



VGFN NEWS

NEWSLETTER
of the
VUNTUT GWITCHIN
GOVERNMENT



*March
Eagle Month*

Ch'izhin Zrii

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Gwitchin Language Day 2006

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**VGFN
NEWS**
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**VUNTUT GWITCHIN
GOVERNMENT**

VGFN News is the monthly
Newsletter of the Vuntut Gwitchin
First Nation Self-Government in Old
Crow, Yukon, Canada.

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Executive Director

First of all, let me apologize for not entering any submissions to the last few newsletters. A lot has happened since the last time I submitted a submission. The weather took a turn for the worse, however the sun is back and shining and we experienced some very sad times for those of us who knew Charlie Blake and Nicole Frost, our prayers and good thoughts went out to their families and friends.

We organized a Trade Show that was held on February 14th, at our own Chief Zzeh Gittlit School. There was a host of people plying their trade to our children and we hope that you went away with the information you desired. The students asked many questions and were genuinely active and participated in the various functions. Thank you to Kim and Alisa for a job well done.

An important retreat was held on Feb 15-18 for Chief and Council members and the Directors were held the 20th&21st. During this, we discussed a better management team of VGG staff and more effective ways to offer professional courteous services to you our citizens. These retreats spoke to the changes that are coming in regards to the Self Government Act Legislation, passing laws,

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation constitution, Chief and Council salary rate, Vuntut Gwitchin Government Budget, Vuntut Business Trust, compensation dollars from our Land Claims package and protecting our assets, Business partners, and current and future compensation dollars.

We also spoke of innovative ways to be a good accountable government to you. Our various departments offer you benefits to ensure that the quality of life you live is adequate if not better. Should you feel that you are not being represented in a professional manner, please feel free to inform us of these discretionary and we will do what we can to correct this.

March 23rd and 24th, we offered beneficiaries the opportunity to information in regards to decisions that will have to be made at the Special GA to be held on April 11& 12, 2006.

In addition to those dates, we also hosted two more consultation dates on the 27th & 28th of March 2006.

Our office is constantly answering requests, queries and general information either by telephone calls, emails or dropping in from our citizens. Most often it pertains to the services we provide. It is by this open and honest communication that we can build on better forming rela-

tionships with you, our citizens.

Communication is the key to a good government. Therefore we have been working at developing strategies to ensure you are provided by accurate information in terms of this government and all the services we deliver and provide. There is to be more community meetings/information sessions in regards to newly developed policies in terms of the programs we deliver. i.e. the Housing Department, Social Programs etc. Be on the look out for more information being posted and/or delivered.

The more citizens that come out to these sessions, the more informed choices you can make. That is your responsibility as citizens of this First Nation. Although the Vuntut Gwitchin Government is accountable to you the citizens, you also have to be accountable by being responsible to attend meetings, informing yourselves of First Nations business, treating with respect Chief and Council, staff members, advisors and each other. Most important, you have the responsibility to select, elect Chief and Council members who possess the necessary skills, experience and values to lead our community.

In saying that I encourage you to come out and voice your opinions, provide advice and most importantly support your Government and community. Mahsi

Kim Blake
Projects Coordinator

This month we had three delegates travel to Washington, DC for Wilderness week. The dates were March 4 – 8, 2006. The delegates got to visit and speak with some US Senators' aids on their thoughts and concerns of opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge before the March 16th vote.

I have kept the letters going to the US Senators and House Representatives on urging them to vote against opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and keeping it out of the Reconciliation Bill. I would like to also attach any children's drawings or writings that you may have of your children; this would add a wonderful touch to the letters.

Sometime in April we will be doing a presentation to the higher grades in the school. This will be to familiarize the students on the Porcupine caribou herd and the plans that the US Government has to open up the Arctic Wildlife Refuge.

In a razor thin margin, the Senate today approved a stripped down budget whose primary purpose seems to be to advance legislation allowing oil drilling in America's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. By the narrowest of votes, the Senate voted 51-49 to approve the overall budget that sets spending caps, and has one single instruction for budget reconciliation – an instruction to the Energy Committee that could be used to allow drilling in the Arctic Refuge.

Drilling in America's Arctic Refuge will do nothing to help the budget, reduce

prices at the pump, or reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Worse yet, if drilling actually ever takes place, it will actually weaken our national security by placing more reliance on the vulnerable, aging, fragile infrastructure at Prudhoe Bay and the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). Oil workers are currently engaged in cleaning up the single largest oil spill ever in the history of the North Slope due to a corroded pipeline feeding into the TAPS. Oil drilling is a dirty business and spills happen, but this is the exact reason why drilling should never be allowed to take place in America's Arctic Refuge. The pipeline itself is very unprotected and in 2001 spewed thousands of barrels out across the landscape after a drunk hunter shot it with a hunting

rifle. In terms of national security, TAPS is a disaster waiting to happen. According to Former Director of the CIA James Woolsey and Rocky Mountain Institute CEO Amory Lovins, “[TAPS is] largely accessible to attackers, but often unrepairable in winter.” Lovins and Woolsey go on to say that “if key pumping stations or facilities at either end were disabled, at least the above-ground half of 9 million barrels of hot oil could congeal in one winter week into the world’s biggest Chapstick.”

A couple of quick words on a very complicated process. This Senate vote is the first step in a very long process. A year ago, we lost the exact same vote in the Senate by the exact same amount, although several individual Senators voted differently. In order for drilling to be approved and signed into law by the President, there are many, many more steps this legislation has to go through. There are actually two entirely separate bills that have to be approved by both the House and Senate. The first bill is the budget resolution and is the bill with which we are currently dealing. The budget resolution is non-binding and never goes to the President. The second bill is the budget reconciliation bill, and it is binding and does get signed by the President at which point it become law. As of this week, we have completed only the first two votes that have to happen for only the first bill, the budget resolution. Ultimately, each bill has to be voted on many times: in committee in the House and Senate; then once each by the full House and full Senate; once by a conference committee that irons out the differences between the House and Senate versions; and finally again by both the full House and full Senate to approve the changes that were made in the conference committee. At this point, only the Senate budget committee and the full Senate have voted. During the week of March 27, the House budget committee will take up the bill, to be shortly followed by the full House where we will again have the opportunity to stop the whole budget resolution.

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One of the things that the

budget resolution does is it has instructions on how to complete the second bill, the budget reconciliation. If a budget resolution does not pass, neither the House nor the Senate can do a budget reconciliation at all. One of the primary purposes of a budget reconciliation bill is to cut the deficit. The current budget resolution only has one single reconciliation instruction: drill for oil in America’s Arctic Refuge, and not only is it projected to not raise much money for cutting the deficit (only 4 billion) but even that paltry amount is actually slated to be used for projects other than reducing debt. In short, drilling supporters are tacitly admitting that the only reason they are even attempting to have

a budget reconciliation is get drilling in the Arctic Refuge. A real reconciliation bill would attempt to actually do things that would cut the deficit. That being said, there are many more steps to go before they even finish the budget resolution, much less start on the budget reconciliation.

While attention on the budget resolution will now shift to the House of Representatives, it is important for us to thank those Senators who stood with us and to let those who didn’t know that we are watching and are disgusted with their pandering to Big Oil special interests. Please take a moment and send an email either thanking your Senator for their support or expressing your disappointment if they voted to pass the Arctic drilling budget.



Tracy M. Rispin-Kassi
Director of Education

First off, I would like to apologize to everyone for not submitting my newsletter report on a monthly basis. The Education department for our First Nation is always busy with correspondence and meetings relating to education in our community. When I say “correspondence” this means opening up communication with all parties that are involved with education in Old Crow. Since late last year, I have committed myself in attending the monthly School Council meetings, the School Planning committee meetings and the Alice Frost Community College Campus meetings. **Communication is the key to making improvements in Education.**

March was a very busy month as we had number of visitors from the YTG department of Education visiting Old Crow. The visitors were: Bob Sharp, Janet McDonald, Bob Walker, Jim Boyd and the new Director of Learning, Kenneth Nash. Here is a brief introduction to each of the visitors:

Bob Sharp

Mr. Sharp was hired by VGFN last February as a Consultant to review the 1999 Strategic Plan and report on ways to implement the Plan. His Final Report was given to Chief and Council on this visit. Anyone wanting this report may do so by requesting it from me.

Janet McDonald

Janet is new to the YTG department of Education and this was her first visit to Old Crow in a long time. Janet replaces Tina Jules, who worked with Mr. Sharp on the 1999 Strategic Plan. Janet is quite aware of our issues surrounding education in Old Crow. She was a Science teacher at F.H. Collins last year, but resigned to take this position at YTG as Coordinator of First Nations Partnerships.

Bob Walker

Bob is the Yukon School Councils Liaison coordinator for Yukon Territorial Government.

Jim Boyd

Jim has visited Old Crow a number of times with Bob Sharp. Jim is involved

with the ACES program in Whitehorse, through F.H. Collins. It is a program that uses a Land Base curriculum. Jim has met with Mabel on the cultural camp and this year, we will be documenting skills/grades for each of the students attending this camp. These grades will be credited towards their Grade 12 credits.

Kenneth Nash

Mr. Nash has replaced Carol McCauley as the Director of Learning for Area 3. His term is up June 30th. Mr. Nash was very considerate in listening to the concerns and issues surrounding our education in Old Crow. Recently he approved the purchase of much needed new gym equipment for our school.

At the School Council meeting, the Council did put a motion forward to consider changing from School Council to a School Board. This is a big step for our community, however, I see it has a positive one because it will give our community the power to hire the teachers we want in our school and the kind of education we want our children to achieve. It will come with challenges but with all new changes in our lives, this is expected. If we, the people, come together to work towards improving education in Old Crow, these challenges will seem minimal. A vote on becoming a School Board will happen in June. In the meantime, the School Council will send out information to community members.

Just recently, I attended education meetings in Whitehorse, and people commended Old Crow on this decision, as we will be the first community to take on this challenge. The only other school that has a School Board is the Francophone school in Whitehorse. At this same meeting, the topic to constructing a central organization to oversee Yukon First Nations education was discussed. Christa Williams, the Executive Director of the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) presented a presentation on how this Committee formed a central body of people in the BC education system, in 1992 by having one person, herself, and now today runs on a staff of 26 people. This Committee undertakes communication research, data collection &

dissemination, professional development and service delivery on First Nation efforts in the area of education in British Columbia. British Columbia has 120 First Nation schools in their province from this a Board of 72 members is represented on this committee. This is what the Yukon may be looking at for First Nations Education. First, this will be presented to the Chiefs Committee for Education on April 21st for discussion.

Going to education meetings outside of Old Crow is encouraging as we are one of the First Nations to be in the front lines. I commend our leadership for their support in the area of education, as many other First Nations do not have this. Sometimes it gets so busy at this office, answering correspondence, interacting with others regarding education, supporting students and programs that sometimes there is not enough time in each day. We push paper every day and rarely hear if the job we're doing is meeting the needs of our people. That is why I say going to education meetings outside of Old Crow is encouraging for us to hear that we are doing well in this department. Communication is the key for improving education in our community. We always welcome feedback from parents and your participation at the monthly School Council meetings. As parents, we need to include ourselves in our children's education for them to succeed. It would be great to involve yourself with the School Planning Committee; their job is to draft together a School Plan for the next school year. Your input will be valuable to the Committee. If you are interested, please contact myself, Meagan Garrett or Elsie Hume. Mahsi cho.

In closing I want to knowledge all the parents that get up each weekday morning to get your child ready for school, by cooking breakfast, lunch & supper, reading a book with them, and helping them with homework. Keep up the great work!

Graduation is coming up next month for 9 of our students in Whitehorse and 1 in Nova Scotia! They are: Malinda Bruce, Travis Frost, Wade Kaye, Lisa Linklater, Bobby Linklater, Amanda Frost, Floyd

McGinnis, Ellen Kyikavichik, Samantha Frost, and Jeneen Njootli.

This is the largest group of graduates that Old Crow has ever seen and we are very proud of this! **Congratulations to the students on achieving this and to their parents, as well.** A job well done by all involved with them, succeeding this far in their education.

Dates for grad ceremonies are:

Native Grad > May 26th

FHC Cap & Gown > May 25th

FHC Prom > May 26th

Porter Creek High > June 1st

Porter Creek high > June 3rd

Happy Birthday to all the April babies out there, especially to my daughters, Kecia Marie for April 13th and April Danielle for April 8th. **May the Creator bless you all with many good things on your special day.**

Mahsi. Take care until next time.

Dustin Davis

Physical Education Instructor

Hello everyone! Well, spring is arriving gradually and with it has come the inspiration to get out and be active. Hopefully everyone is taking advantage of the sunshine to shake off the winter frost. There is a lot of good news coming from the gymnasium at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School and from the *Old Crow Health and Fitness Pilot Project*. Student enrollment has peaked at around 25 students with an average attendance at fitness sessions of around fifteen. Awesome! Students have continued to tear it up in the gym with some students having run more than 800 laps of the gym since the running club was started in late November. One student has now set a new school record of running 22 laps of the gym during a six-minute warm-up run. That's 1.28 kilometers in only six minutes!

Great news! \$ 2,500 worth of new gym equipment has arrived for use with the primary students. This equipment is softer and more appropriate for use with small hands. It was purchased by YTG

with encouragement from Gary Vokey, VGFN and I.

Way to go team! It is Old

Mabel Tetlich

CELC Area - I

Good Day everyone.

For the month of March, the students at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School had their 1-week of spring break and with the nice sunny weather. After being back in school, students are going out side for more outdoor activities. Teachers take their students sliding, for walks and doing some science related subjects.

The indoor culture class takes place every Friday and "thank you's" go out to the culture teachers who make this happen. Your teachings to the students are appreciated by all. The sewing class, industrial arts and cooking/baking classes are quite exciting for the students and they look forward to these classes every Friday. Students at the school are doing their best. They enjoy having community resources visit and teach or share stories.

Crow's children that benefit when we work together. I have recently purchased, with funding from VGFN recreation, ten pairs of snowshoes to use with the fitness project. These snowshoes are suitable for the older students and adults and require very little maintenance. VGFN have also supported my efforts in the gym by purchasing new skipping ropes for the school, and orienteering equipment. Finally, we should soon receive four new high-quality air rifles so that we can have more biathlon events for the youth, while greatly reducing any chance of injury. Thank you VGFN on behalf of Old Crow's youth for all the support.

Don Robert's Visit

As many of you know, Don Robert's was up recently to touch base with the community in regards to the *Old Crow Health and Fitness Project*. Don was quite pleased with his communications with the community. There is a lot of positive energy about the fitness project and the role of having a gym teacher at the school. Now is the time to start looking forward and decide how the fitness project should evolve so that it continues to serve the students of Old Crow. Partnerships with other activities occurring in the community will be essential

The nurse, Brook Davis is coming into the school every Tuesday and Thursday to educate the grades 6-9 students on choices and changes. This program offers many areas on the physical, emotional and mental well being.

On March 15 & 16, Skills Canada had sent two people from Whitehorse to our school to teach cake decorating. The students enjoyed the sessions.

I also had a brief meeting with Bob Sharp on the credits that I will be using at the cultural camp. These credits are base on student's performance as they go about their daily activity at camp. We also did training sessions with two local people. These credits will be used towards their graduation in the future. It is a new change for everyone but it is a good change for your child's education.

Thank you for taking the time to read my report for March. Until next time, mahsi.

along with training community members so that they can begin to take ownership of the fitness project. Please feel free to share any ideas you have about the future or feedback on current activities, both positive and critical. The only way the project will grow and succeed is through direct and honest communication and active participation from the community.

Approaching Events

On Easter week end the RCMP will be flying up their plane and bringing several members to play sporting games with Old Crow's youth at the school. There will likely also be talks on drug awareness. Expect to see more information posted soon as details are finalized.

That's all for now, so after reading the rest of the newsletter I hope you'll get a chance to head outside and be active.



Barry Drury
Director, GS & Housing

First I would like to welcome Kathie Nukon back to our office from her time off.

Now that it seems winter is on its' downward slide, we hope everyone has a very good spring.

At GS/Housing we are looking forward to the upcoming General Assembly where we trust you will accept your new VGFN Housing Policy.

A public meeting is scheduled for April 5th in the community hall for final community discussions on the policy prior to its' presentation at the Special General Assembly.

Sewage Lagoon

The report from YTG on a performance assessment of the sewage lagoon has been received. The performance of the existing lagoon has been identified as a community concern as members of our community have expressed that the lagoon may not be performing as intended. The lagoon was constructed in 1987. Testing of the lagoon was done in September of last year. According to the report "The Old Crow sewage facility is performing substantially below current Territorial and Federal regulator requirements"

As the lagoon is working as it is designed to do according to the report there is no noticeable detection of sewage entering the Porcupine River.

From the report " this indicates that the level of treatment obtained by this system is comparable to tertiary treatment

which far exceeds current Territorial and Federal regulatory requirements and does not represent a risk to the residents of Old Crow or the environment.

There is however, a concern from the lagoon. This is in regards to the presence of diesel, oils, greases, kerosene, weathered gasoline etc. The fact that these chemicals have been dumped in the lagoon is disturbing and must not happen again. The levels of these substances are high but still below the acceptable levels. As a community we must do our due diligence and ensure that disposal of these types of materials does not occur via the sewage lagoon.

We will have a giant yard sale in the arena on April 4, 5, 6, to sell materials from the Old Airport Terminal, as well as other used materials. Come and pick up great bargains.

• We will be replacing some windows at the RCMP as soon as the weather improves.

• Funding is approved for more wash-room renovations

• The water fill points at each residence will be brought up to current building code requirements. This will enable the separation between the water fill point and the sewage pipe that we believe was possibly the cause of the boil water advisory in the community last September and October.

• Funding for eight homes has been confirmed through a program jointly funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Vuntut Gwitchin Government. Four homes are scheduled for this summer with another four in

2007. Please watch for the community posting to indicate that applications will be accepted for allocation of the homes

• We need to finish the children playground at the community hall that will include new playground equipment. The playground equipment is already in Old Crow so we should be able to have the playground finished for use early.

• We need to finish a skateboard park as soon as possible. The area for the park was identified at the baseball diamond. Community youth picked the spot last summer. Everything is here for the park so we just need to build it. The park will be basic but should provide an area that will give hours of fun to youth and others if we dare to try riding one of those things

• Finish repairs to the arena.

• The incinerator at the Garbage dump is scheduled to be installed in April or early May. The incinerator should arrive on a charter during the last two weeks of April.

• I am pleased to say that we have a very committed and active housing committee working on your behalf. At present we have a committee of six community members. Thank you very much to the members Alvie Josie, Helen Charlie, Robert Bruce Jr., Stan Njootli Jr, Vincent Charlie, and Florence Thomas for being on your committee.

More projects will be identified as the summer approaches.

Our door is always open if you would like to come in and have a coffee and chat in Government Services and Housing.

Mahsi

Edna Kyikavichik
CMHC Housing trainee

I hope that you're all doing fine and the warm weather stays. Well, I hope you all enjoy the beautiful weather.

As for myself, working in the Department of Government Services as a Trainee is going good. I enjoy coming to work and working with everyone else in the administration office. I got the hang of what people do in the Housing Dept. and it's an interesting job and keeps me quite busy. We also learn a lot of new

things each day.

My work skills and experiences are building, especially being organized and being prepared. This position confirms that strength within and I never thought I would work in Government Services. I'm happy that I took that risk. I'm sure learning a lot and learning pretty fast, just from the three months Training. This is why we have to challenge ourselves in what we do and work hard for what you want to do.

I'm also taking the Accounting 120 course held at the Campus and I really

enjoy doing accounting work. We do this on our own time and once a week at work on Wednesdays.

I want to say welcome back to Kathie Nukon and a warm welcome to Carol Patterson in Housing. Good to have you in board.

I hope everyone has a wonderful day and enjoying the sunshine. Take care and smile. It's that time of year again, spring all the cold weather will go away and warm weather will come. Yahoo!

Joe Tetlich
Justice Coordinator

This is a short report on the activities that the Justice Department is undergoing. One of our mandates is to ensure that we try to bring in programs for the community to utilize. Over the past few months we have had numerous workshops that YTG has sponsored.

On March 8th,06 we had Norma Davignon and the Deputy minister of Justice come into the community to talk about the "Safer Communities and Neighborhood Act legislation". Basically what this act does is if there is illegal activities' happening in the dwelling the committee within the legislation will have the power to shut the dwelling down with the support of the RCMP.

On March 21st,06 Judy Suley and Barbara Bergmann facilitated a workshop entitled Wills, Estates, and Maintenance Enforcement. This was presented at the Board room where two people showed up. At 7:00 pm there was another presentation where another two people showed up. These workshops are very informative and valuable and the community needs to show an interest when these opportunities arise.

March 21st we had our quarterly Territorial Courts session. Most of my duties are to assist clients to get the most help when in trouble with the law. Through the system we have helped a lot of Clients with legal help or diverting their files to the Old Crow Justice Committee. I would encourage members to come into the office and see what's happening on a daily basis.

Since this is the year end month I have been very busy doing reports for Aboriginal Justice. We also have to submit a work and budget plan for next year. Gathering statistical information is very time consuming however I have managed to accomplish that. This is my report for this month and a word of caution going out to the hunters and trappers. If you are going out alone it is important to let

someone know where you are going and when you are coming back.

Until next time Adios.

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Renee Charlie
Home & Community Care Coordinator

My contract is extended to September 30/2006. I am learning a lot working under this program. I enjoyed working with and for the 65 year & over elders. The elders appreciate what you do for them and they keep telling you "Mahsi-cho".

I coordinate:

Hot Lunch School Program – November/2005 to March 31/2006, this lunch program was Sponsor by Social, Recreation, and Chief & Council Departments.

At this time, I would like to thank the following people who volunteered their time to help out with the lunch program.

Our goal is to teach "Healthy Living", and "Healthy Choices" all this starts at home. Mahsi cho goes out to: Harvey Kassi, Ronald Frost and Earl Benjamin & Faye Elias who were the only ones that donated "Caribou meat", the students totally enjoy this when caribou meat is cooked.

I asked the students what they want for lunch. Their responses are fried meat and Kraft dinner. They got their wish. Mahsi cho goes out to the following that help served, setup tables, and cleanup; Mabel Tetlich, Lawrence Dean Charlie, Joe Tetlich, Glenna Tetlich, Tracy M. Rispin-Kassi, Donna-Marie Frost, Ida Tizya, Sarah Netro, Dorothy Frost, Brenda Frost, Douglas Charlie, Norman Linklater, Fred Shirley, Government Services for sending up their workers, Dustin for supervising the "Gym" after lunch and the cooks, who have done a great job. Work plans are in the works for next fall 2006- 2007 school year lunch program. We cannot run a successful program without your valuable volunteering help. I volunteer my lunch breaks for this school lunch program. I also need "Feedback" on the Lunch Program, enable we plan better and be prepared for fall 2006- 2007 school year.

Meal on Wheels Program

This program started in late November 2005; the elders enjoyed a cooked meal once a week, usually on Sunday. This



program will continue in the fall 2006 in November. This is the first year of this program, so, it was a learning experience, hopefully, and we will plan more for this coming fall.

Elizabeth Kaye donated caribou meat for this Program. I use what I have in my freezer, but, I don't mind. I need feedback from the Elders and (the members) on this program, enable it will be planned and deliver more successful fall 2006. Bring your feedback to my office.

Homecare workers

My office is always in need of "Homecare Workers", for Elders 65 years & older.

If you're interested in working as a Homecare Worker, it's a basic house cleaning employment, please come and see me or submit your names to: Susan Drury, Human Resources Office.

We must all take care of our Elders, as they put a lot into our community and, we must pay them back, by taking care and make sure their comfortable at home. Please, help take care off our Elders.

Heating Fuel and Wood Program

Each Elder is entitled to heating fuel or wood for calendar year- October to March 31. We will be working on updating this Policy; we will ask you (the members) for Feedback on this program. Watch for notices up for workshops.

We are planning for new place to store our wood. No wood will be purchase until we decide where we are store the Elders wood for year 2006-07.

If you have any suggestions of where we can place a new woodlot, it would be very much appreciated.

Their will be jobs for two people;

Home & Community Care Face to Face Meeting in Whitehorse – February 14-16/2006. I attended this meeting alone as our supervisor, was unable to attend. Attending this meeting give more direction of what my program consists off and what is expected of me, as HCC for Old Crow.

We discussed:

- Review service delivery and focus of programs availability.

- Financial & Activity reporting to Whitehorse

- Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative – overview of ADI program/learn how to do work plans and reporting.

I learn a lot on “Diabetes”, but, I need to take courses in this field, if I am to continue working with elders, I need to explain too the elders on what not to eat and what to eat etc.

- Training starts at home with parents/grandparents to cook healthy foods. Training is very important in this program. Example: NO POP policy at school.

- Pandemic overview was discussed EMO-needs a good plan in place in incase of emergency – flu pandemic in our homes and the community. More information is available on this; please call “Whitehorse Disease Control” on pandemic. Over all it was a very informative

meeting, well organized, it was a good positive feeling. All First Nations’ expressed how important it is too take care of our Elders.

Elders Tea

Every Wednesday was scheduled for “Elders Tea”, after the new year I did not do any elders tea get together because of the Flu bug and I have no place to get together with the elders. Hopefully, this continues in our new year, April 01/2006. I will let the elders know by sending out memos.

Now that we are getting into the warm weather, more plans will be in place.

I need ideas from the elders and members what activities they like to see for our elders.

I welcome all feedbacks, and I will put in my work plans. This will be all for this month newsletter. All have a great month and Happy Easter to Everyone.



Jennifer Smith Community Stewart

Recycling News

The Old Crow Recycling Depot would like to welcome its new coordinator Stanley Njootli Jr. who will be implementing the recycling program. We are in the process of beginning a new recycling system. Large colorful recycling bins are being built, and placed in the community (you will see them soon!). Please place your recycling in these bins were it will be picked up. We have decided to proceed this way to ensure convenience for everyone and to make the program a little more reliable. Also, if you have any refundable items (e.g. pop cans) you may want to hold on to them for the depot grand opening where we will be offering refunds for such items.

To date the Old Crow Recycling Depot will accept: (You can get money for the *bolded* items)

- **Aluminum Cans**
- **Glass bottles**
- **Plastic drink bottles**
- **Tin juice cans**
- **Tetrapaks and cartons**
- **Hard Plastic containers (# 1-# 7)**
- **Plastic milk jugs**
- **Tin cans**
- **Glass jars**
- **Waxed milk cartons**
- **Paper** (we will accept it, but are currently storing it until an agreement is worked out for shipping).

No oil containers please!

We will also store some hazardous material until it can be properly disposed of, for example: batteries, computers and monitors, and inkjet cartridges. We unfortunately can't accept oil containers.

Thank you; Happy recycling and if you have any questions please call Jennifer at 966-3037 or email: jsmith@yknet.ca



Sonja Foss
Lands Manager

Happy Spring everyone! It looks like the sun is here to stay for a while and will only shine brighter as we approach warmer days. I hope you are all well and that the winter was not too hard on you. My focus in the office has been primarily based on a research proposal for the Old Crow Flats, but I have a few important updates for you.

Yeendoo Nanh Nakhweenjit K'atr'ahanahtyaa – Environmental Change and Traditional Use of the Old Crow Flats

This is the title of the International Polar Year research project that VGFN is leading in partnership with several universities, Yukon Government, Parks Canada, and the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council. The universities involved in the project are: University of McGill (Montreal), Carleton University (Ottawa), University of Alberta (Edmonton), University of British Columbia (Vancouver), and the University of Northern British Columbia (Prince George). The universities are providing expert researchers in a variety of fields that are directly applicable to the Old Crow Flats. Five of the eight researchers are Northern Chairs of the National Science and Engineering Research Council. Dorothy Cooley is also a researcher on behalf of the Yukon Government.

It is extremely exciting for VGFN to take part in the International Polar Year. The last time an International Polar Year for scientific research took place was 50 years ago and it resulted in the development of a space rocket that eventually landed on the moon.

While VGFN is not going to participate in such a grand venture, in 2007 to 2009 hundreds of scientific research projects will happen throughout the Arctic and Antarctica regions that concentrate

on climate change. However, a strong focus is on Aboriginal Communities in the North and how those communities are adapting to climate change. Old Crow is a First Nation village dealing with the impacts of climate change and just this fact alone gives *Yeendoo Nanh Nakhweenjit K'atr'ahanahtyaa* a good chance for receiving funds in the proposal competition.

The Gwich'in part of the title translates into "taking care of the land for tomorrow". The coordination of this proposal took a lot of time and effort as it involved working together with eight researchers who are all located in different parts of the country.

Together, they will be researching vegetation, muskrats, moose, permafrost,

Also, one of the products that we are expecting to come out of the research is a strategy for Old Crow on how to adapt to the further impacts of climate change. Overall, the proposal is focusing on the nine following topics to coincide with Old Crow priorities and those of the International Polar Year priorities.

1. Current state of the environment;
 2. Change in the Polar Regions;
 3. The polar regions as vantage points;
 4. The human dimension in Polar Regions;
 5. Multidisciplinary Observations and Analysis of the Arctic System;
 6. Process Studies and Impact Modeling Related to Climate, the Physical Environment and Society;
 7. Climate System Links between Northern Regions and the Rest of the Globe;
 8. Ecosystem and Community Vulnerability, Resilience and Adaptive Capacities; and
 9. Examining the Links between Climate Change, Human Health, and Well-being
- The proposal was sent to the International Polar Year Federal Secretariat where it

will compete against hundreds of other proposals. We will not find out if this project will go ahead as proposed until fall, 2006.

There are two projects within the larger proposal that will happen whether or not we get funded. Permafrost monitoring with Dr. Chris Burn from Carleton University will be starting as he is setting up his permafrost probes this June with the assistance from the NR department. Dr. Duane Froese from the University of Alberta will carry out his research on the volcanic ash along the riverbanks on Crow River.

However, this department has definitely heard VG Citizens say that they

**VUNTUT GWITCHIN NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN**



VISION

Together we speak for the land, past and future

MISSION

The Vuntut Gwitchin Natural Resources Department strives to manage the use of the land with an ecosystem-based approach and to empower and educate Vuntut Gwitchin citizens to keep the integrity of the land for future generations to come.

water levels in the lakes, tree rings, temperature, use of the Flats by VG Citizens traditionally and currently, volcanic ash, and more specifically the changes in climate over time. The total amount of funding we applied for was \$1,720,150.00 for five years of research. That's almost two million dollars.

Employment and training opportunities will be made through the proposal if we get funded. So, we will need youth who are interested in the Flats to sign up for field technician positions. We will also need guides and are expecting participation from the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council for direction and input with their invaluable knowledge.

want monitoring and research to happen in the Flats due to the changes they are seeing. This proposal and the whole project is a way that the NR department is responding to those concerns. Basically, none of this work would have happened without your input, passion, and knowledge. So, Mahsi' cho! I ask you all to help us pray that the project will happen because it can only benefit our understanding of the Flats and your use of the Flats.

Sheep Creek Development by Yukon Government

On another note, the Yukon Department of Highways and Public Works, Transportation Engineering Branch has put in a project proposal to the newly formed Yukon Environmental & Socio-Economic Assessment Act (YESAA) Designated Office (DO). The proposal describes in detail the kind of development they hope to start this coming summer. The Transportation Engineering Branch has proposed to make a gravel quarry just north of one of the site specific parcels of settlement land.

At kilometer 433 on the left hand side of the Dempster Highway is S-Site 31A. This parcel of land was selected during the land claim negotiations due to the heritage and natural resources found within. Just south of the parcel is Sheep Creek that drains into Rock River that then drains into Eagle River. The gravel removal from this area would be from the Sheep Creek and just north of the land parcel S-Site 31A. Please see the map attached.

The transportation Engineering Branch has proposed a 50 meter buffer between the land parcel and the gravel quarry. The gravel quarry will only be used once.

Currently, I have been in touch with Yukon Government to inform them that VGFN has a number of concerns if the development will occur in the proposed area. We are concerned because of the archaeological importance in and near the land parcel.

I have been informed by Megan Williams that there is lithic scatter found within the site. Lithic scatter is evidence



typically implying that tools were made in the area. The Yukon Government has indicated that this area is the densest area in the Yukon for archaeological values. However, there has not been an assessment of the area.

Also, there has not been an assessment of economic value of the land parcel and if development was to occur in the area, then the economic value of the land may decrease. There is value in the timber in the land parcel and surrounding the land parcel that could be used by VGFN as it is good building material. The water resource in the Sheep Creek is a future source for drinking water. There has been no assessment of fish or invertebrate species that may be affected by removing gravel from the creek bed. Also, the area is located in the British-Richardson Mountain eco-region where the Richardson Mountain Dall Sheep exists. I have requested information on disturbance effects on Dall sheep by development from Dorothy Cooley as there are concerns about this aspect as well.

The project proposal requires a permit from the Water Board and a recommendation from the YESAA DO in Dawson. VGFN is not a decision maker in these processes as the land activity would not occur on Settlement Land. However, it is in close proximity to the site specific land parcel and I have informed both of these organizations that VGFN has concerns

and will not support the gravel removal in this area. There is much more to the process and it requires more input and time from me. If you have any concerns about this development that you wish the Water Board or YESAA to hear, please come see me. I will use the newsletter to update you all.

Review of First Nation Responsibilities for Natural Resources

A large amount of time of VGFN consultants is going into a paper with above title. It is a document relaying the structural organization of Natural Resource Departments of First Nation Governments. It reviews all of the 14 First Nation Governments, their Final Agreements, and the factors facing the departments, the responsibilities they must fulfill from the Final Agreement, their legislation, and some general capacity issues. This document is to be used in the Implementation Review Process to identify how funding is a concern for us.

Strategic Planning

The NR department received funds from the Yukon Government to hire a consultant who would then guide the department through a strategic plan. The draft documents have been provided to Megan, William and I. It outlines our priorities for the next five years and we will be sharing it with you once it is finalized.

Capacity Assessment

The same consultant hired

for the strategic plan, Angela Walkley, is also guiding us through a capacity assessment over the next several months. Angela will be in Old Crow the first week of May with her husband Mitch and her baby boy Tornio. The purpose of her visit is to have Old Crow residents privately and anonymously tell her what their thoughts are of the Natural Resources Department.

We are hoping that Old Crow community members will provide Angela with their views on what they think the NR Department should be doing and where our strengths and weaknesses are. Your comments will be in complete confidence and privacy. We are hoping to set up a wall tent along the riverbank where she'll have tea and coffee for her visitors. Your opinions about the department and where we should be building our strengths are greatly valued and we hope to receive a lot of guidance from you.

Bio-assessment of the Yukon River Basin

Last summer, John Bailey did some stream bio-assessments around Old Crow with the help of Donald Frost. He was

here in Old Crow to follow up with his results on March 22nd. The research done was on bugs and fish, the flow of water, and data from those three elements were collected. John used the data collected to help do assessments of the streams visited to show examples of natural conditions. The examples (reference sites) can then be compared to streams where development (specifically placer mining) occurs. He hopes to provide DFO and Yukon Government and others a method to determine whether or not placer mining has affected a stream, not affected a stream, and a way to show how much of the stream has been affected.

Forestry

Michael Frost attended the First Nation Forestry Program meeting in Whitehorse on our behalf on March 20th, 2006. Economic opportunities in the forestry sector were discussed at the meeting and a questionnaire was filled out by VGFN.

Melissa and I will be working on best practices of managing the forest resources around Old Crow, on settlement

land, and in the traditional territory. This may involve a new requirement of VG Citizens only harvesting timber in certain areas around Old Crow. Hopefully, the plan will reduce the number of concerns people have had about where wood is being cut.

In the meantime, we wish for all members of the community to stop cutting wood along streams, lake shores, and the river. Cutting wood in these areas is bad for fish habitat since it increases nutrient levels and erosion going into the water. Also, cutting wood in these areas is bad since it decreases the level of shade needed to protect salmon eggs from sunlight during spawning.

There have also been concerns from several community members about the harvesting of timber on the mountain. The more timber taken away from the mountain, the more likely that faster and greater erosion on the mountain will happen. So, please stop cutting timber on the mountain.

With that, I wish you a happy spring. If you have any questions or comments, please come see me in the office anytime.

Melissa Valja

Natural Resources Lands Planner

The past two months have been busy, filled with meetings and workshops. In February, I attended a workshop on **energy efficiency and renewable energy projects** that have been done in the north, and how to make them a reality in our community.

The **2nd Annual Climate Change Workshop** with the NYRRC and the Community Steward on February 27-28th 2006. A big thank you goes out to the several guests from Whitehorse who presented at the workshop. This was held in the ongoing effort to educate people about the science of climate change, and what you can personally do about it here in Old Crow. The youth involvement was great, and you will soon see their murals up in the community.

In early March VGG NR department, NYRRC, the Community Steward, YG Regional Biologist, YG Fisheries Biologist and commu-

nity members met to plan which **three nearby lakes and fish populations are to be assessed** this summer and in the next few years. This is an obligation from the North Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Plan.

The NR Dept. spent three days at a staff retreat where a facilitator helped us start **strategic planning** for our department. This was a productive exercise and will help our department prioritize its goals.

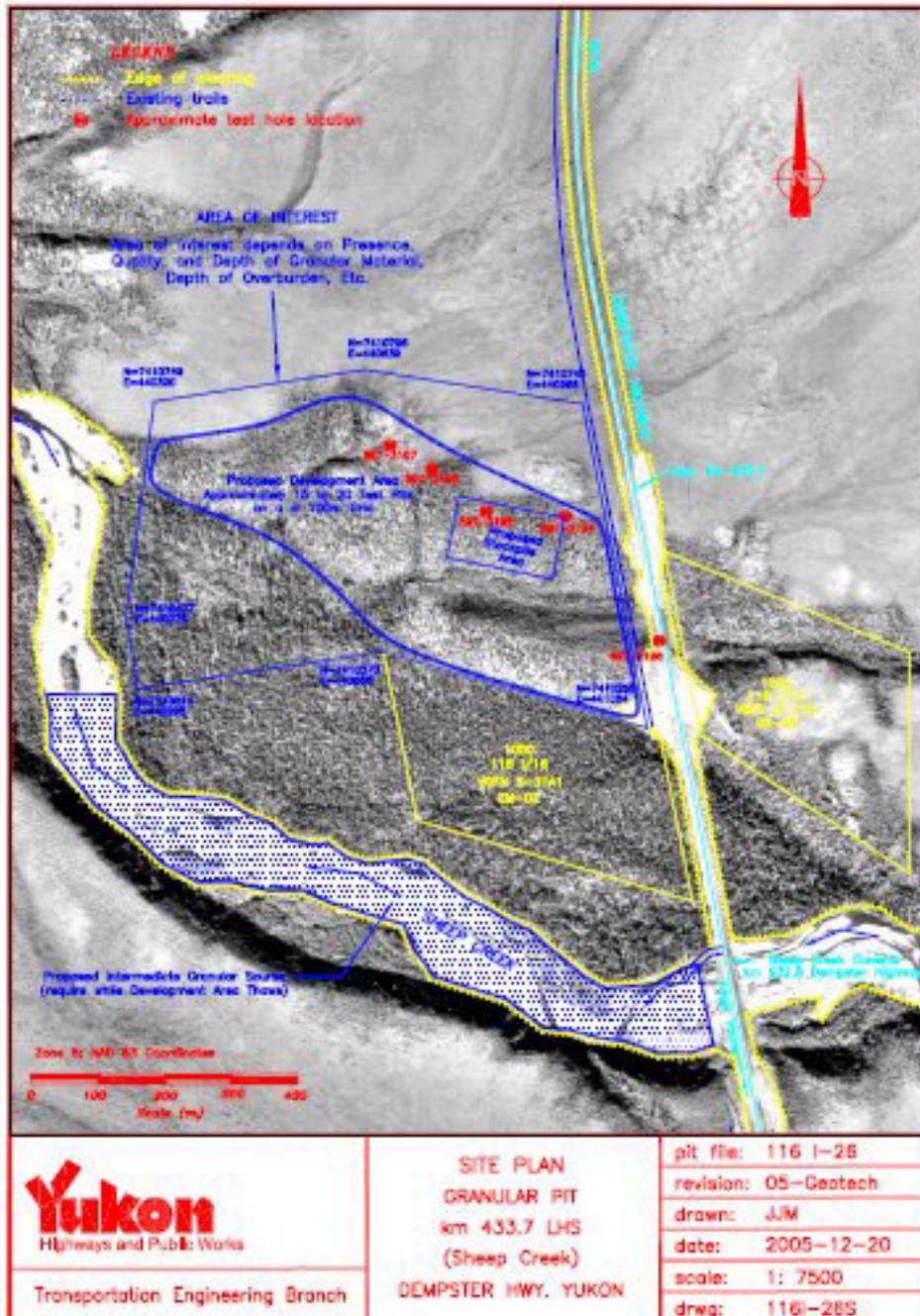
North Richardson Mountains Dall's Sheep Management Plan. There was a community consultation over lunch, where NR department gave an update on what has been happening in this planning process. The Working Group for the management plan met in Inuvik and discussed the development of the plan by creating a table of contents and going through each of the topics and assigning a task list to help us prepare for the next planning meeting.

At the end of March we had the **second community workshop for the Old**

Crow Flats Special Management Area (SMA) management plan. Bob Hayes is helping the Technical Working Group develop the plan, led this workshop. Several people provided valuable comment, but it is recognized that we need to get feedback from more people, especially the families with traditional family use areas in Crow Flat and from the youth. During the next month, we will be interviewing people one on one to get more input through this consultation process. There will be an **Open House in Whitehorse** on April 5th, from 7-9 pm at the Gold Rush Inn. The first newsletter has been released, and I encourage you to pick it up and find out what has been reported.

The **North Yukon Planning Commission held their Open House** and Dinner on March 30th to present some major findings for developing the North Yukon Land Use Plan, and to gain input from the community. They are working towards completing a draft land use plan by July 2006.

Thank you for your time.



Mary Jane Moses
Heritage Researcher

Work tasks continue on updating the Oral History collections, entering new data, transcribing and indexing documents from last summer's Elders interviews, working with Brenda and Frances to update files. Brenda Kyikavichik helps us out in the Heritage department, three afternoons a week to help transcribe and type the backlog of Gwich'in transcripts. Frances Bruce helps out with typing into the database the handwritten transcripts I've written out from listening to the Gwich'in language version to English sometimes twenty-nine pages long however once that's typed, it condenses to about twelve pages. I thank these two ladies for their excellent work. I'm grateful for skilled people whenever we need them. Mahsi' cho goohaB'jaa.

Work still continues on with the collection and researching into the Oral History Collections for information to be entered into the online atlas project we are working on. It's a huge task as I have said time and time again, but if we go slowly then it's doable. To do a good job, go slow and end up with good information and results.

I attended the Career Fair/Trade Show held at the school last month along with others from the VGFN office and community resources and there was a good turnout throughout the day. This was an encouragement for the youth to think about their future education and what field of work they might like to enter into. Thank you to everyone for their support and participation.

The Gwich'in Language Immersion Camp that was slated for last month did not go ahead as planned. There were not enough people signed up to go ahead with it so it was cancelled. Another planned Gwich'in Language activity has taken place at the community hall. A great turn with lots of door prizes, mahsi to all how attended. Speaking of Gwich'in language, we will have completed our Gwich'in language sessions to year end.

Thank you to Jane Montgomery, Marion Schafer, students and Elders for your support

and dedication to the Gwich'in language. I am very fortunate to have good people teaching me my Gwich'in language. For the last two years I have been under the guidance of Gwich'in language Consultant Jane Montgomery and Gwich'in Language Apprentice/Resource Marion Schafer and they have taught me a lot and I have made great strides in learning my language. Last December 2005, I spoke in the Gwich'in language on Mabel English Gwich'in Language program that she does over in Inuvik Delta region. With help from Jane and Marion I was able to write out a one pager, memorize it and speak it from the paper on the program, which I was very proud to do. Today I can follow along and sing in the Chiliq hymns at church. I am still learning as I go along.

The NR Staff Retreat that happened up the hill for our department's strategic planning was facilitated very well and we came away with a good idea of where we want to go with planning for Natural Resources and Heritage.

Happy Spring to everyone! The days are longer, the sun is higher, and the rabbits are sitting to the sun, so much to be grateful for.

Mahsi'cho, chan sreendit gwàndòo gwatsut nididaa geenjit shoh ihlii. Chiitaii gwiinzii niigwii'aa, gwiintsal gwiiniidhàa. Doolee chan, nahgwan vadzaih hanahyaa chan gwiintloo gweehazaa. Translation it means – Thank you, we are again approaching springtime which I am happy for. It is looking nice outdoors, it's a bit warm. Maybe soon we will see caribou again and that will be really good.

Here are some Gwich'in words used in the Heritage Dept. that was translated by Jane Montgomery. These words were used in the Delphi Project back in 1999.

Heritage – Yeenoo dai' diitsii, diitsuu gogwiindai' aii gook'it tth'aih gwik'it tr'agwandaii. [We continue to live by the way our grandfathers and grandmothers lived in the past.]

Place names – Jii nan kak eenjit oozrii tr'ahtsii. [We give names to the land.]

Interview – Natr'oohadakat or Nakhwatr'oohadakat [We will ask you

about]

Archives – Dagwidi'in tthak gwidinithat'oo ezhik dhidlii. [Documents that are written are kept here]

Research – Jidii vahshandaii kwaa kahinihtyaa. [I will search, look for what I don't know.]

Oral tradition – Yeenoo dai' gatr'agwandak. [We tell about the past or we tell stories about the past.]

Culture – Nits'oo dinjii zhuh gogwandaii tth'aih hee ndoo legweedhaa. [We still carry on how native people live.]

Traditional Knowledge – Yeenoo dai' diitsii, diitsuu gogwandaii aii gwik'it juk gadiitr'oonahntan. [We are taught about how our grandfathers and grandmother's lived in the past.]

Mahsi' to all community members who help us out continuously in the VGFN Heritage Branch, I am grateful for your help and guidance to ensure good end products in our programming for the benefit of our future generations. The work that is documented today will have such a huge impact on their lives in the future. They will be able to use these tools to their advantage to make good decisions.



Photos By: Deanna Moses



Frances Bruce
Archival Assistant

Good Day!

This is the fifth month I've been working for the Heritage Department. I am really enjoying my position here with VGFN. I enjoy working with all of you.

I've been working with the Online Atlas, updating the database, typing on the computer and assisting with interviews with the elder's in the community.

So far I am enjoying my position. I will be working here until April. In the fall, I will return back to school, I took a year off to be here with family. I am looking forward to be returning back to school. I hope you all have a great month as spring is just around the corner.

Tammy Josie
Computer Support Technician

February 2006

I took a course at the college January 31st – February 2nd. Adobe InDesign with Instructor Michael Edwards, it's a graphics and publishing program. Three days with this new program, very top notch software.

March 2006

Projects Coordinator, Kim Blake asked me to go to Washington, DC to meet with Senator's aids to talk on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and our people. I left on February 28th and returned to office on March 10th, 2006. The experience was like going to another world, a concrete world. I enjoyed my visit and was

able to meet a lot of very interesting and dedicated people who support No Drilling in the Refuge.

I would like to thank the Caribou Coordination Department for giving me this opportunity to express how I feel to people who have no idea of what kind of people we are and why we live life the way we do.

Department Snack Day

On March 17th, Department of Information Systems hosted snacks in the afternoon. This consisted of Curried Caribou, basmati rice, cake, jello, and muskrat houses. I'd like to thank the staff for leaving no leftovers.

Mahsi Cho and enjoy the weather, cause bugs are slowly thawing!

