



VUNTUT GWITCHIN FIRST NATION
Information Systems Department

News Release ...

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Old Crow, Yukon

#002

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Conclude Their 2003 General Assembly

During the weekend of August 8th to 10th, 2003, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation held their Annual General Assembly at their traditional meeting place of Tlo-Kut, 8 miles up the Porcupine River from their community of Old Crow. Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Chief Joe Linklater, stated “This was an important and successful Assembly, with presentations from some very special guests and more importantly, the passing of some resolutions which will benefit the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Yukon in years to come.”

The Assembly was pleased to invite special guests from the Yukon Government, AFN Vice Chief for the Yukon, Rick O’Brien, a Tetlit Gwich’in delegation, as well as our dear friend and colleague from the United States, Lenny Kolm, who has been instrumental in establishing a working relationship between the Gwich’in and environmental groups in the U.S., as well as presentations from the Land Use Planning Council, Dana Naye Ventures, Yukon Indian Development Corporation and Vuntut Development Corporation.

Guest Presentations:

Yukon Government

- Premier Fentie, Minister Lang, Minister Edzerza
 - Review joint capital construction projects and discussion of economic development strategies.
 - Continued support by Yukon for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation lead on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Porcupine Caribou Herd issue.

- AFN Vice Chief – Yukon Region, Rick O’Brien
 - Brief update of his current activities and he sought Vuntut Gwitchin perspectives on a number of matters.
 - Extension of Health Canada Consent form deadline.
 - Youth involvement in the AFN.

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- MLA – Lorraine Peter
 - Spoke of the progress being achieved by the Vuntut Gwitchin Government and encouraged ongoing effective relationship between VGFN and the Yukon Government.
- Tetlit Gwich'in
 - Discussed natural resource issues of common concerns on the Northwest Territories / Yukon border.
- Lenny Kolm and Associates
 - Lenny spoke of his continuing work on protecting the Porcupine Caribou calving grounds in Alaska.

Accountability Initiatives Underway by Vuntut Gwitchin Chief and Council

- VGFN will be posting unconsolidated audited financial statements on Old Crow's website on the Internet.
- Access to information and protection of private information about VGFN Citizens is now in the VGFN Constitution as of August 10, 2003.

VGFN Constitution

- Corrected any editorial errors and omissions.
- Further substantial changes to be reviewed at a special General Assembly in September 2003.

Briefing and discussion of the Vuntut Development Corporation activities, including Air North

GA Resolutions

- A number of resolutions addressing local interests.
- Of broader interest:
 - Concern about holding and treatment of captive wildlife and game farming.
 - Concern that Yukon Territorial Minister of the Environment essentially rejected the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board's recommendations which were based on very comprehensive consultation with Yukoners.
- A strong resolution of support for VGFN Government taking the initiative to encourage Fisheries and Oceans Canada to apply a fishing closure to the fall Chum fishery on the Porcupine River to help rebuild Chum stocks. Further, VG Government was encouraged to take the lead in monitoring the closure and if necessary enforce the closure.

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