



September 2006



# Khaints'an' (Fall)

Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board

Khaints'an' (Fall)

## Introduction

Welcome to the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board (GRRB) Newsletter for Fall 2006. This edition provides you with some photos and updates from those who work at the GRRB and it also includes some information on various projects and management plans happening around the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA).

Fall time is a nice time of the year. Temperatures are beginning to cool off, but the air is clear and crisp. The change in colors on the land is beautiful and there is much to do to prepare for the winter ahead. Some of our people are out on the land picking cranberries and also fishing and hunting.

Fall time also means that the vadzaih (caribou) are on the move towards their wintering grounds. The Porcupine Caribou Herd is very important to the Gwich'in and we must all work together to protect the Herd. We need to do whatever is necessary to ensure this herd is still available for the future generations. Caribou are facing a number of challenges and we need to be aware of what is going on and what we need to be doing to address the issues.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. Your ideas and suggestions for future newsletters is always welcome. Take care of each other and enjoy the Fall Season.

Bobbie Jo Greenland  
TK Communications Manager

## Mahsi Cho Tsiigehtchic

The GRRB had their most recent meeting in Tsiigehtchic on September 14 and 15, 2006. The Board Members and staff of GRRB would like to say Mahsi Cho to the community of Tsiigehtchic for inviting us into your traditional territory and for allowing us to hold our meeting in your community.

Mahsi Cho to RRC Coordinator Anna May MacLeod, President John Norbert

and Vice President, Sonny Blake for assisting us with all the arrangements. The accommodations and food were great and we enjoyed our stay in Tsiigehtchic.

*Photos and summary of the GRRB meeting will be in the next newsletter*

The next Board Meeting will take place in Aklavik, NT sometime in February 2007.

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## Special points of interest:

- In the "Spirit of Conservation", *Let the Leaders Pass*
- *Aklavik RRC takes Initiative*
- *Traditional Knowledge about Caribou*

## **"In the spirit of conservation" Let the Leaders Pass**

The Porcupine Caribou is probably the most important of all animals to the Gwich'in. Our ancestors ensured that our land and resources were well taken care of in a sustainable manner, so that we are still enjoying it today.

Now today, we are all responsible to take care of the land and resources so that our children and their children can enjoy these same resources for generations to come.

The Porcupine Caribou are not only being threatened by proposed Oil and Gas development in their Calving Grounds, but they also face some problems due to unsustainable practice.

The RRC's in each community have been hearing a lot of concerns about Caribou Hunting and other issues about the caribou.

There are concerns about the decline in Caribou Population. There are even concerns about some hunters killing more than they need and some hunters leaving a mess at the kill site. There are concerns about some hunters killing caribou just to sell the meat to community residents. And of course, there are the concerns about new developments on the land and the problems of contamination and pollution.

In January of 2006, the Renewable Resource Council's passed a motion at their regional meeting. The motion #016-01/06 reads:

*Whereas the Regional RRC members are concerned that the Porcupine Caribou Herd Leaders are not being allowed to cross the Dempster Highway on their fall migration, and Whereas the Regional RRC members would like the Porcupine Caribou Herd Leaders to cross the highway, Therefore be it resolved that the Regional RRC members recommend that the Dempster Highway be closed to all caribou hunting activities in the month of August until September 15 annually beginning in 2006.*

MOVED: Wanda Pascal

SECONDED: Lennie MacDonald  
MOTION CARRIED

### **Cooperation is Voluntary**

Hunters on the Dempster Highway need to understand that this motion was put in place in effort to promote and practice conservation.

Cooperation is voluntary. The motion can not be enforced by legal authority, but some Gwich'in people have been driving out on the highway to hand out flyers and explain to hunters why this motion was put in place.

For more information about this motion, please contact your local Renewable Resource Council.



*Vadzaih Choo crossing the Dempster highway*

*"We are all responsible to take care of the land and resources"*



*Porcupine Caribou*

*"Cooperation is voluntary. The motion can not be enforced by legal authority"*

## The Ehdiitat Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council take's Initiative

In November of 2005, Mr. Jerome Gordon was hired as the Coordinator for the Ehdiitat Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council (ERRC). Prior to this, Jerome worked in various jobs that involved traditional knowledge, land and resource management and environmental impact assessment. He finds his past work experience to be very beneficial to the work he is now doing with the ERRC. In addition to the many issues that the ERRC is already dealing with, they have decided to take the initiative to start a community based harvest monitoring project. I was able to speak with Jerome at the recent GRRB meeting in Tsiigehtchic. He explained to me that the ERRC is interested in bringing back a community har-

vest monitoring program because there is a lot of concern out there about population declines in some of the wildlife species. The ERRC is concerned about the future and they want to determine the causes of any decline in animals which are very important to the people. They want to ensure that the children of tomorrow can enjoy the same animals that we do today. Jerome says he enjoys his work with the RRC very much and he is happy to have good relations with the elders. Jerome said he spends some time visiting with elders and



*Jerome Gordon is the Coordinator for the Ehdiitat Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council in Aklavik.*

assisting some of them with GHAP applications. In return they offer their advice and wisdom which he tries to apply to the plans and projects of the ERRC.

The ERRC have submitted a proposal to NWT Cu-

mulative Impact Monitoring Program in Yellowknife. This project will be part of the capacity building initiative, and will benefit monitoring projects within the NWT. The ERRC is expecting a response by end of October, 2006. The GRRB supports this initiative and we wish the ERRC all the best.

## Mackenzie River Fish Tagging Study

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Canada has been working on a Mackenzie River Fish Tagging Study. This study was initiated in Fall 2004 and will end in March 2007.

The objectives of this study are to surgically implant anadromous whitefish, crooked back, coney and herring with coded radio telemetry transmitters (tags) and track fish movements. Anadromous fishes are those that spend all or part of their adult life in salt water and return to freshwater streams and rivers to spawn. The goal of this study is to identify spawning and over wintering areas that should be considered with extra caution in relation to

the proposed Mackenzie Natural Gas Pipeline Project.

The fish tagging was done in early September 2006 in the Mackenzie River near Pierre Creek. Tagged fish should NOT be eaten if caught before October 31, 2006 because of the anesthetic drug used during surgery. Tagged fish caught after October 31, 2006 is safe to eat because the drug would have naturally left the fish's body by then. But you should still turn it in for a reward anyways.

A \$50 reward will be given for the return of a whole tagged fish that is caught. Information on where and when the fish was caught will also be required to get the reward.

For more information on this Tagging Study, please contact DFO, GRRB or your local RRC.

*"Tagged fish should NOT be eaten if caught before October 31, 2006 because of the anesthetic drug used during surgery".*

## Coastal Zone Canada 2006 Youth Forum - Tuktoyaktuk

The Coastal Zone Canada 2006 Youth Forum was hosted in Tuktoyaktuk from August 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>. Participants in the Youth Forum ranged from ages 12-31 and came from as far south as California USA. Bobbie Jo Greenland, Catherine Lambert, Kendra Sittichinli and I (Amy Thompson) all attended and participated in the youth forum conference. The themes for the Youth Forum were change, sustainability and livelihood in the coastal zone. In order to register for the conference, each youth participant was required to submit a piece of work. We collectively presented a PowerPoint presentation about the Gwich'in culture, the GRRB and then tied our work into the three conference themes. Jayneta Pascal & Frank Elanik of Aklavik were also at the Forum and they did an excellent presentation on their student research project at Fish Hole.

We all really enjoyed ourselves at the Forum. It gave us an opportunity to exchange ideas with youth of different backgrounds. Topics for discussion were traditions and traditional livelihoods, current research, educational opportunities, and the ties between economic de-

velopment and research and education. There was also several community activities scheduled throughout the conference. The first day was started with a scavenger hunt around Tuk. Over the weekend, there were four events to sign up for (fish camp, drum dancing, ice house tour, and arctic sports). There was also a bon fire one night at the point and movies or music every other night (Kendra enjoyed herself so much that she decided to do some karaoke at the bon fire). On the last day, we all participated in a beach clean up. One of the most positive things that the organizers arranged was providing each participant with their own dishes. After each meal, a sink was set up outside with bowls of warm soapy water and each participant was responsible for cleaning their own dishes. As a result, during the entire weekend only 2 large garbage bags were thrown out. We all agreed that the one of the most effective take home messages was



L-R Frank Kasook-Elanik, Kendra Sittichinli, Bobbie Jo Greenland & Jayneta Pascal

that we all can help reduced climate change by doing our own part (turning off lights, using energy efficient lights, using reduced flow shower facets, etc...).

By: Amy Thompson

“The themes for the Youth Forum were change, sustainability and livelihood in the coastal zone”

*Note: Kendra & Bobbie Jo were at the GTC Annual Assembly in Aklavik just days after the Youth Forum in Tuk. They were shocked to find out that in just 2 days at the Assembly, that there was 45 bags of garbage thrown out! This was mostly plastic, paper and styro-foam dishes. Kendra and Bobbie Jo told the Assembly about their experience at the Youth Forum and encouraged people to use their own dishes and reduce wastes. As a result, the Assembly passed a resolution to encourage people to use their own dishes & to eventually stop using the disposable dishes that are made from products that are bad for the environment.*

## Renewable Resource Council (RRC) Monthly Meetings

The RRC in each community welcomes interested beneficiaries to attend their regular monthly meetings to provide some direction on issues.

The Inuvik RRC meets on the first Tuesday of each month. Neil Firth is the Coordinator and he can be

telephoned at 777-6652.

In Aklavik the RRC meets on the first Wednesday of each month. Jerome Gordon is the Coordinator and he can be telephoned at 978-2336.

The Fort McPherson RRC meets on the 2nd Monday of each

month. Gina Firth is the Coordinator and she can be telephoned at 952-2783.

The Tsiigehtchic RRC will meet on the last Tuesday of the month. Anna May McLeod is the Coordinator and she can be reached at 953-3201.

## Introduction from Technician Brian Dokum

Hello, my name is Brian Dokum. I am an Ojibwa Indian from Manitoulin Island, Ontario. I was hired by the GRRB in July 2006.

I graduated from the Natural Resource Technology program in 2002. I have also been a Renewable Resource Coordinator in Tsiigehtchic, Forest Manager Trainee in the South Slave region for one summer and worked for Ducks Unlimited as a Gwich'in Monitor and as a Wildlife Techni-

cian for two summers. Some of my interests are hockey, hunting and fishing.

The GRRB project that I will be managing is the Beaver & Muskrat study. I will also be taking part in the Richardson Mountains Dall Sheep study, Vittrekwa River Char study and



Brian Dokum at Vittrekwa River

the Travaillant Lake fish study.

Thank you,  
Brian Dokum

## Introduction from Technician Trainee Ryan McLeod

My name is Ryan McLeod. I am originally from Aklavik but I have been living in Inuvik for just over a year now. I started working at the GRRB in June 2006 and have been on field trips to Travaillant Lake and the Richardson mountains. From July 29 to August 22 I took leave without pay to take part in a trip down the Kongakut River in Alaska. The trip spanned the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from "Summit to Sea." The trip started in Arctic Village and ended in Kaktovik. The video footage from the trip is currently being made into a documentary to raise awareness of our need to protect "Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit", or The Sacred Place Where Life Begins. The film will air on the European Discovery channel (Marco Polo TV) as well as screenings around the USA and at various independent film festivals. I am proud to say that I was

the only Canadian and also the only native to take part in the adventure in the role of Cultural advisor. I enjoyed the trip and also felt proud to share my knowledge and represent the Gwich'in and our strong ties to the land and the caribou that continue to be a vital part of our culture and livelihood. I am now enjoying the fall hunting season (on weekends) and helping my Grandparents Freddie and Bella Greenland cut drymeat and fill up our freezers.

*"The film will air on the European Discovery Channel"*



Ryan McLeod at Rat River

## Update from TK Communications Manager Bobbie Jo Greenland

Drin Gwiinzii to everyone. I have been with the GRRB for almost 6 months now. During this time I have been involved in a number of projects happening at the Board.

I am responsible for the GRRB newsletter and calendar. I also take care of the Nature Day program and the Youth Work Experience Program. I do the advertising for employment opportunities whenever they arise. At the current time, we do not have any positions available.

I assist the staff with finding the traditional knowledge information they might need about wildlife and other topics they are working on. Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge is very important and we

need to preserve it. Gwich'in way of life is not the same as it used to be, but our traditional values and teachings are still the same. We need to know these teachings and include them in all aspects of the work that we do.

I believe that good communication is key to the success of any organization. So I have been trying to improve the contact and working relationship within our own office and then with the various other Gwich'in, Aboriginal and Government Offices that we are working partners with.



*Bobbie Jo Greenland along the banks of Esau River*

I would like to make more trips to the Gwich'in Communities and meet with the Chiefs and also the RRC's. I would also like to visit the schools and speak to the students about education, traditional knowledge

and resource management.

I welcome people to stop in at our office in Inuvik. Come in for a coffee, meet our staff and talk about projects at the GRRB. Your input and advice is valuable and it can help us to make better decisions for the future.

Mahsi Cho

## Nature Day in the GSA

Staff at the GRRB have been bringing Nature Day to the communities in the GSA for over 6 years. Nature Day is an effort to meet with students and talk to them about conservation and keeping the land and water clean. There are three games that the students participate in and these are called "A long journey home", "Predator & Prey" and "Scavenger Hunt".

The long journey home is the most popular one with the students. They have a lot of fun while learning about the migration of the Char. In this game, the students pretend they are char and they migrate through various ob-

stacles such as log jams, pollution and fishermen. The students get a better understanding of what char and other fish face as they move to and from their spawning areas.

Nature Day happens once a year and is usually for grade 3 students, but on occasion we have included other grades as well. In June 2006, Nature Day took place in Aklavik, McPherson and Inuvik. Nature Day took place in Tsiigehtchic in September instead of June.

Mahsi Cho to all the principals, teachers and students for participating in Nature Day and also to Johnny Edwards and Jozef Carnagursky from GTC who helped out.



*Nature Day In Aklavik  
June 2006*



*Nature Day in Tsiigehtchic  
September 2006*

## Update from Environmental Biologist Amy Thompson

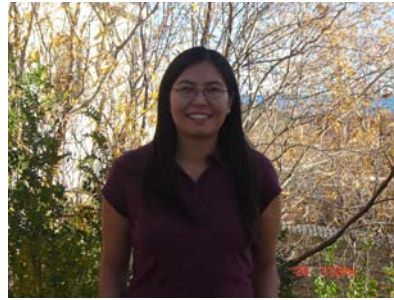
Hello everyone!

I have completed a draft report of “traditional knowledge of fish migration and spawning patterns in the Arctic Red River and lower Mackenzie River”. I plan to have a GRRB report out soon and I will ensure that it is distributed to all the RRC offices and anyone else interested. Please let me know if you would be interested in a copy.

I am looking for ideas to re-establish the Gwich’in Harvest Study. This study was initiated in 1995 and was stopped in October 2004. The decision to stop it was based on recommendations from the Harvest Study Working Group which included representatives from all RRCs and the GRRB. Many harvesters were getting tired of persistent interviewing. After speaking to the RRCs and the GRRB board members, we

think this study is valuable and should be re-started. However, the methods need to be changed so harvesters don’t encounter the same problem. Here are some of the ideas from the GRRB board meeting on September 14-15<sup>th</sup> in Tsiigehtchic.

- The RRCs running the study (with support from the GRRB),
- Continue with interviewing but key on high priority species,
- Work with other co-management and government organizations, and/or
- Set up a simple self-serve touch screen computer program in each commu-



*Amy Thompson*

nity

In the meantime, I will continue to brainstorm with the RRCs to come up with more ideas. If you have any recommendations, please talk with your local RRC office or contact me (777-6607 or biolo-

gist@grrb.nt.ca).

I am also in the process of looking for funding for upcoming Environmental projects. Currently, I am looking into climate change monitoring. Again (as always), please feel free to contact me with any ideas, concerns or comments.

Mahsi Cho!

Amy Thompson

## GRRB is pleased to introduce the new Office Manager; Sarah Fosbery

Good morning everyone!

My name is Sarah Joy Fosbery aka “Cathers”. I have been working with the Gwich’in Renewable Resource Board for just over a month now and enjoying it immensely. For the first two weeks Barb Chalmers, who was previously working as the Office Manager had trained me in the front area of the office. I feel a little more experienced and knowledgeable now since I have been working at my own pace and getting to know my surroundings.

I was born in Terrace BC. I moved to the north when I was

six years of age and resided in Norman wells for a year and a half. We then moved here to Inuvik and have lived here since. My ethnic back round consists of Haisla Indian from Kitimatt BC and Irish.

For my long term goals, I am studying a couple of online courses in Wildlife Forestry Management and Animal Science. After these are completed I am going to work towards my Environmental Science certificate. When these goals are reached I am hoping that I get into a good team environment and help ensure the

protection and the survival of the animal population and habitat in the north.

I am looking forward to working with you all and I think it is going to be a lot of fun.

Thank you,



*Sara Fosbery with her daughter*

## Traditional Knowledge about Vadzaih (caribou)

The GRRB is one of many organizations that has documented some traditional knowledge from Gwich'in elders over the years. The GRRB conducted interviews with elders on many of the animals that are important to the Gwich'in.

Back in the old days all the animals were very important and all living things were respected. The caribou was always the most important of all animals to the Gwich'in. The caribou would be used in every way. In the old days people not only ate the meat, but they also used the skins & bones and they made grease. Caribou is a huge part of Gwich'in life. It is the foundation of physical, mental and spiritual well being. Still today the Caribou is hunted by Gwich'in and used mainly for the meat.

According to Gwich'in elders from the past and present, here are some of the things we should all remember and try to do:

1. Do not kill more than you need
2. Respect the caribou and do not leave a messy kill site. In the winter time, hunters should use snow to cover over the area where they skin and cut up their meat
3. Share what you kill with your family and especially share with the widows and elderly who may not have anyone to hunt for them

4. Make use of the entire animal and don't waste
5. Spend time on the land with elders who have a lot of knowledge and learn about the traditional teachings and how to do things in the Gwich'in way.
6. Language is a main part of who our people are. So we all need to learn our language and be proud to speak it.
7. Alcohol and Drugs is not a part of Gwich'in Traditional Ways. Do not travel on the land and hunt when under the influence of either!

Some elders say that if people do not take care of the Caribou and if they disrespect the traditional ways, then the caribou will stop coming around to our country. Elders say that God (Creator) gave us the land & water to take care of. God created and gave us the caribou, moose, fish, birds and other animals to live on. Elders say that we have to take care of all of these things so that they will be there for all the children in the future.



*Mary Kendi is always happy to share her stories and knowledge with the young people.  
Mahsi Cho Mary!*



*Vadzaih Cho  
Bull Caribou*

*"In the old days they used caribou in every way: they used skins, meat, bones and made grease" (Gabe Andre, 1996)*



*Gabe Andre of Tsiigehtchic has contributed in many ways to the work of GRRB over the years. Mashi Cho Gabe.*

*"Wise old men tell the people not to kill too much caribou, just enough for them to live on. I would like to see in the future our young generation learn as much as they could from their old people: to be careful with caribou, not to shoot them for nothing, just as much as they need."  
(Mary Kendi, 1995)*



## Research Update: Vittrekwa River Char

This year, the GRRB began work on char in the Vittrekwa River. The first goal of our research was to reach the spawning grounds. For this, we were joined by William Teya of Fort McPherson, who had seen char a long time ago while travelling up the Vittrekwa (behind Tsìh ddhàa). William, though he had not been to this location for several decades, led us straight to the spawning grounds (Ne'edilee).

We found many mature fish who were preparing to spawn. We equipped ten fish with radio transmitters (some external and some internal). Over the next few months, we will be returning to the area to relocate these fish. We will learn where the fish spend the winter and will be able to identify these critical habitats. The population of char in the river seems to be healthy as we saw char of many different sizes and ages. However, the population is most likely small: we saw fewer than 100 adults. More work will be needed to obtain an accurate esti-

mate of the population size. Also, we found many char that are **resident males** – that is, fish that remain in freshwater for their entire lives (as opposed to most of the fish that go back and forth to the ocean). This population may have more resident males than other populations of char in the area.

Many people were involved in the research. William Teya, as mentioned above, was instrumental in providing the traditional knowledge to the project. Steven Tetlich (Fort McPherson) and Brian Dokum (GRRB) were central to the success of the project. We were also joined by two youths (Jason Francis and Charmaine Wilson) and two researchers from DFO Inuvik, Aaron and Tara Schweitzer. Woodie Elias (Fort McPherson) has been a strong proponent of this research from



*Nathan Millar & Steven Tetlich checking the trap net on Vittrekwa River*

the very beginning. Thanks to all those involved!

The research has opened up many new and interesting possibilities for study which we plan to follow up on. The questions of population size and

habitat use are of particular importance.

*Nathan Millar  
GRRB Fisheries*

*“The research has opened up many new and interesting possibilities for study”*



*A mature male char in breeding colour*



*A resident male char: this fish is quite small (10”) but is mature (has large gonads). This fish remains in freshwater for its entire life.*

## Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board

Thank you for reading our newsletter. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

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Check us out on the web!

### GRRB Mission

To conserve and manage renewable resources within the Gwich'in Settlement Area in a sustainable manner to meet the needs of the public today and in the future.

### GRRB Vision

We believe that people in the Gwich'in Settlement Area are responsible for using, protecting and conserving their resources, as well as, active partners with the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board in managing their resources.

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*Note: Catherine Lambert is attending University of Alberta this Fall and will be returning to the GRRB in January 2007. Her project update will be in the next newsletter*

