



VUNTUT GWITCHIN GOVERNMENT

Government of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

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20th Annual Vadzaih Choo Drin Celebration *Caribou Days Returns with Some COVID-19 Precautions*

(Old Crow, Yukon – May 7, 2021)

The 20th Annual Vadzaih Choo Drin (Big Caribou Days) is resuming this year from May 21 to May 24 with some COVID-19 measures to ensure the health and safety of our isolated community.

This year, the event will be open to Yukon-based Vuntut Gwitchin citizens and invited guests only. A smaller, community-focused gathering will help limit any potential introduction or spread of COVID-19 in Old Crow. Despite the scaled-down event, organizers are preparing for a memorable four days focused on coming together as a community after a difficult year apart.

Vadzaih Choo Drin has become an increasingly popular event amongst Yukoners and northerners to learn about Gwich'in culture and traditions. Vuntut Gwitchin looks forward to the time they can welcome everyone back to celebrate with them and share in these important traditions.

Organizers are adapting past Vadzaih Choo Drin activities with current health and safety measures, including:

- Spreading out events across Old Crow to limit crowds and promote physical distancing.
- Limiting outdoor activities to 100 people, with appropriate distancing measures in place.
- Limiting indoor activities to 50 people, with mandatory mask use.
- Asking all participants to keep distance from one another and refrain from hugs and handshakes, despite how difficult we know that is.

“For 20 years Vadzaih Choo Drin has been an integral cultural celebration for Vuntut Gwitchin people, bringing together all generations to share, learn and be with one another,” said Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm, “like everything in this pandemic, we are learning to adapt our traditions to keep our communities safe.”

This May long weekend celebration first began in 2000 as an annual event held by Old Crow organizations to celebrate the integral role of the Porcupine Caribou in Gwich'in culture and their return to the north for the summer. After cancelling the event last year during the early months of the pandemic, the Vuntut Gwitchin Government is hopeful that next year it will be able to welcome its broader Yukon family once again.

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