowboarding, which of course had some little Old Crow twists to them.

We are amazingly proud of the youth who have stepped up (and out of some comfort zones) and pushed themselves in various leadership opportunities and sporting events over the past couple months. We had 4 young ladies participate in the Blue Jays Rookie League training in Whitehorse in February, and since initiated their own after-school sport program for the other youth. They are proving themselves to be strong young leaders working towards a baseball tournament in June, and earning prizes along the way. We are also incredibly proud of Allison Schafer who trained in Old Crow and competed as a member of Team Yukon at the Arctic Winter Games in Hay River over Spring Break.

With funding support from the Crime Prevention Victim Services Trust we had another great Spring Break in Old Crow. Facilitators from BYTE, RCMP, and Elders joined rec staff and several youth out at our multi-day Tl'oo K'at Camp. We took a trip out to Caribou Lookout for another camp night with youth responsible for setting and maintaining their wall tent. In town there was the annual Spring Break Scavenger Hunt, 3-on-3 Hockey tournament, lunches at the Youth Center and a Babysitters course to keeping people busy. Thanks to Myranda Charlie and James Itsi for all the hard work over the break!!

A special visit from the NHL Indigenous Alumni Tour at the beginning of March brought the whole community out for an action packed day on and off of the ice. Much time and effort went in to preparing the rink and ice for their visit- thank you Kevin, Ty, Caleb, Myranda, Michael, and others!!! Despite not quite getting it up to NHL standard for the Alumni game, we did have great afternoon skills & drills session on the ice, dinner meet & greet, and evening floor hockey game at CZGS with the pros.

We are again joined by pros from the cross-country skiing world, including Canadian Olympic skier Knute Johnsgaard, for the Annual Father Mouchet Memorial Ski Loppet. This year marks the 5<sup>th</sup> annual event honoring the late Father Mouchet and again takes place on the Saturday of the Easter weekend. This is always a great day that brings young and old out for some fun, competitive spirit, and hanging out at the ski chalet. This special glass medals were designed by Lumel Studios and awarded to each participant.

From facility maintenance to program execution, there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes in recreation that often requires some added support. I would like to sincerely THANK Recreation staff, our back up workers, GS, NR, and all those who step up to the plate to help us out- it really is appreciated





Howard Linklater

## Neenjit Dagoonch'uu Shilak

The sun is back and we are starting to feel the heat from the sun. This means the start of another construction season is fast approaching.

Work is proceeding on the Old Crow Community Hall Project. (OCCH) The drilling for the installation of the piles will begin approximately a week. Then the piles once installed needs to sit and set before construction of the complex can begin. According to the construction schedule, this will be late July or August start flying in build materials, the building will be made with Structural Insulated Panels (SIPs). This is an excellent project to get your hours as an apprentice. Qualified Tradesman and Apprentices will be given priority for employment on this project. The General Contractor has not been selected and that will be done through public tender.

As you can see from the VG-GS budgets, we are planning a very aggressive Health & Safety Renovations Projects for this year. Twenty (20) systems, (10 INAC) (10 YHC) will be replaced with new 8x10 super insulated (8 inches of spray foam), self-contained Utility Room additions, where all the system components will be housed. We will be moving water tanks, hot water tanks and pumps out of the house into the Utility Room Addition. This will reduce water damage and mold contamination caused by freeze ups in housing unit. We would be able to drain the water lines without having to enter the house. We will be focusing on becoming more energy efficient in whatever we build. Yukon Housing Corp. uses a similar system on their units here in Old Crow, so the idea is not new and we know it works. Written notices will be sent to all the effected citizens. Applications were submitted last year to INAC and to YHC this winter on some of the reported Health and Safety issue on file. We will be splitting the work over the summer the first 10 units will start in June and 10 units to start August.

The other major Safety concern is the fuel tanks. All the fuel tanks that are up high on the stands will be dropped to concrete pads and lift kits will be installed. These old gravity feed systems no longer meet code requirements. With the tanks being elevated they are very dangerous and we have been very fortunate that no one has been seriously hurt if one of these tanks were to fall over. We will be replacing 10 tanks this year and eventually we must replace them all. We will be assisting Yukon Housing's contractor with the replacement of 10 tanks of their own. Our boys will be doing the work on the concrete pads, swapping the tanks and dealing with the fuel transfers.

We are investigating an offer to a joint venture with Jai Zachary of ElectroMotion Energy Corporation, to build 3 residential units, 28x32 two-bedroom units. They have designed new ventilation and heating system for Structural Insulated Panel (SIPs) Houses. This is a similar product as the green SIP houses that were built a couple of years ago. The difference being the ventilation and heating system is new concept and very energy efficient; it cuts heating and electrical cost by circulating the air around in the unit. They have done some work in Paulatuk for the Gov't of NWT. We are very aware of the improved energy efficiency of these SIP units and see that this is the direction and the way go in the future. This company is very confident in their product and has put their money where their mouth is and will be putting in \$668,800.00 towards the project. These units will be placed on Piling Foundations. We will be checking out the product before any commitments are made.

We have made some strategic investments this year to deal with the long-term impacts of "Climate Change." A drill rig for piling foundations and a spray foam insulator. We have also purchased steel "I" beams for house moving. We now have enough steel "I" beams, equipment and the ability to move any buildings around the community.

The Heavy Equipment Operators scheduled for this spring, no firm start date has been set but this course will proceed. When we have confirmed these dates then we will post them. The course will be offering many courses which are also required for Housing Construction Workers. So please "UPDATE" your resume, including all safety ticket, first aid etc. Please apply by "RESUME ONLY". "Put my name down" will not work anymore. There is a computer in Education to update your Resume's. This will give us an idea of what skill level each worker is at and you will be placed according to your experience and skills level. Submit resumes to Malinda in HR.

There are a number of Health & Safety issues that we will be dealing with this summer. These projects are important to address mold contamination and health concerns of our citizens. We will need a large workforce to complete these projects; I am encouraging all workers to prepare for a busy construction season. We cannot continue to operate as we have in the past as these projects will not get done. This will result in unnecessary hardship on the very people we are trying to help. In some cases, this will be affecting your own family. The other big concern which will effect renovations is we don't have many empty units for people to stay in during renovations of their houses. If at all possible you may have to stay with families for a short time. There will be limited work done to the housing unit just the bathroom area will be rebuilt. The biggest concern I have is workers not showing up. I have said in the past, "You do not work for me; you are working for your people." So, when you don't show up you are hurting your own self and people. If this trend continues we have no choose but to bring in outside workers to do the work. Blowing shifts because you want to drink will not be tolerated. I encourage all citizens to help and support all the workers make it to work.

"HELP US TO HELP YOU!"

Mahsi

**Chandel Frost**  
**Government Services Clerk**

My name is Chandel Frost, I'm just starting my second year working for *Government Services* and my main duties are data entry and processing invoices with our department.

If you have a work order please contact Loretta Itsi or Brain Cameron.

Hope everyone is enjoying the almost spring weather.



“Education is very important. Get a good education, so you can work for our Self Government.”  
- Alice Frost











Vuntut Gwitchin Government  
PO Box 94  
Old Crow Yukon Territory  
Y0B 1N0  
867-966-3261 ext: 227  
[www.oldcrow.ca](http://www.oldcrow.ca)  
[www.vgfn.net](http://www.vgfn.net)

If you have suggestions,  
concerns, announcements,  
jokes, stories, poems or  
photos you would like to see  
in future newsletters please  
feel free to contact me or  
leave a message.



## Health & Social Department Report

At the H&S department we are tasked with delivering programs and services in the areas of health and wellness for the citizens of Old Crow. One of the challenges we have at the moment is staffing. We have a few vacancies within our Department that we are presently trying to fill. We are presently looking over the applications and in due time we should have most of our positions covered.

Over the years there have been countless workshops/ seminars, "one on one" Counselors, Facilitators, all coming in to achieve our goal of assisting our community. This is all good as our citizens feel that this is important. We also assist citizens that want to go "outside" for treatment options. We try to accommodate each person as to where they would like to go. There are a few treatment programs that are only designated under the NIHB that we have to adhere to. We also have funding under the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement which caters to survivors and or intergeneration. There are specific treatment options for this specific cause which would be all in Alberta or BC.

We are also in the midst of coordinating a workshop for the community as to what you envision to be a **"HEALTHY COMMUNITY"**.

- How do we get there?
- What do we need to do?
- What are the challenges?

All these questions need to be discussed in a group format.

We are also looking at funding proposals for the coming summer months. Parents work and need that "something" to keep their children busy. We need your suggestions as to what that would look like to see. There is a lot of funding out there that we can tap into, however we need your suggestions.

We at the H&S Department, invite you to come in and give us suggestions, concerns, feedback as to what you want to see us do for you. We have an open door policy where we will listen to you and react to your suggestions. Please watch for programs/workshops that are coming in the near future.

With that I hope you take in the good weather and have a safe spring.

Mahsi' Joe T.

# VGFN Post-Secondary Education DEADLINES!

## Program

Fall programs at Yukon College

Fall programs at other Educational Institutions

Winter programs for all Educational Institutions

Summer programs at all Educational Institutions

Alice Frost Community Campus

Upgrading

## Deadline

May 15<sup>th</sup> of each year

June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year

November 15<sup>th</sup> of each year

April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year

Year-round, no deadline

No deadline

\*\*\*Applications must be complete and be received by the Post-Secondary Education/ASETS Coordinator by the deadline.\*\*\*

