



VGFN NEWS

NEWSLETTER
of the
VUNTUT GWITCHIN
GOVERNMENT

Gwifluu Zrii



May
"Crust on the snow Month"

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Grad 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.

Contributions to VGFN News are by the employees of VGFN.

VGFN Chief & Council

Chief: Joe Linklater
Deputy Chief: Roger Kyikavichik
Councilors: Glenna Tetlich
William Josie
Esau Schafer

VGFN News Editor: Tammy Josie
tjosie@vgfn.net
Assistant Editor: Michael Peter
mpeter@vgfn.net

Dorothy Frost
Administrative Director

Good day, Happy Spring to you all!

The birds are singing and the sun is shining brightly down on us once again, what a glorious sight.

Our office continuously, on your behalf work towards a more responsible and accountable government, to ensure quality and consistency is being met throughout our daily duties. We hope that you have been treated respectfully and in professional manner by our staff members. Your letters and phone calls when received are forwarded to the appropriate departments who handle these specific questions, suggestions and ideas to provide the services in a more professional manner. We thank you for the time and energy you have spent providing us with your direction and leadership. It is through this collaboration that we are able to better govern ourselves and our community.

We are always striving to deliver our programs and services in a timelier manner.

On that note, I attended a 4 day course on **Records Management**, with the following emphasis on (excerpts taken from course description):

Creating and receiving information in a variety of formats. The challenge today is to ensure that all forms of information, whether they are traditional paper records or new digital forms such as electronic mail, are managed to ensure that they are retrievable and available to support the organizations business. The challenges lie not only in establishing comprehensive recorded information management programs, but also in ensuring that all information is captured, filed, saved and made available according to the requirements of staff, but also according to new standards for managing evidence, and new standards for program operations. The course outlined key components of a comprehensive recorded information management program, reviewing the new international standards for information management and best practices for the management of all in-

formation for mats. All aspects, including policy requirements, information capture, filing, retention and disposition were included.

Here are some key points that I learned, although there are a lot more information that I have noted as well.

1) Information stored on computers is recognized in Canadian Law as a valid business record.

2) All transactions, may it be from your hotmail account or yahoo is the property of the Vuntut Gwitchin Government due to the fact that you using Government equipment during normal business hours.

3) Determining how long to retain records. These are based on an assessment of the regulatory environment, business and accountability requirements and the risk. The rights and interests of stakeholders should be considered; these decisions should not be made intentionally to avoid any rights of access.

4) Records retention should be managed to meet current and future business needs by

a) Retaining information concerning past and present decisions and activities as part of our Government's memory to inform decisions and activities in the present and in the future.

b) Retain evidence of past and present activities to meet accountability obligations

c) Complying with legal requirements by ensuring that the applicable business activities are documented understood and implemented and meets the current and future needs of internal and external stakeholders.

I can go on and on, but you can see that there is a lot of work that we will be implementing to ensure that not only our corporate history is preserved but that daily business is captured and retained as well.

The key here is a better manageable system that has the ability to track all these documents. We have set aside some funds to further investigate this form of tracking and manageability of all our records.

In addition to this I attended a one day course with emphasis on...

Privacy Management and Digital

Information Management

This one-day session, taught by Stuart Rennie, a lawyer examined the recent federal legislation governing the management of privacy and new Canadian standards defining the specific regulatory and evidentiary requirements for ensuring that digital information is acceptable as evidence. This was of particular interest, as we have broader organization responsibilities for legal and regulatory compliance, as well as privacy management.

It was noted that during the course of these sessions that we as a Government must adhere to the laws of general application if we want to ensure we are taken seriously as a government. Our due diligence is the key to this and we can do this by implementing a system that is able to do this.

With that, I shall let you go for now and in the next submission I will bring forth additional information that pertains to our Government.

Thank you kindly.



Glenna Tetlich Council

Drin Gwiinzii; I hope that you are all enjoying the nice weather. It is great to see so many people going out to Crow Flats this spring and enjoying our beautiful country.

There will be some changes in the H&S Department in the next few months. The posting for Community Wellness Worker and H & S Director has been posted and closed. We will be starting the interviews and hope to have these positions filled in the next couple of months. I will be stepping down from the Director of Health & Social Programs and focusing on my duties as a VGFN Council member.

Mahsi Cho, Ted Howes for accepting the term position as the Acting Community Wellness Worker.

Loretta Itsi Administrative Assistant, Social Programs

Drin Gwiinzii; hope you are all enjoying the warm weather.

My duties as the administrative assistant include administrative work to social assistance. My primary job responsibility is to ensure members are adequately being taken care of when in need. This means that if you are unemployed or seeking employment than we are obligated under our policy to ensure your well

Joe Tetlich Justice Coordinator

Working in the Justice Department involves collaborating with the community as a whole. Whether you are in the field of health or environment there is always laws of general application that we have to follow and abide by. Crime concerns everyone, whether you are the offender, victim, child, friend, neighbor or the innocent bystander. When someone infringes on your property or disrupts in any way your well being, this is not acceptable. We live in a society where we like to think that we care for everyone.

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So how do we as front line workers help? We can only help the ones that are seeking help.

VGG H&S Dept. is working in partnership with the Yukon College to develop and deliver a one month 'Personal Empowerment' program which will begin the first week of June. We are in the planning stages and will inform the public of the time and place once everything is finalized. I would like to encourage anyone that is interested to participate. Some activities will include - Elder's teachings by a variety of Elders throughout the month, crafts (stained glass and carving by Derrick Kapuschak, traditional practices by various resource people from the community, and effective communications by Ted Howes, Gabor and James will also offer some training. Some of this training will be done out on the land, so if you see a wall tent set up on the hill across from Gladys Netro's place, you'll know what it's for. You are welcome to

being.

The first part of the month has to do with administrating funds to our clients.

From my experience, during the warm months we have not many clients. During the winter months we have a high number of clients. We are at a stage in our long term plan to revisit the S.A. Policy. This is not a major change; however we are looking at more independency. This will encourage individuals to feel positive about him or herself.

There are a number of programs that we are focusing on that will achieve these

To actually infringe on peoples personal life is going beyond our call of duty. We are always looking for individuals that would like to volunteer their services; everyone has some sort of skill that could be utilized in the community. Working as a Justice Committee member could be a very rewarding experience, you are actually helping individuals better their lives by supporting them. There is also opportunity for training and some travel/training out of the community. If you are interested in sitting on the committee please come and see me, Joe Tetlich EXT. 259.

We are looking at accountability very seriously now as the Courts are looking at a paper trail for individuals and offences. When individuals get community service work it doesn't necessary mean

drop by anytime for tea and to take part in the activities; we are anticipating a very exciting and fun time.

H&S staff will be doing some community consultations to discuss changes to the SA program, Elders Wood/Fuel program and Adult Care Program. The first consultation meeting took place on May 11, 2006 for SA Policy program; we would appreciate your input on how you would like to see these programs delivered in the future.

Have fun at the Annual Caribou Day (Vadzii Choo Drin) Celebration! Don't forget the National Film Board will be here the same weekend to show the film on the Old Crow Youth Health & Fitness Project as well as the Kwanlin Dun Coyote Ski Team to participate in the weekend events, please make them feel welcome. Mahsi Cho!

results. We have been collaborating with the college to enable community members to achieve basic computer skills & accounting. This will hopefully encourage individuals to further their studies in education. One of the things in getting work is lack of communication skills. If individuals learn to communicate more effectively, there self-esteem will increase.

The Dept. has come along way within the last year on making some positive changes. I thank you all & look forward to working together with the community on these changes. Mahsi Cho!

that they can work for their immediate family and get credit for that. Community service work means doing a task that will make you realize the mistake you have done, and to try repair the damage to the community or individual.

We have submitted our budget and work plan for the next fiscal year and its business as usual. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to come in and discuss. All have a wonderful and safe spring.



Renee Charlie
Home & Community Care Coordinator

Since the last newsletter, April has been a very busy month for me, as this is our new Fiscal Year for our Vuntut Gwitchin Government. All the old files, departmental financial reports, contribution agreement, reporting and work plans for "Medical Health" are all finalized.

I attended the "Special General Assembly", April 11 and 12/2006, at the community hall. All resolutions requested by Leadership was discussed and passed by the assembly.

On the weekend of April 8 & 9/2006, I had the opportunity of taking Trust Training, this course I would recommend to all citizens of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. The course will help you to understand about how our trust moneys' are being invested and earned moneys' for the future generation. This course is in three modules. Anyone interested in this training, please see Alisa Kelly in the executive office.

Community Wellness Collaboration Meeting

The first meeting was held April 20 at the community Campus with a group of Resource people. James of the college coordinates this meeting. I attended this

meeting representing the: Home Community Care Program and as a grandparent. This meeting is to focus on positives and community Health & Wellness for Old Crow to become a safe, healthy, and happy place to live. Our second meeting was held, April 27. We needed to

Know-"What work best for the Community of Old Crow".

Some ideas:

- Youth conference – Old Crow 2006
- Gwitchin Youth Gathering
- Pizza supper with youth
- Public Forum – workshop and booths social department

Recreation – important to our community

Sharing / Actions / Positives

Our next meeting was on May 16 at 3:00pm at the college. Anyone interested in contributing to this meeting are most welcome to attend please contact James at the college.

Wood/Heating fuel:

A draft update policy on wood/heating fuel was drafted and we will be consulting the community on these changes in the near future. This policy will be approved by leadership and taken to our Annual General Assembly at Tlo-Kut 2006.

No decision on where the new woodlot will be located as of yet and no feedback from the public, as I indicated in my last newsletter submission.

Homecare Workers

We will be doing some consultations with the Adult Care workers to discuss some changes that are coming up. Annual spring cleaning will start as soon as it gets warm; this program is for 65 years & over Elders. To

sign up see me at my office to put your name for spring-cleaning job. Please, take time and help take care of an Elder.

Elders' Tea

Elders' gathering will be every Friday at the gathering place. 2:00pm to 3:30pm for Elders to visit with each other. All elders are welcome to have Tea, Coffee, Juice and Snacks. Each week we are trying to have a special guest to visit with the Elders and watch videos and have door prizes.

This program is to get the elders out of the homes for few hours. If the public has any ideas for the Elders program, I appreciate the feedback. Our first Elder's tea was held; April 21 and I had 12 Elders attend. It was also Victor's birthday; we a birthday cake and song for him. Any volunteers will be greatly appreciated or spend time with the elders on Friday afternoons'. Donations for door prizes are welcome.

Home and Community Care Van Usage

There have been complaints on the usage of the "Van". The van driver works on call for program activities and to assist Elders on getting to there destination when they live far.

These activities are:

- Driving individual clients with mobility issues to health appointments and community events.
- Delivering meals to clients with mobility difficulties or those unable to attend community meals for health reasons.
- Driving other groups as requested by the Home and Community Care Coordinator for activities related to health promotions in the community.
- Use for after-hours emergencies and/or health reasons.
- Drive Elders to store and the TD bank on Fridays.

I have a policy in place for use of the Van. The driver and backup driver sign a agreement and abide by this policy.

To everyone out on the land, a safe and happy spring to you all!

"BE THE CHANGE THAT YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD"



Marion Schafer
Community Health Representative

Good Day everyone. Just to give a brief update on the C.H.R. Program.

Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative

This has been completed for the fiscal year. Workshops were held at the school in February and March followed by hot healthy lunches. I'm currently working on the work plan for this year and the program will be receiving more funding soon for this current year.

The C.P.N.P is an ongoing program; this program is addressed to pregnant women and infants up to one year of age and is designed to improve the health of both mother and baby.

Heart healthy eating through life span scheduled for Feb 8, 2006 was cancelled due to a funeral in the community. This workshop will be rescheduled for 2006-2007 fiscal year. I am looking and searching for new ideas, if you have any ideas please contact me at the health center.

I've attended various trainings and workshops throughout the year. Will give more detail at the G.A .report.

This concludes a very brief report and wish everyone has a nice spring and into the summer.



Catherine Mwenda
Director, Finance

It has been a very busy spring for us here in the finance department. It is wonderful to see the ground without snow and the river flowing again! We thank our creator for another spring season and the beginning of lots of life in our skies, rivers and the land!

Work

The main projects I am currently preparing for the 2005-2006 year –end audit. The auditor will be in town for the final audit from June 30 to July 3,2006. In addition I am working on putting together the budgets for 2006-2007 fiscal year and this will be presented to all of you during our General Assembly in August 2006.

We are also working on streamlining our Records Management system in the department. Dorothy and I were in Whitehorse at the end of April 2006 for a 5-day training on Records Management at Yukon College. This was a big eye opener for me in many ways and I am already putting some of the new skills of records management in our department.

Records Management applies not only to governments and companies but also to individuals. I will share more details/ tips on the individual records management in future newsletters.

Please see more details of what the course covered from Dorothy's report.

Other initiatives we are working on relate to improving our efficiency in the various functions within the department. This includes the accounts payable, payroll and accounts receivable functions. A major support function to the government we are always looking into new ways to serve you better and more efficiently.

New projects we have worked on recently include

- We have revamped our accounts receivables and also our collection process. We have started to send overdue notices more frequently now and have seen a great reduction in our accounts receivables and this translates to more money in the bank and made available to run our many programs in the government.

Thank you to those of you who have kept your accounts with VGG up to date

- The new purchase order and check requisition system that was put in place by our Information System departments. This system helps departments in tracking all their commitments and payments better and on a timely manner and is a great aid to active management of the program or department budgets

- Working together with Government Services we will be putting in place an inventory management system later in the summer. This is a big project that will involve physical re-arranging the warehouse for better storage and retrieval of materials and creating working space at the site as well automating the inventory management system. This new program will be able integrated into our financial system and will eliminate a lot of manual processes we currently use to manage our stock and will also at all times give us information on what we have in stock

- In the next month or so Finance will be doing a verification exercise for all of VGG property/ Assets and develop a database to track all our assets. This is a good planning tool to know what we have currently, where it is located and the condition it is in. It also helps to plan future replacement schedules etc

Staff

The department is has some new staff since my last report. Maureen Gagnier is back to work with VGG and she is our Finance Manager. Please do welcome her back and we are very pleased to have her back.

Barbara Abel is our summer student this year and again please do welcome her and we are happy to have Barbara in the department and to give her a chance to put into practice the many wonderful new skills she has been learning in her accounting program.

Marla and Ida are still with us in the department. They are keeping very busy and doing a wonderful job.

I would like to thank all my staff for the wonderful job they are doing

Thank you and have a great spring and summer! Wishing you good harvests for those of you hunting and fishing!

Sonja Foss
Lands Manager

Hello Everyone!

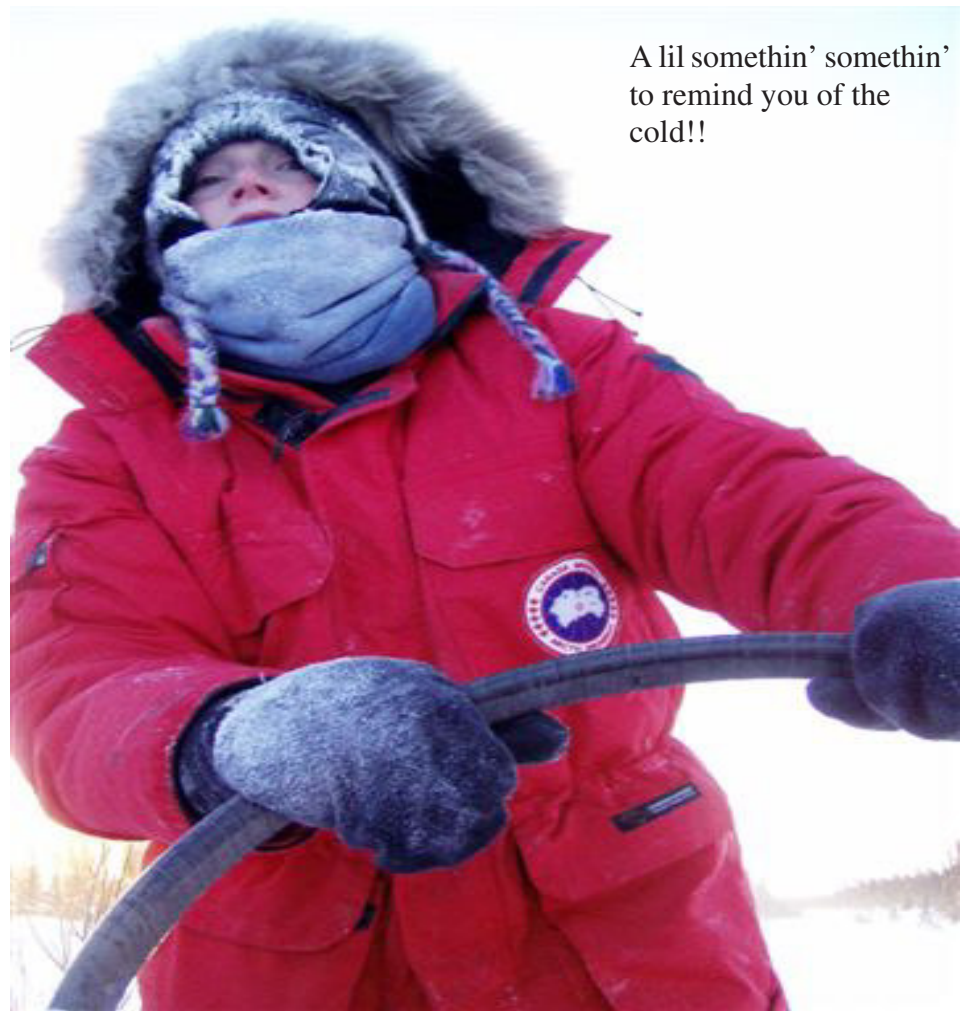
Believe it or not, April feels like a very long time ago. It feels like there have been many changes – in the weather, the department, and our responsibilities as the summer months approach. April started out with new focuses on cabin building, land use interests within the traditional territory, and preparing for meetings in Whitehorse nearer the end of the month.

Lands

A draft for a new cabin building approval process is in the works. The idea behind the process is to start recording land use within the VG settlement land boundaries. Basically, if someone is interested in using land for a specific purpose, they will apply to be able to use that land. Eventually, we will provide applications through VGG NR Department to those who would like to use settlement land for cabins, creating trails, etc. Once all requested information has been received and an approval process has been followed, then the information will be stored in a land registry. A permit for the use of the land will then be issued. Hopefully, I will be providing the full draft to William by the end of June.

Meetings

I attended the Mining Land Use Regulations meeting with the YESAA FN Caucus in Whitehorse. There is a protocol in the works between CYFN, YTG, and industry. There is the need to develop administrative procedures and protocols under the agreement of November 30, 2005 to ensure that FNs are apprised of mining related activities in their respective traditional territories, including those activities that are designated as Class 1 under the MLUR. These are still being developed. The reason why the protocol is coming into existence is due to new legislation that has been implemented. YESAA came into full force last November and it requires all Classes of placer mining be assessed for environmental and socio-economic effects that should be accounted for in development. However, Class 1 does not require an assessment.



A lil somethin' somethin'
to remind you of the
cold!!

So, in order to ensure that responsible development takes place we need to identify a process for the Class 1 activities. While placer mining does not currently cause much concern within VG Traditional Territory, there is the potential for it in these northern reaches. Therefore, it is important for VGFN to have a seat at the table to make sure that its values are being represented.

Also, the YESAA FN Caucus met with the YESAA Board to discuss issues that FN Governments are having with the new process of environmental assessments. There have been 120 projects assessed since January under YESAA. FN Governments are having difficulties making the 14 day deadline for the submission of comments. Unfortunately, those Governments are going to have to wait for the 5 year review process before things can change. Other issues are that communities do not understand or even know about their roles within YESAA.

I've requested to the Board for more education and outreach to occur, but was re-directed to INAC for further support. I am still waiting to hear back from them.

The following day of meetings revolved around all Decision Body representatives getting together to discuss further issues being highlighted by the new YESAA process.

There is still no clear process on how to incorporate Traditional Knowledge into the assessment process without it losing its confidentiality. Megan has informed me that VGG is working on a Traditional Knowledge Policy based on the policy framework created by the Yukon Heritage Working Group. This was created in light of YESAA as well.

Also, there is a territory wide issue on the rise related to the land use disposition process that YTG currently follows. In almost every FN traditional territory, there are several applications in at the Yukon Lands

Branch applying for tenure or for ownership of the land. Unfortunately, there seems to be conflict arising because some First Nations have been using those specific land selections for centuries and have built much infrastructure on them. However, the applications do not relay this information and the land may soon be owned by other people who will not allow that FN to use the land. This causes much concern to the YESAA Decision Body Forum because we see a role for YESAA to play in order to alleviate some of these pressing issues. I will keep you posted on what happens at our next meeting in June. In the meantime, I plan on writing a letter of support to those FN's impacted to show that we too are interested in having a more thorough land disposition process that involves the consideration of all parties.

I spent an entire day at the Lands Branch and at Natural Resources Canada Legal Surveys Division going over all of the information that they have on VG Traditional Territory and settlement land. I made arrangements for that data and information to be sent up to Old Crow so that we can have better access to map making and tools for management.

HEED and CFSC Course

Approximately 20 participants from Old Crow successfully completed the Hunter Education and Ethic Development course. At the same time, they also received their Canadian Firearms Safety Certificate (priorly known as FAC). Congratulations!

GARBAGE ON RIVER

Please, whoever you are, stop putting sawdust and other materials on the river. The Solution to Pollution is NOT Dilution. The garbage you put on the river harms fish, wildlife, dirties peoples' cabins and decreases the water quality. We have had sooooo many complaints from people about this, and apparently, this happens every single year.

The NR Department has put up signs and posters about this issue around town, but they have not stopped people from putting garbage on the river. So, we received verbal approval from Chief and Coun-

cil that we can report these incidents to the Dawson Conservation Officer Kirby Meister. I have personally been in touch with Kirby who has spoken with other people in town too, and received the following information from him:

· This is not a new issue – I recall dealing with this in Old Crow in the early '90's when I was working in this district at that time. I learned that it had been customary in Old Crow for people to clean up around their homes in spring when the thaw started, and haul everything out onto the river, so that it would all “disappear” when the ice went out. At that time, I recall it was mostly sawdust, stove ashes, animal parts and dog waste that was being dumped on the river. Invariably, though, there was often regular household garbage mixed in with it, like paper, plastics, etc.

· Any of these types of litter are detrimental to the river, to the fish and wildlife that live in the river, and to the people who camp or live downstream.

· Section 101 of the Yukon Environment Act makes it an offence to discard litter in the Yukon anywhere other than in an approved facility (like the dump). The definition of Litter is very broad, and includes all the things mentioned in the first point above. In other words, it's against the law to dump all this stuff on the river.

· We will investigate these occurrences further if someone gives us good information about who dumps on the river, and who is then willing to act as a witness in court. We would need the name of the litterbug, where they dumped, a description of what they dumped (photos or video would be ideal), the date and the time.

· Through the T.I.P. program (Turn in Polluters/Poachers), there are cash rewards available for anyone providing this type of information, if it leads to a charge being laid.

· My experience in the past with this issue is that it upsets a lot of people in Old Crow, and most people are angry that it is happening, but I never once came up with a witness willing to help me put a case together. Our options for dealing

with it include a Ticket with a fine of \$57.00, or if we think a particular event is more serious, we will require the person to appear in court and ask the Court for a higher fine. A person could also be required by the court to clean up the mess they have made, no matter what the cost is for them to do that.

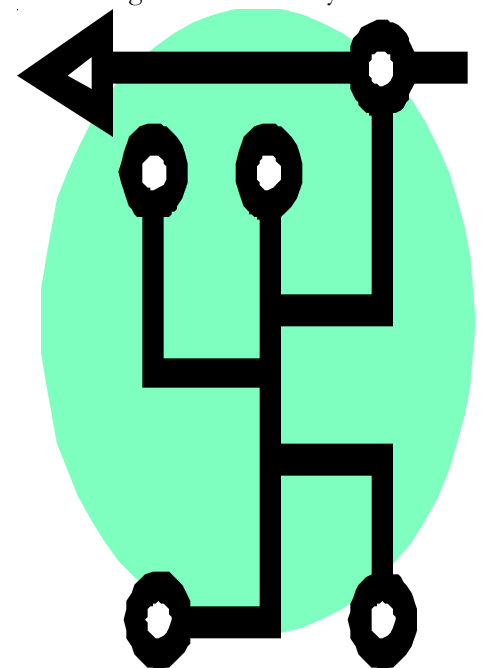
So, please everyone, stop littering on the River! It is your choice to be a good community steward and uphold respect towards the clean drinking water you inherited. Please avoid us having to report bad behavior when it could be so easy to transport your garbage to the dump.

YESAA

I reviewed two projects submitted to YESAA that were along the Dempster Highway. The two projects were for rock quarries and gravel removal to keep the highway in good repair. I posted the information at the beginning of April. One rock quarry was very close to a site specific piece of VGFN settlement land (S-31A). Comments were submitted and we are waiting to hear back from the designated office on its recommendations.

I'd also like to thank the Tetlich family for giving me the opportunity to help out a little bit when breaking trail out to John Charlie Lake. So, Mahsi' cho! It's beautiful out there in the Flats and I felt very fortunate for getting out. I'm inspired to see how the land has been taken care of for all time.

Have a great month everyone.



Megan Williams
Heritage Manager

The fiscal year end reporting and proposal writing time is drawing to a close and we have many interesting projects planned for 2006-07.

Vuntut Gwich'in Cultural Geography Project

This is the final year of the Vuntut Gwich'in Cultural Geography Project. We have a field research season planned in order to conduct place name verification and other oral history interviews. Our focus will be on ensuring that our place name database and GIS mapping will be accurate. We are also planning some basic signage to assist people with learning Gwich'in place names. Our next steps with Gwich'in place names after the summer research season will be to prepare our submissions to the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board and to complete the Online Atlas.

Rampart House Reconstruction Project

This year we are planning to conduct the reconstruction camp at Rampart

House in June rather than July and August as we did in past years. The focus this year will be to continue working on Cadzow House. Job postings for Supervisor, Log Workers, Cook, Labourers and Boat Operators are posted.

Language Activities

We are meeting to plan our approach to language activities this year. Our planning sessions with the VGFN Heritage Committee provide great direction for language work over the next few years. A community survey will be conducted soon so community members can provide their input into the direction we should take in gaining widespread fluency in the Gwich'in language.

Caribou Fences

The main activities around caribou fences continue to be work done by Dr. Ray LeBlanc who is gathering past research in addition to his own vast collection of data in order to produce a manuscript about the fences. We are working closely with Dr. LeBlanc on this project.

At the same time, the VGFN Heritage Committee is working with Parks Canada

to prepare a submission to nominate the caribou fences as a National Historic Site. This nomination will include all the known caribou fences in the VGFN traditional territory. We anticipate that the nomination preparation process will take at least two years. If you have any questions about this process, come into the Heritage Office or see any member of the VGFN Heritage Committee. The community will have opportunities to be involved in this process.

Traditional Knowledge Policy

VGFN is in the process of developing the long-awaited Traditional Knowledge (TK) Policy. This is a very important process and will affect all Vuntut Gwich'in citizens. The purpose of the Policy is to protect and preserve Vuntut Gwich'in traditional knowledge, for example: hunting and fishing sites, spiritual sites, symbols, songs, stories, medicinal plants, genetic information and resources, etc. After the internal review the Policy will be taken to the community for feedback and to educate citizens about the process.

Mary Jane Moses
Heritage Researcher

Ongoing work continues of database entries of Oral History information from last summer's fieldwork from our Cultural Geography Project. I've been busy transcribing and indexing interviews to update the database, to get all those caught up and out of the way before our next field trips. Our next field work to the land begins sometime in July 2006, again to verify place names within the traditional territory with our Elders. This is one of the best parts of my job that I enjoy is getting the opportunity to go out on the land and listen to the yenko dai' stories

of the Vuntut Gwitchin people. I gain a lot of knowledge just by listening to these stories. I've listened to many long ago stories from such places as Bear Cave Mountain, White Snow Mountain, Geegoo K'yuu and Jalk'it to name a few. I'm privileged to hear all these interesting stories and learn from them and pass them on. I'm very grateful today that I can hear and understand the Gwich'in language that brings me to my next topic.

I attended a symposium in Vancouver on April 25/26 entitled "AFN Chiefs Committee on Languages – Critically Endangered Languages Symposium"

I attended along with 10 other Yukon delegates at the Sheraton Hotel just across

the street from St. Paul's Hospital. The symposium goal was to "provide an opportunity for a variety of individuals involved in First Nations languages work to discuss the relevant issues around critically endangered languages. The symposium objectives were to – facilitate a dialogue on the measurements, standards and approaches currently used by community based language workers to critically endangered languages, to provide an opportunity to front line language workers to provide information on their successes, challenges, needs and priorities for strategic purposes and to initiate a visioning exercise for the future of First Nations languages work in Canada leading to concrete strategic action."

Here are some important notes I scribbled down.

What can we do as a collective?

- If you have a healthy language you have a healthy community
- Find one path to revitalize languages,
- Retain principles that



hold us together

Leaderships need accurate information on languages for lobby efforts

Know that ancestral stories are the foundation,

Don't spend too much time counting who speaks and doesn't speak languages-it's just a game

Develop system and share it, share templates

You can't separate culture and language, the two mesh and go together

Stop the blaming of how language loss came about

Open lines of Communication

Self-Government land based education, accreditation

Identify funding sources for language implementation

Start pushing for language legislation

Demand more increased public funding

If borders are in place, cross those borders and network

Belief - that language revitalization, correlation of language and culture = self worth, Language revitalization matters,

Own our own curriculum,

Capacity – linguists- our own people,

Use Online Distance Education

One size does not fit all

Education has no room for language development, make the changes

Engage key players

Language= self worth and identity

Mobilize FN leaderships,

What can you and I do?

How much does my language matter to me?

What do we value about our languages?

We have to decide and choose how valuable our language is to us,

Renew that choice and start speaking your language today!

Learn 10 sentences in my language.

The key component is the will of the people to learn

and relearn their lan-



guages,

How much time do people want to put into languages?

What is the next step?

We have to believe strongly to continue on with preserving our languages

Instill the upbringing in your grandchildren; instill in them our whole way of life, Encourage ourselves to think for the future, nobody can do for the future except ourselves,

How do we paint a true reflection of all languages?

We need to change the mentality and attitudes of the community and decolonize our people

Barrier- not culturally appropriate, personal schedules, no time, not getting paid to attend language learning classes, parents and grandparents don't speak the language and English is the dominant language – how can we remedy this?

Who we are in the language – values?

Learn by hearing, seeing and doing

Language use should be a non-issue – it is a given,

Address the shame of not speaking

languages

Language revitalization matters,

Overarching goal – to preserve, protect and enhance FN languages,

Start speaking now –don't wait for legislation,

What can be done in schools, places of learning

Teach language in mornings when children are fresh for

learning

5 year Strategic Plan, Immersion route

Computer technology-use it for learning languages, use interactive Cd's,

Use vowel games, Bingo games, make them intergenerational so different age groups can learn and socialize

Use outdoor classrooms for teaching languages

Make own resources

Not enough trained fluent people

Not enough contact time in teaching in schools, need language mentors

Speak to children in the language – teaching a subject, 20 minutes is too short, children not hearing the language in translation, try languages on MP3's

Have a language festival,

Teach the teachers to market our languages

Community based language- lessons, culture, syllables,

Speak language now,

Pair off with Elders

Just do it- start speaking now

Self-Government land based education, accreditation

Identify funding sources for language implementation

Funding Resources

Develop resources/delivery,

Lack of funding for languages

Enact language legislation,

have languages recognized as official languages, amend existing Languages Act to include First Nation's languages

Ways and means to support FN languages – use legal tools, Constitution and language Act,

Language immersion, language



nests, oral history, honor heroes, elders and mentors,

Language revitalization matters

Responsible/stewardship – led by and developed by First Nations

Big effort needed to take back our languages

“Awaken the spirits of our languages, our languages are in us by birth.” quote from a Moiri lady.

To end off, lots to think about, about saving our languages.

I was very happy to attend to this language symposium. It gave me a lot of insight into our own Gwich'in language and ways we can improve future programming with direction from community. **An important question to ask yourself – what action will I take today to save my language?** Thak ts'o' – sreendit edik'anohtii.

Filmmakers, Media, Photographers, Authors and Researchers

All must fill out an application form for your project or activity within Vuntut Gwitchin Traditional Territory. This is an approximately 2 weeks – 30 day process. This paperwork must be filled out and

forwarded to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Heritage Office **prior** to your visit to Old Crow with your proposed project/activity. Approved applicants will then sign an agreement with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation outlining any restrictions relating to the project/activity. If any VGFN member knows of Film crews or anybody coming to the community to do any of the above, filming, photography, storytelling for books, magazines etc. please let the VGFN Heritage office know about it prior to the arrival of the people. This is our way of keeping track of people who come through our traditional lands and what they propose to do with the information.

The application forms can be accessed on the website at www.vgfn.ca under Departments, click on the Natural Resources section then under *other*, click Downloads and Forms. Then under Visitor Forms, click on your right hand side on either Media forms, Research forms or Filmmaker's forms.

Consent forms are required at all times to be signed by the client [i.e. Old Crow Elder or any other person in Old Crow] when you take their photograph, videotape them, interview or record them. Consent approval is part of the application process. Translators may be needed to interpret for Elders. Consent forms are available upon request or you use your own forms if they are approved as part of the application process.

If you have any questions, concerns or need clarification on this process, please do not hesitate to call 867-966-3261, weekdays, 9am – 4:30 pm or email mwilliams@vgfn.net or mjmoses@vgfn.net.

Tracy M. Rispin-Kassi *Director, Education*

In April, this department partnered up with the Alice Frost community campus to host information events during Education week, April 3rd to 7th. Thank you go out to James, Gabor and Jen at the college for coordinating the events, as well as Mabel, Sonja and Donna. Thank you also to the members of the community, who took time to visit and participate in the events. Coordinating events in the community takes time and energy, so it is rewarding to the coordinators when events are well attended.

April was also the month, which the annual Cultural Camp started up. This year the camp ran from April 14th to May 5th. This year was the first time that the camp was a school approved field trip. In saying this, each student was assessed by the workers at the camp on their skills. The assessment will be entered into a database, where we can track the students' skill building. This assessment is something VGFN Education has been working on with Mr. Bob Sharp, where the student's learnt skills can be credited towards their education. These credits can follow through to Grade 12, where each of our children in Grade 12 works on a Portfolio of themselves, this is a mandatory class and it starts in Grade 10. At this time, I have the assessments on my desk and have requested Mr. Sharp to work with Mabel and I to document the results. Mr. Sharp is scheduled to arrive on June 7th to the 11th.

At the end of the Cultural camp, Mabel, requested traditional leave to go out to her camp in Crowflats until the end of May. This was approved. In the meantime, I felt that Mabel's position needs to be filled and a posting was posted for a week. Unfortunately, no one applied for this short term employment. Therefore, I had asked Donna, the Employment Training Officer to work in the school on some of the mornings. Donna has enjoyed her time there.

The homework tutor program has been slowly moving along. Sonja has had a struggle with getting kids into the program



now that the snow has disappeared and of course, with the excitement of spring and the return of the caribou this is understanding. But for the course to be successful we need the consistency of students for the tutoring and this means support from the parents. At present we are looking at the budget for this program to see if we would be able to do some summer programming. Once we found this out, there will be a posting posted in the community.

I continue to commit my time to sit in on the School Council and College Campus monthly meetings. I feel that this is a necessary and important partnership for our community, as we all share the same beliefs of improving education in Old Crow. Recently the community went through the voting process, which the School Council asked the community if they would agree to change to a School Board. Only in Old Crow, would we end up with a tie! We also understand that the community needed more information on becoming a School Board, so in the following months and at our Annual General Assembly, information will be posted and probably delivered to your mailbox.

This year's Graduation of our Vuntut grads was absolutely wonderful! The Cap n' Gown ceremonies at F. H. Collins was the first event, where six of our graduates are.

The Vuntut Grads looked proud as they received their diploma and of course, we shouted out our cheers. It was a proud moment for family and friends to see six Vuntut Gwitchin graduates, the most in Old Crow's history. Congratulations to the parents as well, for supporting their children in this accomplishment. On June 1st, we have two other Vuntut Grads attending their Cap n' Gown at Porter Creek Secondary High School, they are: Samantha Frost-Lindstorm and Lisa Linklater. Jeneen Njootli, daughter of Stanley Njootli Sr. and Sybil Frei will also be graduating on June 28th in Ottawa, Ontario.

So Old Crow, in total we have 10 Vuntut Gwitchin Grads for the Class of 2006!

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Our graduates participated in

the 31st Annual Native Graduation held by the Council of Yukon First Nations and coordinated this year, by our own Kimberly Rumley. Kim did an excellent job of coordinating this event and our grads looked magnificent in their beaded regalia. They looked so beautiful and handsome with their dresses, vests, jackets and slippers. A lot of beadwork and sewing was done this year in our community for this event. Congratulations to all the families and friends who took time to sew these pieces together, each bead was sewn with pride and most of all love.

Four of our Vuntut Grads also received awards in the following:

Malinda Bruce > Stirling Young Insurance Award

Amanda Frost > First Nation Graduation Committee Award

Travis Frost > First Nations Male Athlete of the year Award

Wade Kaye > Congeniality Award

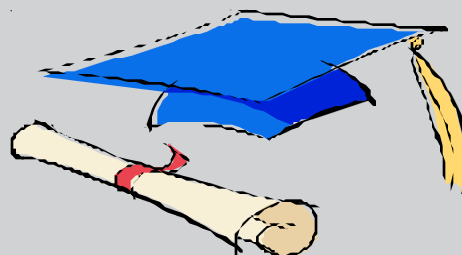
Congratulations on your hard work!

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find photos of our grads. These were taken by Miranda, Tammy and I.

June will be busy with the closing our school year at Chief Zzeh Gittlit school on June 7th. Awards night will be on the 5th. Congratulations to all the award recipients this year! Also big cheers for *Aaron Andre-Josie* and *Pricilla Tizya* on completing their Kindergarten year! **Congratulations!**

Good Luck to our Grade Nine students, who will be heading out to Whitehorse in the fall!

Lastly, I would like to congratulate all the Vuntut Youth, who have demonstrated their skills, culture and pride as Vuntut Gwitchin in the Arctic Winter Games, the Yukon Historical Fair and soon some will be traveling to Denver, Colorado for the North American Indigenous Games. We, in Old Crow are very proud of your accomplishments!



Dustin Davis
Physical Education Instructor

Congratulations go out to all those students who have put a solid effort into running laps each day in the school gym. Several students have now run more than **1000 laps** of the gym for a total distance of more than 60 km. Way to go! Hopefully you have seen many students around town with the flashy red t-shirts they earned for running 500 laps of the gym. Students are experiencing first-hand that with a consistent daily effort they can go a long way! Success comes from moving forward a little bit each day!

The remainder of the equipment purchased for the school physical education program has arrived and improves the range of activities I can deliver to the kids. For the coming school year I hope to purchase archery equipment that can be used both by students and the community. VGFN Recreation Department will be providing the funding. Partnerships between VGFN and Chief Zzeh Gittlit School allow greater overall opportunities for the community. Hopefully next fall I will be able to provide sessions at the school for people to learn archery. Orienteering equipment arrived and students greatly enjoyed their first experience with it. I hope to hold an introduction to map and compass skills workshop for community members interested in improving their skills in this area.

During Caribou Days, students will visit from Whitehorse for a cultural exchange from the Kwanlin Dunn First Nation. The *Old Crow Health and Fitness Pilot Project* is hosting this exchange. These Whitehorse students participate in a "Back to the Land" program run by Gary Bailey. Gary was part of the TEST program and has ties to Old Crow, having trained here under Father Mouchet when he was younger. It makes it very clear how important the work of the Fitness Project is when you see people like Gary giving back to today's youth because of the positive experiences he had with Father Mouchet. Gary is excited to bring youth back to Old Crow, a place that had a big impact on who he is today. Kwanlin Dunn youth will be joining in on community

events as well as leading a workshop on traditional stick gambling. This will help Old Crow youth become even stronger at Dene Games trials in the future, as this is one of the activities where our youth are less experienced. There will be a series of activities hosted by the *Old Crow Health and Fitness Pilot Project* over the weekend that will be physically active and traditional: activities such as weight packing over a cross country course, a hike to the top of First Mountain, and cross country running biathlon. Expect to see a schedule of activities as Big Caribou Days approach. All of these activities will be open both to youth and community members, so come on out and show your Gwitchin pride for being active on the land.

Finally, the National Film Board of Canada will be in Old Crow on Big Caribou Days weekend as well. There will be a community viewing and official launch of their new film about the *Old Crow Health and Fitness Pilot Project*. The ongoing efforts made to seek a healthier lifestyle for today's youth should be a source of pride for Old Crow and hopefully most of the community will come out to see this new film. Mahsi

Dana Lord **Receptionist**

Hello! I am enjoying our spring it's so good to see the sun shining, the snow melting, kiddies running around having fun and the seagulls on the river. Looking forward to the ice going and finally... my daughters 4th birthday on May 21st.

As everyone knows, I am working full time for VGFN as the receptionist, now under the Department of Information Systems with Paul Doehle as my new Director, Tammy Josie as my supervisor and I'd like to welcome Michael Peter to the Dept.

I am enjoying my job doing such duties as answering phone calls, taking messages, checking the mail and other tasks that need to be done for the office. I hope everyone is looking forward to the Annual Caribou Days starting on the long weekend starting May 19-22, 2006.

Have a nice day and a beautiful spring Old Crow.

Susan Drury, **Acting Director**

Carpenter Laborer Training

The course will run May 15 to June 23. Instructors are Randall Francis and Michael Frost. We hope to have 12 to 15 participants. VGFN is delivering this program in partnership with Advanced Education and AHRDA. Participants will be working in the skating arena to begin with – pre fabricating the five washroom additions and learning, updating or refreshing skills. We're pleased to have two very experienced carpenters living in Old Crow who are capable of teaching skills to participants. The participants may also work on some renovations and new house construction while in the program.

Student Summer Jobs

HR has also been working with Directors on compiling a list of student positions. We've hired two students in positions funded partially through the YTG STEP program: Natural Resources Assistant – Cheryl Charlie, and Game Guardian Assistant – Erika Tizya-Tramm. Through the YTG career placement program we hired a computer tech summer student – Michael Peter. Other positions will be GS painters, archive/filing clerk, survey helpers, and recreation leaders and workers. Some partners don't approve their funds until mid-May and we need to wait for confirmation of their funds before we can make some positions official. We will post the positions as soon as we can. There will not be as many positions as last year due to limited funds.

Cooks Agreement Form

HR along with Directors has drafted a Cooks Agreement Form that details the wages for various cooking situations. We're working on a check list so that cooks and those arranging for cooking service are both clear on expectations for delivering the service.

Job Descriptions

The job descriptions are completed! All current positions at VGG have a document that states the main duties, and decision making and accountability expectations. Staff in those positions will soon be getting a final copy of their job descriptions.

HR is working on a zero tolerance policy for VGG customers regarding being under the influence of alcohol or harassing staff whether in person or by telephone.

In January, the Chief asked HR to supervise the Recreation Dept. The following are activities that have been happening in Recreation.

Recreation

Health and Fitness Program (on going planning with Dustin Davis, Glenna Tetlich and Don Roberts, purchasing of equipment and materials)

Derrick Kapuschak attended a **youth arts based facilitation** workshop in Whitehorse in March funded by the Youth Directorate. While in Whitehorse Derrick taught carving at the Skills Canada workshops, and attended the Yukon Arts and Culture Summit.

Canada Winter Games – participated in teleconference meetings and planning for how Old Crow can participate in the games – holding a torch event and a community games activity here, as well as community groups/individuals attending the games

Film Festival in March

Spring Break activities

Easter Carnival in April

Researched funding proposals and connected with other agencies in the community.

Working with GS and YTG on the building of the playground and skateboard park.

Recreation Centre Feasibility Study

A community meeting was held in Old Crow and a survey was handed out in early April. An interim report is now available and the consultant, Doug Hayward, is returning to the community to share the report. There was a community meeting on Monday, May 15 at the hall to discuss the report. More details will be coming.

Information on forming Co-ops.

Doug Hayward has arranged for a speaker to come to Old Crow to share information on advantages and disadvantages of forming co-ops and how to get one started. Co-ops are groups of people with common interests such as artists or

cooks or those who want to buy bulk foods as examples, who join together to conduct business and share workspace, marketing and other resources. The speaker was Marty Frost and he was here Monday, May 15.

National Film Board

The NFB came to Old Crow on May 20 to show the film they created about the Health and Fitness Project. Shirley and Pauline Frost conducted a short workshop for community residents regarding the film content, more information later.

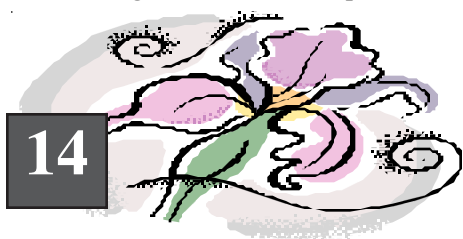
North America Indigenous Games (NAIG)

The games are being held this summer in Denver, Colorado. Some of our youth have been successful at trials held in Whitehorse. To date these are the youth who we know have made teams: rifle shooting team members are Jay Charlie, Myranda Charlie, Ashlyne Frost, Kyle Benjamin; alternates are Sheila Kaye and Natasha Frost. These youth will soon be selling NAIG raffle tickets in order to pay for their participation fee. Please support their efforts! Pauline Frost is the coach of the rifle shooting team and while here during the long weekend in May she'll conduct a coaching clinic for the team members who live in Old Crow.

We're also working on long term plans for recreation as well as summer plans for recreation to include arts, crafts, theatre, music and dance; outdoor on the land activities; sports and games; social, culture and heritage activities.

We're pleased to be working with the Recreation Society, who we understand would welcome more members. President is Sonja Foss who can be reached at the NR office at the government offices.

Please contact us if you have any ideas for recreation. We're getting some good ones for summer from individuals and other government departments. We're also looking for volunteers – anyone wants to organize a fiddle camp? Mahsi?



Barry Drury Director, Government Services & Housing

Presently GS/Housing has our carpenter course going on with Randal Francis and Michael Frost as lead instructors. The goal of this training is to upgrade local skills and also do pre-fabrication of units in one location which at present is in the arena.

We have 16 people attending the course and they all have done a super job so far.

Now they are moving into the actual installation of new washroom units that were pre-fabricated in the arena.

Other Projects

- The completion of the skateboard park at the ball diamond is in the works. This location was chosen by students last summer

- The new playground and equipment beside the community hall

- Five new washroom – water and sewer additions

- Four housing units are anticipated later this summer

- Small project at the New Airport Terminal, for YTG

- The new incinerator project in conjunction with YTG

- Finish repairs to the arena, with Sprung Structures. New schedule: mid-July. This fits our schedule better.

- We must begin to implement our new housing policy as adopted at the recent General Assembly

Shortly, each household in the community will receive in the mail a rent notification including the amount payable each month. Rent will be payable beginning the first day of August 2006. As per the housing policy all housing units in the community are deemed to be owned by VGFN unless otherwise determined. We realize there are units in the community that are privately owned. The decision on ownership will be made by the housing committee.

If you feel the home you are in is legally owned by you and or your family the opportunity to present your case to the VGG Housing Committee will be allowed. Please contact GS/Housing to book an appointment. If you feel the unit you reside in is lawfully yours the rent you pay effective August first will be held in trust by VGFN and if the home is agreed owned by you and or your family all monies paid will be returned.

If you believe you have ownership of the home you must pay the rent each month until the issue of ownership is determined by the Housing Committee.

The committee will present their findings to Chief and Council, for approval of the decision.

Have a great summer....



Maureen Gagnier
Finance Manager

I cannot believe it has been four months since I arrived. Winter has tamed to summer. Thank you for the privilege, it is good to be back working with everyone again. I would like to welcome Barbara and her family back into the community. Barbara will be working in finance for the summer and we are pleased to have her.

We have been very busy, as we are always in finance, but especially at this time of year. One program we have been working on is the implementation of a system for our accounts receivable notices with a focus on collections. The idea is that it is more difficult to pay a debt that has grown to what seems an unmanageable amount than to pay a much smaller one. Thirty, sixty, and ninety day notices are being sent with regularity. Disconnection advises for Water & Sewer services, unfortunately sometimes have to be sent and acted upon. It is not always a pleasant decision, but a responsible one. We want everyone to know that one important policy we have in finance is that our door is always open and if you find yourself in difficulty with the payment of your account, we are always eager and willing to sit down with you and discuss your payment options.

Another policy in finance is that we cannot give out checks we have issued to anyone other than the person or organization named on the check. This policy is in place to protect the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the person or organization it is paying. If you are expecting a check from VGFN and would not be in town to receive your mail or you are not able to pick it up and want someone else to do this for you please contact finance directly to make this arrangement. You can drop off, fax or email us a note authorizing us to release your check to another person for deposit. Finance will not, under any circumstances release a check without an authorization.

I wish everyone a safe and healthy summer. I can hardly wait for berry season but I don't want to wish away the summer. Mahsi' Cho

Melissa Valja
Natural Resources Planner

Old Crow Flats SMA

The activities that have occurred under this planning process are: Whitehorse Open House on April 5th where the Technical Working Group (TWG) and Facilitator Bob Hayes discussed the Old Crow Workshop and gained good feedback from several VGFN members; and the Technical Working Group meeting on April 6th in Whitehorse where we discussed our next steps and work to be done. The first Old Crow Flats SMA Newsletter was produced at the end of March. The questionnaires have been used to interview interested community members during May. In May and June the TWG will complete writing the draft of the Management Plan for the Senior Management Committee to review it in July. A presentation will be made at the GA of the draft plan.

Observations during Traditional Pursuits Program

A chart was developed for people to note any observations about their time on the land during the Traditional Pursuits Program. There are questions about whether ice and snow conditions are changing, and the number of birds and animals that you've seen and harvested. If you received this chart and would like to comment on it, please come in and talk to our department. We've developed this to help us with our long-term plans for ecological monitoring.

HEED and FAC

The Hunters Ethics and Education Development and Firearms Certificate course took place from April 19th to the 23rd. This course was well attended and approximately 20 people took it. A big thanks goes out to the Yukon Government Conservation Officers (C.O.'s) who taught it: Kirby Meister and Russel Osborne. Another course will be organized in a few months if there is enough interest. It is crucial for safe hunting practices to be maintained since it is what allows people to continue living off the land.

Fishing Branch CMA Meeting

The Committee of Managing Agencies

met here in Old Crow on May 18th. We reviewed the status of action items from last year (like the Risk Management Plan), were updated on the research conducted in the area (like the bear monitoring and the hydrology), and the Commercial Bear Viewing that Bear Cave Mountain Adventures is starting up (through VDC).

Climate Change

The pamphlet that we've been working on will be out in June. It will be a great resource to let people know how to reduce their Greenhouse Gas (GHG's) emissions in Old Crow. Keep it and stick it on your fridge!

Recycling

New bins have been installed throughout the community. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer with this important activity talk to Stan Jr. who is the recycling coordinator. Remember: every item that you recycle is another item kept out of the dump, which will lessen the burden on it.

FireSmart proposal for Old Crow and Rampart House

I have completed this proposal for funding to conduct FireSmart activities around Old Crow and Rampart House. We have received some positive news about it and can expect the first stage of this work to occur in late August.

Wildfire Meeting

Mike Sparks and Dan Baike of YG Wildland Fire Management came up to Old Crow on June 1st, and met with our department about the fire forecast for the summer, which is a cooler and drier summer. They expressed interest in completing a more detailed FireSmart plan for Rampart House, and we will also be making sure that they have the latest GIS maps with cabin location in the traditional territory.

Girls Science Camp

This will be held in August and will bring together woman role-models in on the land knowledge and science to host a camp for girls out on the land. Talk with Jennifer Smith or I for more information. Mahsi' Cho!

