

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

VOTE
TO WIN!
SEE PAGE 8 FOR
DETAILS

KHAH ZHAK DHA'AI 2022

SHORT DAYS MONTH | DECEMBER



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Drin Gwiinzii Shilak Naii,

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health as we come to the close of 2022. Many aspects of our traditional life continue as we meet new challenges as a community and a government, but first I want to acknowledge councillors Paul Josie and Bonnee Bingham.

Councillors Bingham and Josie joined leadership at a time when they were greatly needed, and they supported our community, our government, and our First Nation in doing so. I will always hold them up with respect and gratitude, hai cho.

I'm proud to leave a clear path for the next leadership to follow as directed by our nation and our General Assembly. We now have a [Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 entitled Yeendoo Geenjit Gwitr'it T'agwàa'in](#) (We are working for our future) that will strengthen and modernize the Vuntut Gwitchin Government.

Over the past two years, while beginning the work on the strategic plan, we began bringing on new staff who were excited to be a part of VGG's growth. I give our staff my gratitude and respect as well.

Before joining Council in May 2016, I was a part of several youth organizations, including one that brought Yukon First Nation youth through the Peel Watershed by canoe. In those days, I spent almost half the year out on the land. I didn't have much of a bank account, but I was happy.

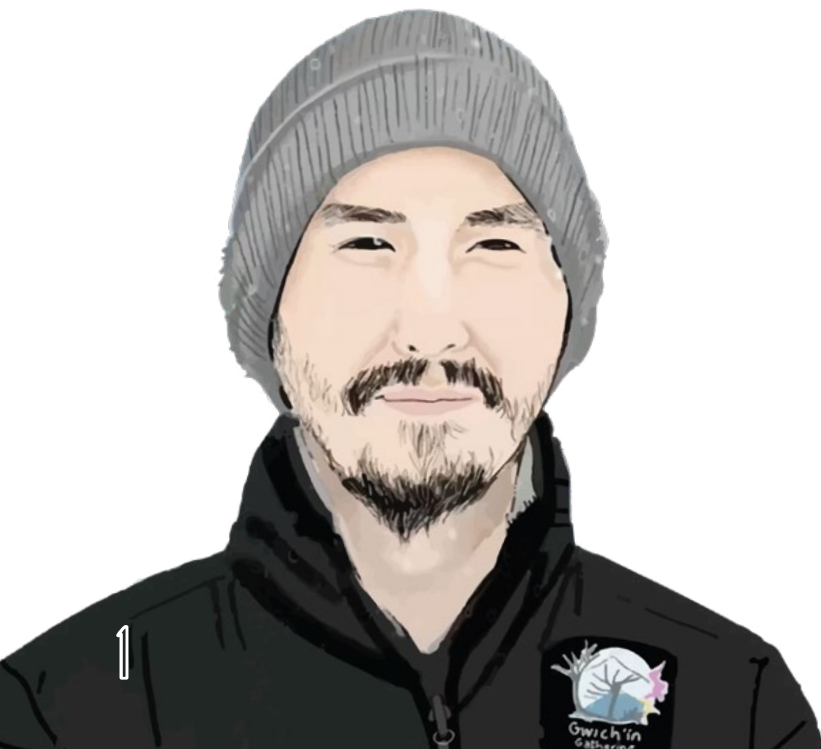
When Tracy Rispin came to my door one day with nomination papers, I looked at the names and signed them. I was 29. Early on, I felt intimidated by some high-level meetings. Now, I know that everyone wants to help, to do a good job. We don't always agree, and sometimes we don't see clearly how to accomplish our goals together, but we are all trying to make a positive difference in the world.

I used to think I could never influence any major institutions that effected my life, now my signature is on ground-breaking documents like the First Nation School Board Agreement. My signature is my own, to be sure; but equally, it represents the voice of the Vuntut Gwitchin people who I have had the honour of representing over the past several years throughout the Yukon, Canada, and internationally.

This is a lesson that I want to share with the young people of our community, our young Vuntut Gwitchin Citizens. We all have things that we hope to accomplish in our lives, for ourselves and our close friends and family. But as Vuntut Gwitchin, we also have an opportunity to contribute to our community and to our nation in a way that will benefit present and future generations.

Of course, there is still much work to improve all aspects of our lives as a community and as a nation. It is certain that VGG will continue to face challenges like those facing governments across Canada and around the world; issues such as education, mental health, climate change, jobs and housing. As we work to meet these challenges, Vuntut Gwitchin Citizens remain our government's most important partner.

I see so much potential in our people. I am excited when I think about how our nation will advance in the coming years, and I hope that



these past years of service helped our community and people get there.

I want to thank everyone I had the privilege of working with as well as every Vuntut Gwitchin Citizen, whether you live in Old Crow, Whitehorse, or elsewhere. I hope you all know how grateful I am to have had the privilege to work with you, and to serve our people. I would also like to congratulate and welcome our Chief Elect, Pauline Frost, and our two new councillors Debra-Leigh Reti and Jeneen Frey Njootli.

I want to share with everyone words spoken to me by an Elder that shaped my leadership. The Elder told me: If you are crossing mountains in a snowstorm, you can't give up and turn around no matter how difficult the journey ahead might be; you have to keep going. These words fill my heart.

I served the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to the best of my abilities, and I didn't turn back. We must all keep moving forward. In doing so, we honour our Elders, our ancestors, and all the generations to come.

Haii cho,

Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm
2018 - 2022

MESSAGE FROM THE NEWLY ELECTED CHIEF AND COUNCIL

Shilak nait, it is with great honour and pride that we present ourselves as your newly elected Chief and Council.

When we put our names forward to run in the election, it was with the intention and desire to bring forth your concerns with humility and kindness, and to focus on a well community.

We are prepared to lead as matriarchs of strong family and community connections. We realize that this is a huge sacrifice and it will take us away from our families, our community, and it will put us in some very stressful situations, however, we can assure you that we are prepared to work hard and represent your voice and our community through the best possible way, as a team.

Each one of us will work towards positive changes and to always be approachable to all. Dinjii nait datthak eenjit t'igwii'in—We are doing this for all people.

Sha gwich'in kat you are all in our prayers. Drin tthak ts'at tshik ke'gwadhat niwhah vili'.

Drin Tsul Shoh ohlii - Merry Christmas
Juk Drin Choh shoh inlii - Happy New year

Pauline Frost
Debra-Leigh Reti
Jeneen Njootli



2022 BIENNIAL GWICH'IN GATHERING

In July, the Vuntut Gwitchin Government welcomed family and friends from across the Gwich'in Nation to Old Crow for the 2022 Biennial Gwich'in Gathering.

The theme of the Gathering comes from the words of our late Elder Myra "Choo" Kyikavichik, who said: "T'lyah niniint'aii kwaa dai', Gwich'in naii tthak khelok t'igiinch'uu" (Gwich'in people were like one).

It was a time to reaffirm our strong voice calling for the permanent protection for Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit (The Sacred Place Where Life Begins).

THE GWICH'IN NATION ACCORD

A highlight of the Gathering was the passing of the [Gwich'in Nation Accord](#), which builds on the example of longstanding collaboration between Gwich'in leaders and communities in our ongoing determination to protect Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit. The intention of the Accord is to further unite the Gwich'in Nation, calling on our leaders and each of us as Gwich'in to work together for the benefit of all our people.

LÚK CHOO

Lúk Choo (salmon) was also an important subject of discussion this year, given the historically low numbers that we saw over the summer, and in the past few years. We shared our experiences and ideas



concerning other important issues facing our communities, including alcohol and other drugs, the challenges of Gwich'in language and culture revitalization, and efforts to support mental health and wellness among our people. Throughout the Gathering, we were inspired by the performances of the Fort Good Hope Drummers, and the musicians who played the fiddle and guitar. People danced late into the evening.

2022 GWICH'IN GATHERING RESOLUTIONS

[Gwich'in Nation Accord - Gwiyiinji Ilak Hah T'igweedi'yaa Sriinatr'igwihee'aa \(We Will Act With One Mind to Make Things Right\)](#)

[Gwich'in Niintsyaa - 2022 Resolution to Protect the Birthplace and Nursery Grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd](#)

[Gwich'in Niintsyaa - 2022 Resolution to Protect the Relationship between Gwich'in and Lúk Choo](#)

2022 GATHERING LOGO

The logo for the Gathering was created by Gwich'in artist Danita Frost-Arey, who lives in Inuvik. The water, caribou and fireweed represent where the Vuntut Gwich'in live in Old Crow, Yukon.



OLD CROW CHURCHES RECEIVE YUKON HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION

In a ceremony held in August, Archdeacon McDonald Memorial Church and St. Luke's Church were officially recognized as Yukon's 11th designated Historic Site under the territory's Historic Resources Act.

The buildings were recognized for their historic and cultural significance to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Yukon.

Built by community members, their log construction is typical of many churches built in Yukon communities, where lumber was scarce but logs readily available and community volunteers ready to lend a hand.



The Archdeacon McDonald Memorial Church Old Crow's Archdeacon McDonald Memorial Church was built in 1926.

Pictured here soon after its construction, St. Luke's Church was built in 1959 to accommodate a growing congregation and was active until 2012.



YOUTH OF THE YUKON CANOE RIVER TRIP

In August, Yukon RCMP and Dinjii Zhuh Adventures organized a 14-day canoe trip on the Yukon River with Yukon First Nations teens from across the territory.

Departing from Lake Laberge and ending in Dawson City, the 700 km trip is part of the Yukon RCMP's Indigenous Youth Outreach Program. Old Crow RCMP Constable Max Lavertu participated, as did VGFN youth Adam Frost and Jonathan Frost. They learned canoeing skills with a focus on safety, skill development and appreciation for the land.

The group arrived in Dawson City on August 26 and were welcomed by community leaders.



RCMP-GRC 
ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE • GENDARMERIE ROYALE DU CANADA

DINJII ZHUH ADVENTURES & RCMP PRESENT

Youth of the Yukon

Canoe River Trip



AUGUST 13-26 14 Days
14 First Nations
1 Epic Adventure

for more information, interested youth aged 13 - 17 are encouraged to reach out to their local RCMP Detachment, Community Recreation Coordinator or contact organizers directly at the email below:
YFN-RCMPLandBaseCamp_YFN-GRC-campalanature@rcmp-grc.ca





GWICH'IN LANGUAGE COURSES

Ten people participated in the 2-week Gwich'in language teacher training put on by Sophia Flather, VGG's Language Coordinator.

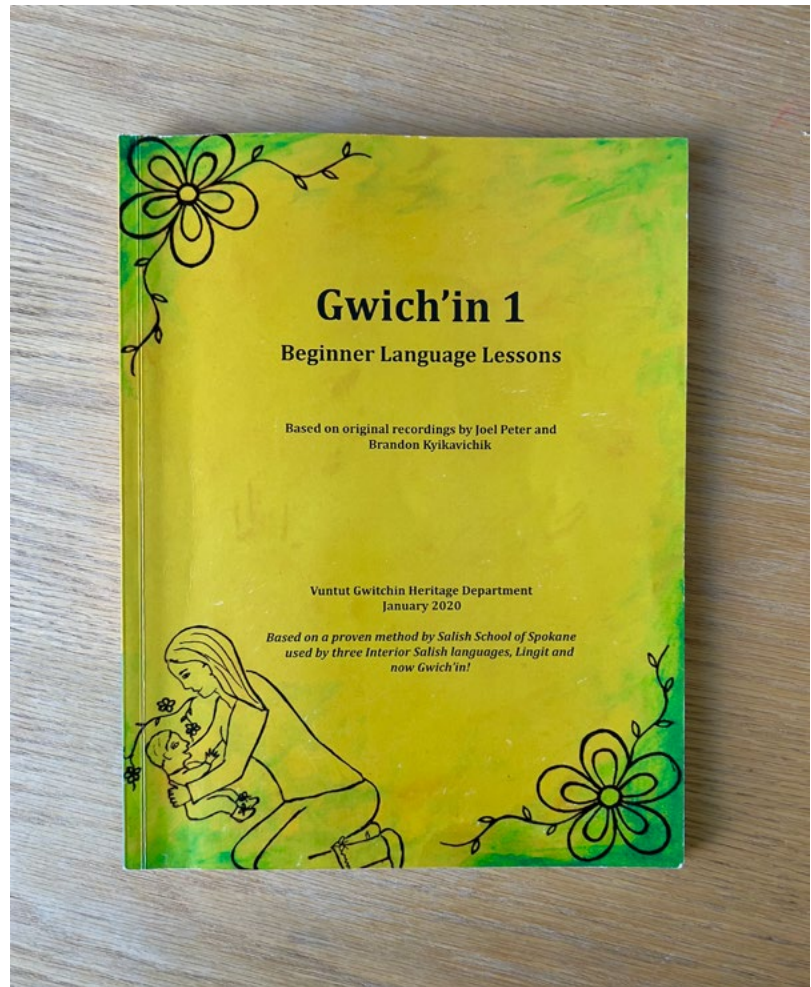
Participants continue to learn with the Gwich'in 1 textbook used during the group training. It is exciting to see their teaching skills improve and their confidence grow.

The Language Coordinator's job is to create a fluency-transfer system where students who have taken the courses come out proficient speakers. The curriculum is easy to use and can be picked up and taught by anyone.

Sophia is also working on a language-transfer system, based on the Paul Creek method. It includes textbooks, recordings, lesson plans and booklets.

The Paul Creek method is a resource for second language adult learners that incorporates storytelling, repetition, immersion, games, and visual aids. It can be used by anyone who wants to learn a language, from teachers to families.

People have many things going on in their lives and are pulled in many directions in the community. For this group of teacher trainees, it is no different. It can be challenging to make time for language learning, since it takes many hours of concentrated learning and practice.



The Gwich'in 1 textbook is based on a language learning method also used successfully to teach Tlingit and Interior Salish languages.

We have been carving out times to come together and work through Gwich'in 1.

We expect this group to have worked through this textbook by early next year, and we would like to have a celebration for them at that time. We are looking into providing some classes for the community in 2023.

VOTE TO WIN!

\$400 - 1 WINNER

\$200 - 3 WINNERS

VGG hired a graphic designer to create four colour sets to go along with red, the main colour in the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation flag.

VGG would like to use these colours on any new documents produced by VGG, such as letters, reports, presentations and posters.

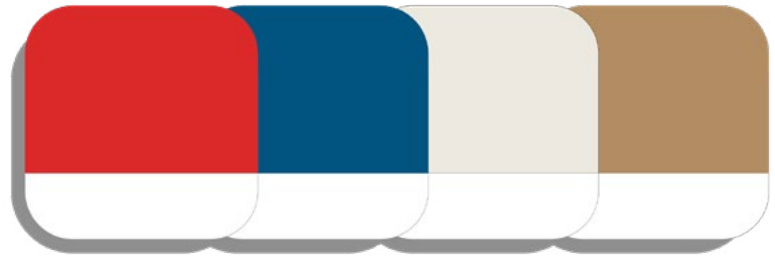
We are going to draw names for three \$200.00 cash prizes as well as one \$400.00 cash prize.

To be added to the draw, send an email with your name and your **1st and 2nd favourite colour sets** to communications@vgfn.net.

If you are emailing on behalf of a child who is a VGFN Citizen, please indicate their name(s) and 1st and 2nd favourite colour sets as well so we can add everyone's name for the draw.

The draw will be on Monday, Jan. 23, 2023.

COLOUR SET 1



COLOUR SET 2



COLOUR SET 3



COLOUR SET 4



MAKING VIDEOS ON THE LAND WITH REEL YOUTH & WAYC

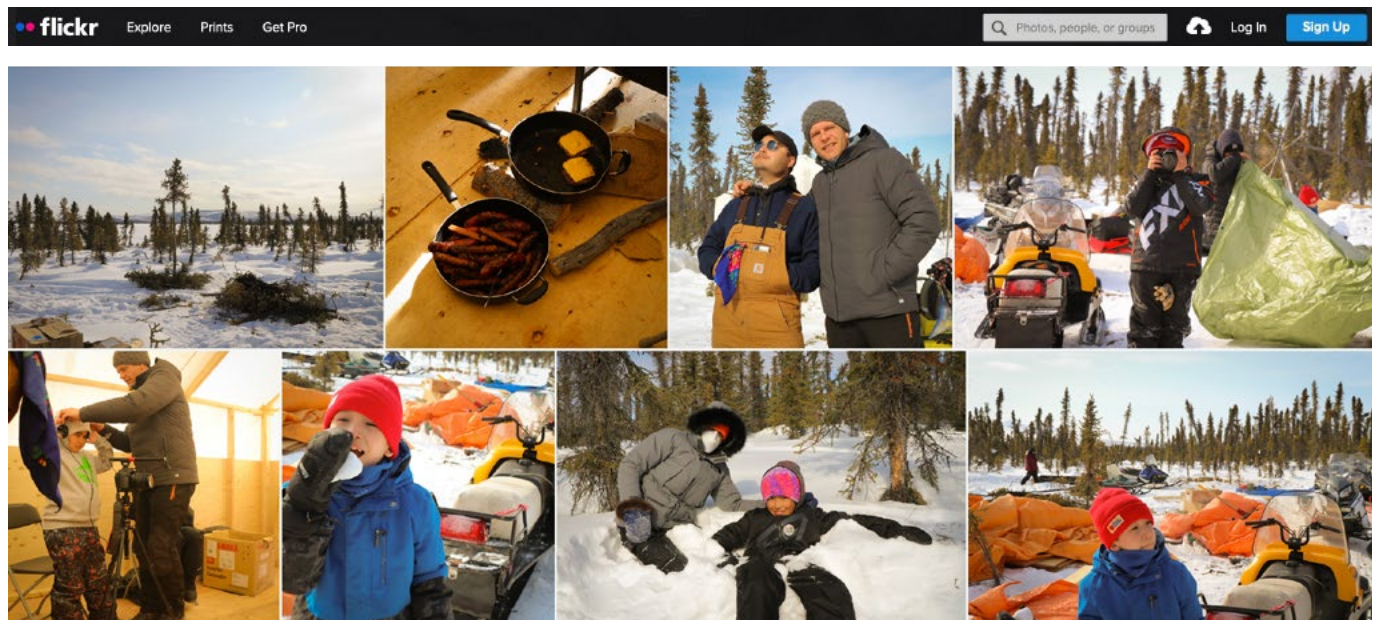
In 2022, Reel Youth and the Western Arctic Youth Collective (WAYC) travelled to Old Crow to work with VGFN youth on a series of documentaries that feature Gwitch'in Elders and community leaders, whose stories are shared in Gwitch'in and English.

Reel Youth is a media empowerment project that creates positive change in young people's lives through media skill building, leadership training, and creative collaboration with peers and mentors.

The **Western Arctic Youth Collective** was created in 2020 by Inuvialuit and Gwitch'in youth, for youth with connections to the Beaufort Delta region of the Northwest Territories.

YOUTH PHOTOGRAPHS ON FLICKR

The VGFN youth participants took photographs to document the production process.



OLD CROW RINK REPAIR CREW

In July, an Old Crow crew worked with a technician from the company that made the rink roof to fix sections of the roof that were damaged or completely removed by the winter winds. Thanks guys!



FEATURED RESEARCH PROJECTS SUMMER/FALL 2022

Here is a sample of the over thirty approved research projects currently underway in Vuntut Gwitchin Traditional Territory. For a full list of projects, see pages 28-29 of the [VGFN GA 2022 Annual Report](#).

NAVIGATING THE NEW ARCTIC - SOUNDSCAPE ECOLOGY TO ASSESS ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN CONTROLS ON WILDLIFE BEHAVIOR

Project lead: Natalie Boelman, Columbia University
2019 - October 2023

Soundscape ecology is a cost-effective approach that allows researchers to both monitor and understand the response of wildlife to climate change and human activities across vast areas.

The research team has installed multiple recording devices in the boreal forests and arctic tundra of northern Alaska, Yukon, and NWT, a region where this comprehensive, large-scale research has rarely been possible.

The goal is to collect and analyze soundscape recordings in order to track the impacts of climate change, wildfires, and human activities such as oil and gas development on insects, waterfowl, songbirds and caribou.

The team is very grateful to the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation for giving permission to install some of the automated recording devices on Vuntut Gwitchin Traditional Territory.



RECONCILIATION AND RENEWED RELATIONSHIPS IN NATIONAL PARKS

Kai Bruce, Concordia University
May 2021- April 2022

This project seeks to understand how VGG, Parks Canada, and the North Yukon Renewable Resource Council have learned to work together as co-managers of the Vuntut National Park.

Kai Bruce's research is funded in part by the Conservation Through Reconciliation

Partnership, an Indigenous-led partnership dedicated to advancing Indigenous-led conservation and establishing best practices for reconciliation in existing protected areas across Canada.

Based in Whitehorse, Kai has made two trips to Old Crow and has heard from various Elders, park managers, and youth about their perspectives on Vuntut National Park and its importance to the community.

Kai will return to Old Crow in 2023 to present his research results to the community.

HOW SHRUBBIFICATION INFLUENCES HYDROLOGY, PERMAFROST, AND MERCURY MOBILIZATION – SUPPORTING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN OLD CROW FLATS

Project lead: Pascale Roy Léveillé, Laval University
June 2-17 and Aug 20-31

Researchers from Université Laval, Yukon University, and Brock and Laurentian universities carried out field research in Crow Flats in June and August 2022. The team is studying the impacts of cli-

mate warming and related shrub growth on water, slumps, and drained lake basins. They will be back in Old Crow in early 2022 to present their results at the Old Crow Research Round-Up.





NIJIN CH'ICHI' GWILIK DAI' YIINJI'GWIHIDHOH'EE (WHEN THERE IS A DEATH, SHOW RESPECT)

A guide to Van Tat Gwich'in Funerals. VGG Heritage Branch, last updated 2020.

Nijin Ch'ichi' Gwilik Dai' Yiinji'gwhidhoh'ee ("When there is a death, show respect") was created by VGG's Heritage department to assist families in planning and conducting funerals for their loved ones.

The booklet provides helpful information so that people know how Gwich'in traditionally did things when someone passed away. As the guide explains, "Today, while following our traditions, much of how funerals are done is up to the family. It is hoped that this information is helpful to families going through a difficult time. Most importantly, the guide is intended to bring peace and respect to the deceased, the family and friends, and the community."

For a copy of the Nijin Ch'ichi' Gwilik Dai' Yiinji'gwhidhoh'ee guide, contact Megan Williams, VGG Heritage Manager, megan.williams@vgfn.net. Related knowledge such as Van Tat Gwich'in funeral Ch'ilik, prayers, service, pamphlet templates and other information are also available upon request.



BURIALS WHEN GWICH'IN LIVED ON THE LAND

“Since long ago from when native people lived, as far back as I can remember, when a person passes on in the bush, everything is quiet...no matter how difficult it was, when someone passed on they took them down to Rampart House. That is where they are buried.

This is how native people lived. We just lived in the bush. Everything was quiet and they only wore black clothing. And the dishes, they used to tie something on them so it's not so noisy. And they keep it quiet.”

—CHARLIE THOMAS, QUOTED IN THE GUIDE



TL'OO K'AT FAMILY CAMP

In September, community members went out to Tl'oo K'at for the fall family camp. It was a time to rejuvenate and relax as well as learn about the land. Our guide Esau Schafer brought us up to Fish Lake and told us about the ancestral lands and where each of the ancestors had lived.

Back at the camp, we cooked smokies over an open fire and made tea and coffee. Some recreation staff went hunting up river and brought back a moose, which we all helped prepare. We made some dry meat and, each night, we ended the day with a good conversation around the campfire.

The fall camp reminded us of the importance of young people in our community getting out on the land and having good experiences at Tl'oo K'at and other traditional Vuntut Gwitchin gathering places.

We hope to have a successful Winter Camp in March 2023. There will be hunting, ice fishing, and many chances for youth to learn from our elders, who have so much knowledge and good stories to share with all of us.

SREE VYÀA BY THE NUMBERS: MAY 1 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

400,000

kilowatt hours of local renewable electricity produced

120,000

litres of diesel saved

42

percent of Old Crow's electricity needs supplied

1,500

hours that the Old Crow diesel plant was turned off thanks to Sree Vyàa



COMING IN 2023

VGG will engage with the community in early 2023 for input on how profits generated from Sree Vyàa should be reinvested.



4TH ANNUAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS DAY

On September 12, community members walked together around town to raise awareness for those who struggle with suicidal thoughts and who have lost loved ones to suicide. If you feel overwhelmed or lost, please reach out. We want everyone to know that they are not alone. So many are going through this pain. Some have been there and have some insight. We are in this together.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS WEEK SEPTEMBER 26-30, 2022

This year's Health and Wellness Week brought us together for a week of positive programming, healing through music, art therapy, interactive play, and cultural and spiritual reawaking ceremony.

Inspired by the Gwich'in phrase Naganainlyaa K'itanahee (Follow your dreams), this year's theme was to create a sustainable community that provides a safe and supportive place to live, play, dance, and participate in ceremony together.

Thanks to everyone who participated and to all those who contributed their time and care!



Basketball Camp at the Chief Zheh Gittlit School with Damen Bell, a Haida & Tlingit First Nation former professional basketball player.





THE TŁİCHO DRUMMERS

We were happy to welcome the Tłıcho Drummers from the Northwest Territories during Health and Wellness Week. Drummers George Mackenzie, Mark Mackenzie, Jonathan Black, Alex Black, Peter

Adzin, and Tony Tatchia all speak and sing in their language, Tłıcho Yatıı. They celebrate their Dene cultural heritage through spiritual prayers songs, drum dance music and drumming for hand games.



POSITIVE CHOICES, POSITIVE VOICES PROGRAM

Offered by the Alice Frost Community Campus in October, social worker and residential school survivor Andy Nieman's two-week **Positive Choices, Positive Voices** community mobile healing program helps participants take control of their feelings and their triggers by learning to turn negative unhealthy thinking into healthy positive thinking.

Graduates of the program (below) spoke to the community about their experience taking the program at a graduation ceremony held at the close of Health and Wellness Week.



NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

On October 4, residents of Old Crow joined together on the National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to honour Indigenous women, gender-diverse, two-spirit, and transgender people who have been murdered or gone missing across Canada.

About fifty people walked through town and back along the Porcupine River to the Community Hall, where Lorraine Netro said a prayer in Gwich'in and Mary Jane Moses shared a poem in memory of her granddaughter, Brandi Vittrekwa.



2022 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 2022 VGFN General Assembly took place during the week of October 3 to 7, 2022 at the Darius Elias Community Hall. The GA welcomed Alisa Lombard of the Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick, who co-chaired the GA with VGFN youth Ciara Kakfwi-Frost.

For the first time, Citizens attending the GA had five days in which to thoroughly discuss issues and concerns affecting all government departments. Citizens also discussed other important issues, including VGG's internal re-organization; the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan; progress on 2021 GA Resolutions, and objectives for the future.



The theme of the 2022 General Assembly was “Nihtah iidilii ji' t'aih nakhwats'an heelyaa” (We are stronger united). This phrase was included in the 2022 General Assembly logo which is based on an illustration by Mary-Jane Moses (see logo above).

Fourteen GA Resolutions were passed (see following page). One of the resolutions will consider the GA Agenda and meeting Structure remaining constant from year to year. To this end, a GA Working Group will be launched in early 2023 and will operate year-round to discuss the GA agenda and other issues affecting the annual event, as well as the GA's role as a pillar of government.

ELECTIONS LAW REVIEW AND GA VOTE

Following a public survey and two public meetings, the committee recommended a [VGFN Elections Law](#), which received first reading by Council, but did not receive the support of the GA for a second reading.

The GA asked for additional public consultation, which will take place in early 2023. Given that the Elections Law was not passed at the GA, the 2022 General election relied on the [Interim Elections Act](#) rules and procedures.

WHAT'S NEW? HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RECOMMENDED ELECTIONS LAW

1. Voting age is 16
2. The Yukon residency requirement is removed
3. Voting methods include online voting
4. A reduced number of signatures are required for nomination
5. Special GA if there are not enough candidates
6. Candidates Forum will have remote video access
7. An Elections Committee will be formed to advise the Returning Officer
8. Rules for recounts, tie-breakers, and challenging election results have been introduced
9. Special GA for Council vacancies less than six months before a general election
10. Candidates can run for Chief AND Council

2022 GA RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2022-1
Education support increase
Submitted by Cindy Dixon

Resolution 2022-2
Education support funds owing
Submitted by Cindy Dixon

Resolution 2022-3
Youth Summer Positions
Submitted by Cindy Dixon

Resolution 2022-4
Nation Building Office Space
Submitted by Cindy Dixon

Resolution 2022-5
Wellness Investment Fund
Submitted by Cheryl Charlie

Resolution 2022-6
VGG Re-Organization and Strategic Plan
Submitted by Lorraine Netro and Brandon Kyikavichik

Resolution 2022-8
Advocacy for Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit
Submitted by Lorraine Netro

Resolution 2022-9
Remote Access to the General Assembly and other public meetings
Submitted by Stan Njootli Jr.

Resolution 2022-12
Monthly funding allowance to be deposited on time
Submitted by Debra-Leigh Reti

Resolution 2022-16
Recovery Program/ Aftercare
Submitted by Cindy Dixon

Resolution 2022-20
Education funding review policy
Submitted by Debra-Leigh Reti

Resolution 2022-21
Naming of the new Elders Complex
Submitted by Sandra Charlie

Resolution 2022-22
Emergency Housing for VGG Employees/ Beneficiaries
Submitted by Kym Blake

Resolution 2022-23
Ski Lodge/Ski Program
Submitted by Crystal Linklater

GA 2022 MINUTES

For a digital copy of the 2022 GA Minutes, email Loretta Itsi at loretta.itsi@vgfn.net.

You can also request a printed copy from Reception at the VGG Admin Building in Old Crow.

THE YESAB ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND ONLINE REGISTRY

In October, representatives of YESAB's Executive Committee and Dawson District Office travelled to Old Crow to meet with VGG staff and community members. YESAB staff gave a [presentation on the YESAB assessment process](#), talked about the Online Registry, and answered questions from the community.

YESAB PRE-SUBMISSION ENGAGEMENT USER GUIDE

Also in October, YESAB published a [Pre-Submission Engagement User Guide](#) to help proponents and participants better understand the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act (YESAA) Pre-Submission Engagement process. The Guide sets out information on the process framework and requirements, and on how it was developed. The guide is a working document and will be reviewed and updated periodically.

YESAB ONLINE REGISTRY

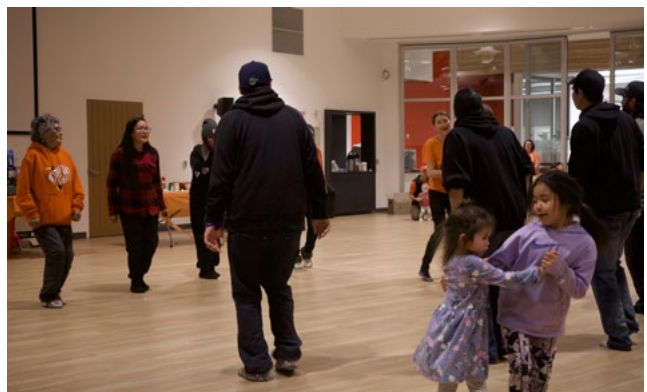
Visit the [YESAB Online Registry](#) to find information about projects within VGFN Traditional Territory and submit comments to be considered in YESAB's assessments.

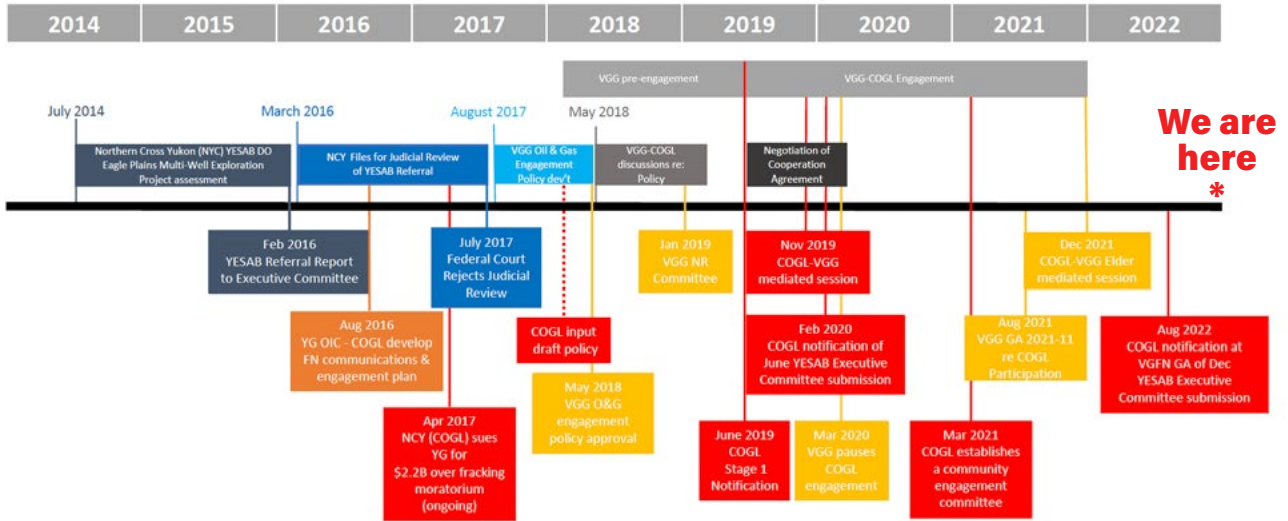
CELEBRATING THE NEW FIRST NATION SCHOOL BOARD

In February 2022, Chief Zheh Gittlit school and seven other schools in the territory joined the [First Nation School Board](#) through a territory-wide referendum. The new school board enables Yukon First Nations to share authority over public education with the Yukon Government. These schools will work to incorporate Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing into all aspects of learning and school life.

In November, the VGG Education Department, the First Nation School Board and Yukon First Nation Education Directorate put on two events to celebrate the new school board. Celebrations began with a mid-day ceremony at the Chief Zheh Gittlit school and continued with an evening celebration with dinner and live fiddle music at the Community Hall.

Also in November, Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm was one of 5 trustees elected to the Yukon First Nation School Board for a three-year term. A Community Advisory Committee will be established in the new year in Old Crow.





VGG’S ENGAGEMENT WITH CHANCE OIL AND GAS LIMITED

Chance Oil and Gas has proposed a large scale oil and gas exploration project in the Eagle Plains region of VGFN Traditional Territory. The project involves drilling up to 30 new wells, conducting 3,500 km² of seismic surveys, and building all season access roads. VGG is relying on its Oil and Gas Engagement Policy to guide clear and transparent engagement with the company.

The VGFN Natural Resources Committee guides implementation of the [Oil and Gas Engagement Policy](#). The committee includes an Elder and a Youth representative, two additional VGFN Citizen members, a member of Council, and the Strategic Lead of Stewardship and Sustainability.

The Policy affirms that all engagement with the oil and gas industry on any large-scale projects proposed within VGFN Traditional Territory must uphold the objective of sustainable development as enshrined in the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement. In the Agreement, sustainable development is defined as “beneficial socio-economic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and

societies are dependent.” The Oil and Gas Engagement Policy also touches on other important issues, such as VGFN’s right to free, prior, and informed consent.

The Policy outlines a 3-stage engagement process: Stage 1. Notice Period; Stage 2. Cooperation; and Stage 3. Benefits and Stewardship. To date, Chance Oil and Gas and VGG have been unable to successfully negotiate a Cooperation Agreement under Stage 2 due to compliance, communications, community approval process (consent), and capacity funding issues.

VGG is now focused on preparing VGFN citizens for the environmental assessment process once Chance’s 30- Well exploration program is submitted to YESAB at the end of 2022.

Stewardship and Sustainability remains committed to supporting citizens through the higher-level Executive Committee screening YESAB process. Stay tuned for more details and let us know how we can support you.

For more information on the VGG Oil and Gas Engagement Policy, please contact Erika Tizya, Strategic Lead of Stewardship and Sustainability, erika.tizyatramm@vgfn.net.

DOCUMENTARY FILM: COMMENT ÇA VA LE NORD? ("HOW IS IT GOING IN THE NORTH?")

Drin Gwiinzii Old Crow!

Thank you very much for the wonderful welcome to your community. We met some inspiring people and our visit was a real privilege for our team.

We hope that our documentary series on climate change in the Yukon will reach as many people as possible across Canada and beyond so that audiences can learn more about Gwich'in values imbued with invaluable wisdom and knowledge, inherited from your ancestors over thousands of years. Our 5-episode series entitled "Comment ça va le Nord?" will begin broadcasting on Radio-Canada's Explora Channel in April 2023. We hope to see you all again!

Mahsi' cho!

Simon D'Amours, Melanie Poirier-Pelletier, Jonathan Lalande, Alexandre Piuze-Gualmini, and Antoine Bergevin-Richer (left to right in the photo)



REMEMBRANCE DAY 2022

Community members gathered on the morning of November 11th at the Darius Elias Community Hall to commemorate Remembrance Day. Jason Van Fleet and Deputy Chief Paul Josie led a service with Old Crow's Canadian Rangers and RCMP.



JUNIOR RANGERS ON THE LAND

In late November, the Junior Rangers went out on the land to do some training exercises, including the recovery of a snowmobile on the trail past Second Mountain. The Junior rangers participate in four activities each month, such as operating an air rifle, sewing, and bannock making.

Mahsi' Cho to the Canadian Armed Forces for making the Junior Rangers program available to youth in Old Crow. Canadian Ranger Patrol Group Master Corporal Daniel Blake (in the red coat below) joined the program when he was 12 years old and enjoyed it so much and became a Ranger when he turned 18.

The Junior Rangers welcome anyone in between the ages of 12 and 18 who would like to join.



COMING SOON! NORTHWESTEL'S ONEWEB INTERNET SERVICE

In February 2023, the satellite Northwestel uses to provide internet service to Old Crow and several NWT communities will go offline.

To ensure continuity of service, Northwestel will connect the effected communities to a new network of low-earth orbit satellites operated by the UK company OneWeb, which Northwestel says will improve internet speeds in Old Crow.

A team of Northwestel engineers and technicians travelled to Old Crow in September to prepare for a Land Use permit application required to install the OneWeb antenna on VGFN Settlement Land.



The new antenna will sit on an 8 by 8 metre pad located on the western portion of VGFN Settlement Land (see above) and is expected to be operational by late January 2023.

OLD CROW CONSTRUCTION AND HOUSING UPDATE

ELDER'S COMPLEX

With nine apartments, the Elders Complex has heated floors, a spa/soak room with a starlike ceiling and a reception area. The wood ceiling and wall panel installation is complete.

Kitchen countertops are being installed and electricians are focusing on getting permanent power to the building before Christmas. Crews are now working to complete the installation of the exterior siding. Construction is expected to be completed by March 2023.



ELDERS COMPLEX, DECEMBER 2022

HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRE AND 10-PLEX

The 10-Plex is fully enclosed and protected from weather and the Health and Wellness Centre will be fully enclosed shortly after the 2-week Christmas construction break.

Monitoring equipment has been installed with the foundation piles of both buildings to gather long-term ground temperature information. It provides confirmation that the surrounding permafrost remains frozen, and the soil provides support for the buildings.

Ketza TSL is on target for completion of the 10-Plex in spring 2023 and the Health and Wellness Centre in late 2023.

After completion, there will be a period of time for the installation of equipment and staff as well as operational maintenance and training before the buildings will be open for occupancy and use.



10-PLEX, DECEMBER 2022



HEALTH CENTRE, DECEMBER 2022

From March 2021 to November 2022, Ketzá TSL reported community benefits in the amount of \$7,637,000. These include: 28 Vuntut Gwitchin employees located in Old Crow and in Whitehorse; 17,250 Vuntut Gwitchin work and training hours; Vuntut Gwitchin earnings of \$885,000; and business benefits of \$6,752,000 through Air North, Porcupine Enterprises, the Old Crow Development Corporation, and various leases and fuel purchase.

The Health and Wellness Centre will contain health services including public; primary and urgent care; allied health services including social services, mental health supports, home care, and dental; administration and support spaces; and a dedicated wellness room.

All the suites in the two story 10-Plex will have separate entrances, a washer and dryer, a fridge, and stand-up freezer.

The housing units will be managed by the Yukon Housing Corporation, and will provide: four 1-bedroom units, one of which will be a barrier-free accessible suite; and six 2-bedroom units, two of which will be barrier-free accessible suites. One of the 2-bedroom accessible suites, located on the lower floor of the building, will be dedicated for use by VGFN residents.

COMING SOON ~ MODULAR HOMES

Twelve modular homes are near completion and will be transported to Old Crow on the Winter Road in early 2023. The five 1-bedroom homes; five 2-bedroom homes, and two 4-bedroom homes are expected to be ready for residency by next summer.

The new homes will be located downtown, on the North Road, and one near the school. The modular homes have the same exterior siding and as the three single family homes and will be heated with an oil boiler system and wood stove.

NORTH ROAD SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

The North Road single family homes have been completed. A Housing Committee has been established to oversee the process of selecting occupants in early 2023.

Applications will be available in January 2023 at the VGG Housing Department.



A view of the back stairs of one of the newly completed homes on the North Road.

OLD CROW BERRIES, PLANTS, AND FUNGI

JÀK ZRAII

Jàk zraii (blueberries) are found in Vuntut Gwitchin territory in acidic, low-lying, and/or open forest areas often along with sphagnum moss, lichen willow, and Labrador tea.

The flowers of this upright shrub are small and pink, and the leaves turn bright red in the fall time and cover tundra slopes.



NAKÀŁ

Nakàł, as they are called in the Van Tat Gwich'in dialect, are plants that grow to about 5 to 20 centimetres among the mosses of boggy open forest, moist tundra, and alpine areas.

Nakàł, known in English as salmonberries or cloudberries, are a species of flowering plant in the rose family. The white flowers have five petals and are produced on a single stalk. Nakàł berries are picked and eaten for food in Old Crow and across the circumpolar regions.

Nakàł are technically not berries but fruit, or more precisely, a cluster of small fruits. The fruit contains four times as much vitamin C by weight as an orange. They also contain kalium, zinc, magnesium, and beta carotene, and the leaves can be used to treat burns and insect bites.





The photograph above shows a nakàt plant on Crow Mountain in September. It's not surprising that nakàt are referred to in English as cloudberries!

DEETRU' JAK

Deetru' jak (juniper) berries are used to make tea by washing and boiling the berries either alone or with the plant's branches and roots. This tea, as well as the steam produced when making it, is used by Gwich'in as medicine for colds or an upset stomach. The berries can be dried and kept on hand for later use.



DACTYLINA ARCTICA

The photograph below was taken in September on Crow Mountain. It shows a species of lichen-forming fungi found in the boreal forests of Canada. It's scientific name is *dactylina arctica*.

MINI QUIZ

WHAT OTHER NAME(S) IS DACTYLINA ARCTICA CALLED?*

- a. Arctic finger lichen
- b. baby fingers
- c. dead man fingers



* Answer: All three names are correct.

THE SLOUGH, OLD CROW





DOGS OF OLD CROW

