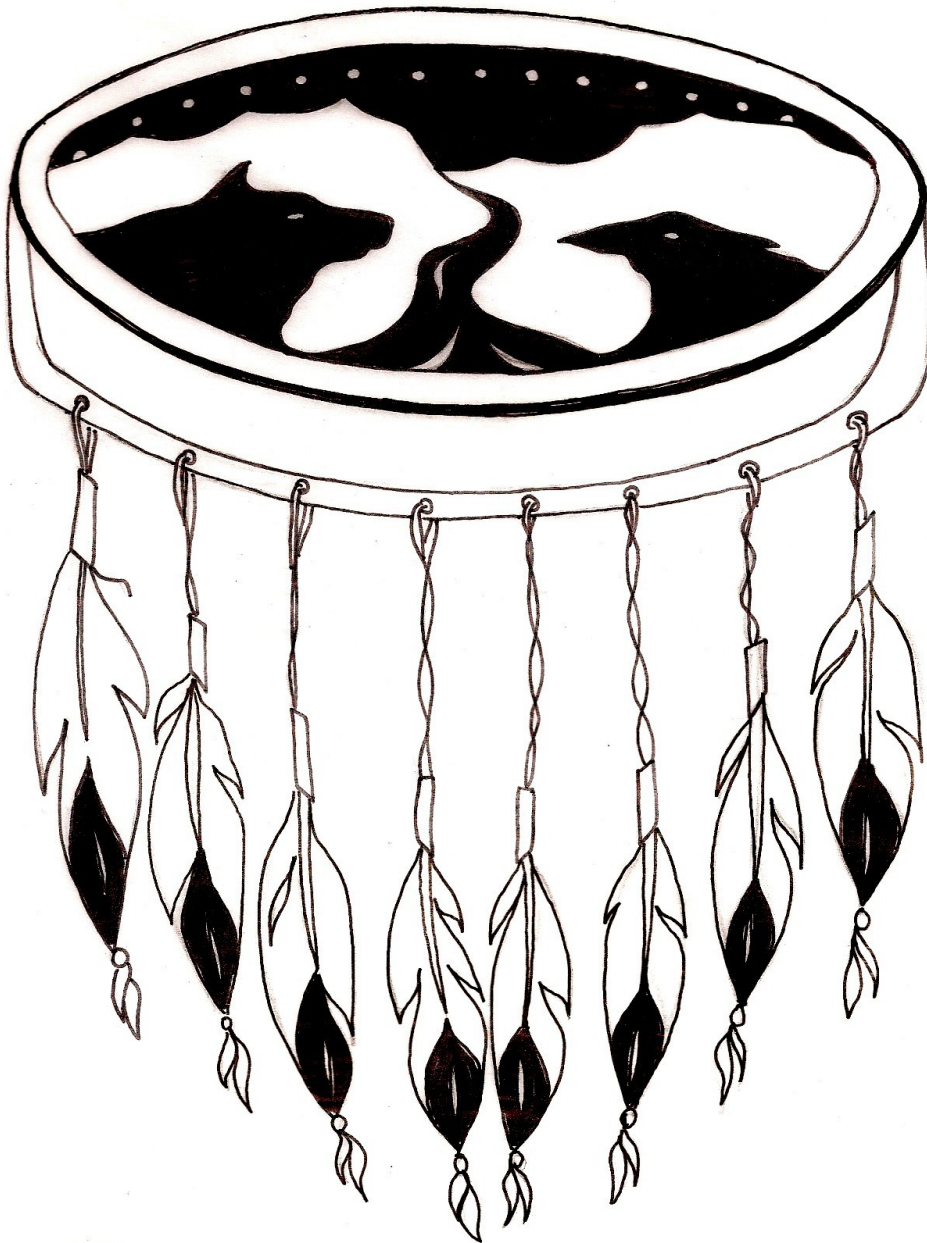


A Handbook

OF

**YUKON FIRST
NATIONS
EDUCATION
RESOURCES
FOR
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

2013/2014



**FIRST NATIONS PROGRAMS AND
PARTNERSHIPS UNIT,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

This handbook provides introductory information about Yukon First Nations and some of the Yukon First Nations' education programs, services and resources that are available. It is intended to foster the integration of Yukon First Nations' culture, history and languages into the classroom. This teacher handbook is a complement to the *Yukon Teacher Handbook 2013-2014* published by the Department of Education.

A Handbook *of* Yukon First Nations Education Resources for Public Schools 2013/2014

DEDICATION



Sandy Anderson (Alexander Charles Anderson) was a member of the Yan Yeidi (Wolf) Clan of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation. He was the second son of Mary and Richard Anderson, and was born in 1954. His traditional name was Khatgwexgh.

Sandy grew up in Whitehorse and attended residential school in Lower Post for the first two years of his formal education. He graduated from F. H. Collins in 1973. He received his B.A. in Anthropology at the University of Victoria in 1980. In 1982 he received his teaching certification at University of B.C. Sandy taught in B.C. for several years. He began his teaching career at the two-room DIA school in Fort Babine. He taught both secondary and elementary school in the Smithers School District, and he taught at the band-operated Maaqtusiis School in Ahousat on Vancouver Island.

He returned to the Yukon in 1991, when he was offered an instructors position in the Yukon Native Teacher Education program. Sandy promoted his love of Social Studies and Language Arts to upcoming teachers. He was one of the few staff hired that had First Nations ancestry, and he led the way in providing First Nations perspective, and ways of knowing and doing in this post-secondary institution. Sandy was a caring teacher and provided detailed responses to students work to support them in their teaching careers. He was a very generous man, and, with his connection to the coast, he was able to share her-ring eggs for special dishes at the College. Sandy is remembered for his quick wit and his great sense of humour, and previous YNTEP graduates were encouraged by his wonderful smile.

Sandy also worked at the Department of Education as a curriculum and resource material developer. He was part of the team that developed the Yukon First Nations resources for Social Studies grade 5 units that focus on clans, traditional governance, language and citizenship.

We would like to dedicate this teacher resource to the late Sandy Anderson. He had an extensive career in education, as a teacher, as an instructor of teachers and as a curriculum materials developer. He was a kind and gentle First Nation's role model, and he was a teacher you would have wanted for your own children. Gunałchîsh Khatgwexgh!

Màhsi' choo (Gwich'in)
Màhsi' cho (Hän)
Máhsin cho (Northern Tutchone)
Tsin'j̥j choh (Upper Tanana)
Sógá sénlá' (Kaska)
Shàw níthän (Southern Tutchone)
Gunat̓ch̓ish (Tlingit)
Gùnèt̓ch̓ish (Tagish)
Thank you

to the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Native Language Centre,
Alyce Johnson, Sara Davidson and
Lauren Wallingham & the staff of the
First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit
for their help with this handbook. Translations courtesy of the
Yukon Native Language Centre.

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Front cover: First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit logo
Artist: Vernon Asp
Drum: Represents passing down culture and language
Mountains & River: Represent part of the land, part of the water
Wolf & Crow: Represent the two clans in the Yukon
14 Mini Circles: Represent the fourteen First Nations in the Yukon
8 Feathers: Represent the eight Yukon First Nations languages
Back cover: First Nations Graduation, Class of 2012

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8. COMMUNITIES

First Nation:
Community:
School:

Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN)
Carcross and Tagish
Ghuch Tlâ Community School



*Carcross, Yukon
YTG photo*

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 130 Phone: (867) 821-4251
Carcross, YT Fax: (867) 821-4802
Y0B 1B0
Website: www.ctfn.ca

Community Population: ~435

CTFN Population: ~600

First Nations Languages: Tagish, Inland Tlingit

The Carcross/Tagish people have both Tlingit and Tagish ancestry.⁹ The name Carcross/Tagish reflects the two communities that are now the home bases of the people.⁹ Tagish was a place where people gathered to trade and hold celebrations in the 19th century.⁹ In Tagish, the place name for this area refers to the sound the river ice makes in the spring as it is breaking-up.¹⁰ Carcross is where the majority of the people lived during that last century and continue to live today.⁹ In Tagish, the name for this place is *Todezane* and in Tlingit, the name is *Natase Hin*.¹⁰ As intermarriages between the Tagish people and the Tlingit people became increasingly common, Tlingit gradually became the primary language thus replacing Tagish.⁹

On October 22, 2005, the Carcross/Tagish First Nation signed a Final Agreement with the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government.⁹ The Carcross/Tagish First Nation's governance system is based on the clan system. The six clans are: under the Wolf moiety—*Daklaweidi* and *Yan Yedi*; and under the Crow moiety—*Deisheetaan*, *Ganaxtedi*, *Ishkahitta* and *Kookhitta*.¹

Ya Dak Du Hidi Daycare

The *Ya Dak Du Hidi* Daycare also has locally developed curriculum that focuses on Carcross/Tagish First Nation's values and virtues. They have a Tlingit dancing and drumming group that performs at local celebrations. Two Elders help three times a week to teach the Tlingit language. This daycare program helps to strengthen identity, culture and language, which helps to build emotional competency at an early age.¹¹

Locally Developed Curriculum

The Carcross/Tagish First Nation launched its Constitution of Carcross Tagish First Nation Curriculum in 2008. The learning outcomes for this locally developed curriculum include topics such as: "stories, land, clan roles and responsibilities, clan origins, clan membership, ceremonies [and] rituals and symbols." The curriculum covers kindergarten to grade 9 and focuses on the self, community and nation. It is constantly evolving, as it "is recognized as a working and living document." Teachers and community members continuously work together to develop resources and ensure all the needs of the students are being met.¹¹



*The First People's Performances/
Dakhká Khwáan Dancers, YTG photo*

First Nation: Champagne & Aishihik First Nations (CAFN)
Community: Haines Junction
School: St. Elias Community School

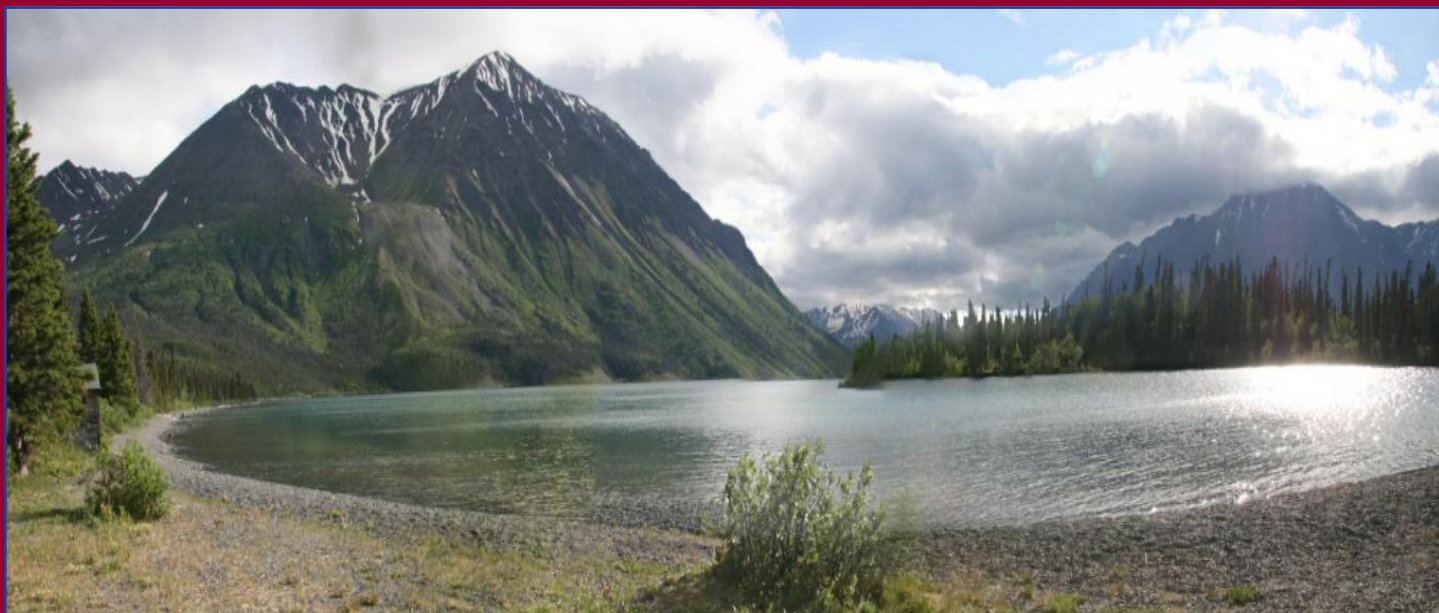
First Nation Contact Information:

Address:	Haines Junction 1 Allen Place, PO Box 5310 Haines Junction, YT Y0B 1L0	Whitehorse Suite 100, 304 Jarvis St Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2H2
Phone:	(867) 634-4200	(867) 456-6888
Fax:	(867) 634-2108	(867) 667-6202
Website:	www.cafn.ca	

Community Population: ~810

CAFN Population: ~1,200

First Nations Language:
Southern Tutchone



Kathleen Lake, Yukon
Photographer Lauren Wallingham

Champagne & Aishihik First Nations were named after historical settlements along the Dezadeash River and the headwaters of the Dezadeash and Alsek Rivers. The traditional territory of the Champagne & Aishihik First Nation is vast and covers 41,000 square kilometers, crossing the modern day borders into B.C.¹³

In 1993, Champagne & Aishihik First Nations were one of the first four Yukon First Nations to sign a Final Agreement with the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government. However, the land claim negotiations remain incomplete for the Champagne & Aishihik First Nations traditional territory on the BC side of the border.¹³

Traditionally Southern Tutchone people were located throughout a number of communities, including: Chu'ena Keyi (Hutchi), Äshèyi (Aishihik), Shāwshe-Neskatahin (Dalton Post), Łu Ghą (Klukshu), Shadhāla (Champagne), Nakhū (Kusawa and Takhini), K'üà Mān (Kloo Lake), and Dakwākāda (Haines Junction).¹⁵



Shadhäla, Champagne, Yukon

Shadhäla, the Southern Tutchone name for Champagne, means “Little Sunny Mountain” or “Sunshine Mountain Camp.” The area is known for being a repeated camping spot among Southern Tutchone people and traders. When a trading post was established at Champagne, families from the nearby settlements of Shäwshe, Łu Ghq, and Chu’ena began gathering in this area to trade and share stories.¹⁵

Today, there are a few permanent residents, and many seasonal homes. It remains an important place for Champagne & Aishihik First Nations, and many Southern Tutchone gatherings are held here.¹⁵

The Champagne & Aishihik First Nations *Dä Kų* Cultural Centre, meaning ‘Our House’ opened in 2012.¹⁴

The vision of *Dä Kų* is: “Our Cultural Centre is a gathering place that recognizes and celebrates the cultural contributions and way of life of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations peoples—the places we come from, the traditions and languages we carry, and the arts we practice and perform. It is an environment creating lasting memories, where young people will learn the wisdom of our Elders, know our stories and legends, and assume responsibility to carry our values.”¹⁴

Klukshu village is located on Klukshu Creek at the southern end of Klukshu Lake. The creek is a tributary of the Tatshenshini and Alsek River system. Klukshu is a seasonal salmon fishing village, and while there are not many salmon that come through anymore, it is still culturally important to Southern Tutchone people today. The Southern Tutchone name for Klukshu is *Łu Ghq*, which means “fishing place.”¹⁵

“Further back in time, a traditional story records how, long ago, a Wolf man named *Ākhjìyis* had discovered it, the creek and therefore the salmon resource belonged to him. However, *Ākhjìyis* killed his Crow brother-in-law. In compensation for this misdeed, ownership of the creek was transferred from the Wolf to the Crow people. Ownership in the *Dän* way doesn’t mean exclusive rights, but stewardship, taking care of the place so the resource would always be plentiful. The Crow people allow others to harvest salmon at Klukshu.”¹⁵



Łu Ghq Chua, Klukshu Creek
Photographer Lauren Wallingham



Dä Kų Cultural Centre

**First Nation:
Community:
School:**

**First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun (NND)
Mayo
J.V. Clark School**

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 220 Phone: (867) 996-2265
Mayo, YT Fax: (867) 996-2267
Y0B 1M0
Website: www.nndfn.com

Community Population: ~500
NND Population: ~500
First Nations Languages: Northern Tutchone

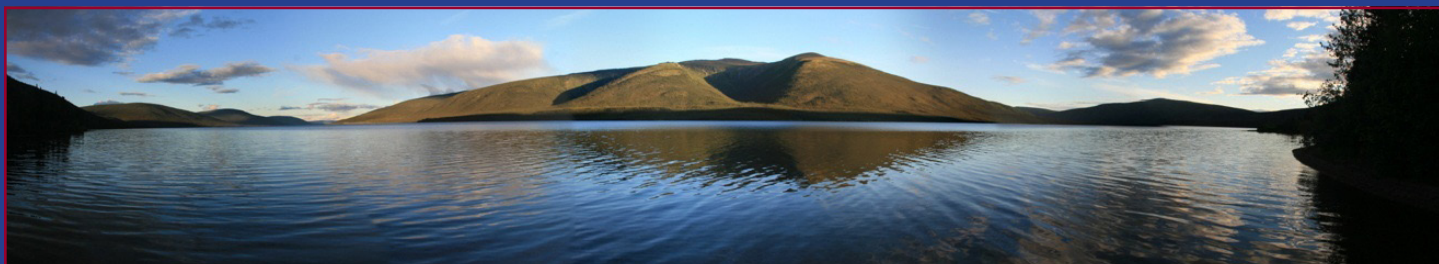
The Stewart River runs through the traditional territory of the Na-Cho Nyak Dun. In Northern Tutchone this river is called *Na Cho Nyak*, which means “Big River.” The traditional territory of the Na-Cho Nyak Dun spreads across 162,456 square kilometers, and crosses into the Northwest Territories. The Na-Cho Nyak Dun have cultural connections with the Northern Tutchone people of the Selkirk First Nations and Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nations. Some Na-Cho Nyak Dun people are able to trace their ancestry back to the Gwitchin people to the north and the Mackenzie people to the east.¹⁶

The First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun was one of the first four Yukon First Nations to sign a Final Agreement with the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government in 1993. The First Nation is currently implementing and working toward fully realizing this Final Agreement.¹⁶



*Aboriginal Day Dancers,
Na-Cho Nyak Dun photo*

Ethel Lake is known as *Ta Kwan Te Mun* in Northern Tutchone, which means “Fire Lake.” *Ta Kwan Te Mun* continues to be culturally important to the people of Na-Cho Nyak Dun. Today, the First Nation has the Ethel Lake Outpost, which is a cultural place for Na-Cho Nyak Dun citizens. Retreats, cultural events, and fishing camps are held at the Outpost.¹⁷



*Ta Kwan Te Mun, Ethel Lake, Yukon
Photographer Lauren Wallingham*



Peel Youth Alliance, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun,
Na-Cho Nyak Dun photo

"Our people's way of life is directly tied to the well-being of the Peel Watershed. The land management system arising from our Final Agreements with the Crown is meant to protect the cultural values of our people. It is time to respect the spirit of these Agreements."
~former Na-Cho Nyak Dun Chief Simon Meruyun

The 77,000km² of the Peel Watershed falls within the traditional territories of the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun, Tetl'it Gwich'in (in the Northwest Territories), Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.⁶⁴ The Na-Cho Nyak Dun's territories and salmon fish camps traditionally extended from the Stewart River watershed to the southern part of the Peel watershed.⁶⁴ Na-Cho Nyak Dun people travelled from these regions to the upper Peel watershed in order to hunt and trade.⁶⁴

The Peel Watershed is one of the largest intact natural areas left in North America, and it is one of the most pristine mountain boreal ecosystems remaining in the world. For years, the people of the four First Nations have been calling for protection of the Peel Watershed.⁶⁵ The independent Peel Watershed Planning Commission recommended 80% protection, with 55% of the watershed permanently protected from road construction, and 25% of it protected in the interim, but subject to review every 10 years.⁶⁵ The Yukon Government has rejected this proposal, and with numerous mining claims already staked in the area, the future of the Peel Watershed is still unknown.

For more information go to:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfRmz3usHsg and <http://protectpeel.ca/index.php?page=news>



Wind River, Peel Watershed, Yukon
Photographer Lauren Wallingham

First Nation: Kluane First Nation (KFN)
Community: Burwash Landing
School: Kluane Lake School (in Destruction Bay)

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 20 Phone: (867) 821-4251
 Burwash Landing, YT Fax: (867) 821-4802
 Y0B 1V0
 Website: www.kfn.ca

Community Population: ~100
 KFN Population: ~250
 First Nations Languages: Southern Tutchone



Students from Kluane Lake School

Many of the *Lù'àn Män Ku Dän*, the Kluane Lake People, can trace their ancestry back to the Tlingit, Upper Tanana and Northern Tutchone; however, the majority of the people today identify themselves as Southern Tutchone. The traditional territory of the *Lù'àn Män Ku Dän* is the Shakwak Valley, which reaches from the Ruby and Nisling mountain ranges in the northeast to the St. Elias Mountains in the southwest.¹⁹ Small settlements have been found throughout this territory, as *Lù'àn Män Ku Dän* moved around on well known trails and rivers.⁵⁶

The Kluane First Nation signed their Final Agreement with the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government on October 18, 2003. One of the smallest First Nations in the Yukon, Kluane First Nation is now in the beginning stages of implementing their agreement.¹⁹

The Kluane Lake School and the Nelna Bessie John School have created a partnership in order to host an annual Spring Camp out at Pickhandle Lake. This camp has become an important traditional and cultural event for the students, and the Kluane Lake First Nation and White River First Nation.



*Pickhandle Lakes Habitat Protection Area,
 Photographer Michelle Sicotte*

The Pickhandle Lakes Habitat Protection Area falls within the traditional territories of the Kluane First Nation and the White River First Nation. It is an important wetland complex for waterfowl staging, nesting and moulting. Work is currently underway to designate this area as a Habitat Protection Area under the *Yukon Wildlife Act*.⁴⁹

**First Nation:
Community:**

**Kwanlin Dun First Nation (KDFN)
Whitehorse**



*Miles Canyon, Whitehorse, Yukon
Photographer Sam Wallingham*

The Kwanlin Dün First Nation held the Grand Opening of their Cultural Centre on June 21st, 2012.²⁰ The Cultural Centre has been built on the banks of the Tahgàh Chō, the Yukon River. The Grand Opening, which fell on Aboriginal Day, was a communitywide celebration. Since the opening, the Cultural Centre has been filled with artists working, celebrations, and learning.²⁰ In November the Healing Totem was raised, which was carved by the Northern Cultural Expression Society, under the guidance of Master Carver Wayne Price.²⁰

Our Vision: “To revive, preserve, and demonstrate our language, practices, values, and traditional way of life for the benefit of our people and to share our culture with other First Nations and the public-at-large from around the world.”²⁰

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: 35 McIntyre Drive
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 5A5

Phone: (867) 633-7800

Fax: (867) 668-5057

Website: www.kwanlindun.com

Community Population: ~25,000

KDFN Population: ~950

First Nations Languages: Southern Tutchone

In Southern Tutchone the waterway (that in English is known as Miles Canyon) through to the Whitehorse Rapids is called *Kwanlin*, meaning “running water through canyon”²⁰ Kwanlin Dun means “people of the rapids.”⁵⁹ The Kwanlin Dun First Nation is not made up of people from one region, “but rather, Kwanlin Dun has welcomed people from other First Nations from as far as Atlin and Tagish to the southeast, Old Crow to the north, Little Salmon to the northwest, and the Kluane area to the west.”⁵⁹ Members of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation include Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, Tagish and Tlingit people.²⁰ For thousands of years, ancestors of the Kwanlin Dun have lived along the Chu Nínkwän (the Yukon River).⁵⁹

In April 2005, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation’s Final Agreement came into effect, after decades of negotiating with the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government.²⁰



*Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre,
Kwanlin Dun First Nation photo*

First Nation:
Community:
School:

Liard First Nation (LFN)
Watson Lake
Johnson Elementary School
Watson Lake Secondary School

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 328, Campbell Highway
Watson Lake, YT
Y0A 1C0

Phone: (867) 536-5200
Fax: (867) 536-2332

Community Population: ~1,550
LFN Population: ~1000
First Nations Languages: Kaska

The Kaska Dene have occupied their homeland for tens of thousands of years. The Kaska Traditional Territory extends 240,000 square kilometers in the Yukon, Northern British Columbia and Northwest Territories. The Kaska Dene have been divided into five First Nation Bands, including three in BC: the Dease River First Nation, the Daylu Dena Council and the Kwadacha First Nation; and two in the Yukon: the Liard First Nation and the Ross River Dena Council.⁵¹

The largest of the five First Nations that represent the Kaska Nation, the Liard First Nation is centered in Watson Lake, Yukon and Lower Post, British Columbia.⁵⁸ The Liard First Nation has not negotiated a Final Agreement and remains a Band under the Indian Act.

The Dene have two living forms to identify different “blood” families. The two living forms are known as clans, and they are:

Mésgâ Dene- Crow Clan
Ts’ı̨yōné Dene- Wolf Clan

All Mésgâ Dene are related to each other, and all Ts’ı̨yōné Dene are related to each other. The Dene are affiliated with one family only, the clan of their mother’s line.⁵¹



Liard First Nation Head Start Program, Liard First Nation photos

Dene Kegehdih Kóá *Where people are taught*

Guts'édane Kecedih Kóá Aboriginal Head Start Program

The Guts'édane Kecedih Kóá Aboriginal Head Start Program is a National Early Intervention Program sponsored by Liard First Nation and funded by Health Canada. It is for preschool children living in rural and northern communities.⁵¹



Roy Dick showing Johnson Elementary School students how to skin a beaver; 2 Mile Lake, Yukon, Liard First Nation photo



Jolanda Whalen, and Courtney Caesar learning how to cut dry meat from Elder Mida Donnessey, Liard First Nation photo

Aboriginal Labour Force Alliance Program

The program assists Liard First Nations in upgrading their skills in order to obtain employment. Some components of the ALFA Program include:

- Occupational Skills Training;
- Kaska language, values, spiritual beliefs and traditions;
- Cross Cultural training; and
- Pre-employment training and life skills.⁵¹

Language and Heritage

Liard First Nation's Language and Heritage staff provide the following services to preserve and revive the Kaska language and heritage:

- Language lessons;
- Kaska language mentoring;
- Recording of Elder's stories;
- Recording and archiving traditional stories;
- One on one learning sessions;
- Interpreting for Elders and Liard First Nations;
- Promoting cultural activities.⁵¹



Elder Mida Donnessey and Watson Lake Secondary School student looking for low bush cranberries, Watson Lake Secondary School photo

**First Nation:
Community:
School:**

**Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation (LSCFN)
Carmacks
Tantalus School**

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 135 Phone: (867) 863-5576
Carmacks, YT Fax: (867) 863-5710
Y0B 1C0
Website: www.lscfn.ca

Community Population: ~400
LSCFN Population: ~630
First Nations Languages: Northern Tutchone

The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation is located in the community of Carmacks. They have close affiliations with their neighbours Selkirk First Nation and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun.

On July 21, 1997 Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation signed a land claim and self government agreement, and on October 1, 1997 LSCFN became a self-governing First Nation.⁶⁰

The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation follows an election process for their Chief and Council members. An Elder and a youth member are also on the Council and are selected by their respective councils. The Council reports annually to the General Assembly, which is a gathering made up of all the citizens of Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation.²¹



*Tagē Cho Hudān Interpretive Centre Sign,
Carmacks, Yukon*

The theme of the Tagē Cho Hudān Interpretive Centre is the past and present lifestyle of the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation Northern Tutchone people. Going back thousands of years, the Interpretive Centre displays the rich history of the Northern Tutchone people.⁵²



*Yukon River at Carmacks, Yukon
Photographer Lauren Wallingham*

First Nation:
Community:
School:

Ross River Dena Council (RRDC)
Ross River
Ross River School

The Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nations are the two Kaska Dena communities in the Yukon. The traditional territory of the Kaska Dena reaches more than 240,000 square kilometers and crosses between the Yukon, Northwest Territories and northern British Columbia.⁶¹ Provincial and territorial boundaries have divided the Kaska people into five First Nations; however, the Kaska continue to see themselves as one Nation.⁶¹

Like the Liard First Nation, the Ross River Dena Council has not negotiated a Final Agreement with the Yukon Government.²³

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: General Delivery Phone: (867) 536-5200
Ross River YT Fax: (867) 536-2332
Y0B 1S0

Community Population: ~350
RRDC Population: ~450
First Nations Languages: Kaska, Slavey



*Lapie River,
Ross River, Yukon*



*Dena Cho, Ross River, Yukon
Photographer Brian Ladue*

A Kaska artist, Gordon Peter, carved a marble statue that was erected on a site overlooking the community of Ross River in 2010. The statue was named “Dena Cho” or “Big Man” after Jack Sterriah who had lived in the area and who was a very big and strong man.

First Nation:
Community:
School:

Selkirk First Nation (SFN)
Pelly Crossing
Eliza Van Bibber School

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 40
Pelly Crossing, YT
Y0B 1P0

Phone: (867) 537-3331
Fax: (867) 537-3902

Website: www.selkirkfn.com

Community Population: ~300

SFN Population: ~500

First Nations Languages: Northern Tutchone

Located where the Pelly River and the Yukon River meet, Fort Selkirk has been an important place for Selkirk First Nations people for thousands of years. In the summer, Northern Tutchone people gathered at the Fort Selkirk area to harvest salmon and trade with other First Nations groups. It was also a place where neighbouring First Nations gathered for celebrations, which involved singing, dancing and stick gambling.

As non-First Nations began to settle at Fort Selkirk in the 1800s, Selkirk First Nation people built homes for the winter, but they continued to harvest food and travel throughout their traditional territory. By the 1890s, a mission was established, and during the Gold Rush Fort Selkirk's population peaked at 1,200. With the diminishing river traffic by the 1930s and the building of the Alaska Highway in the 1940s, Fort Selkirk was abandoned in the early 1950s.

Fort Selkirk is a living cultural heritage site, and it continues to be an important place for Selkirk First Nation people.

In Northern Tutchone the Selkirk First Nation People call themselves *Thi Ts'ach'an Hud'an*, after the Selkirk name for Victoria Rock. To other people they are known as *Hu'cha Hudän*, which means "flat area people." This is because the landscape around the Fort Selkirk area is flat on either side of the river. The Selkirk First Nation people have lived here for thousands of years in areas such as Tat'la Mun Lake, Lower McMillan River, Grayling Lake, and other small settlements beyond Fort Selkirk.²⁴

The Selkirk First Nation was the seventh Yukon First Nation to sign a Final Agreement with the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government. They signed their Final Agreement on July 21, 1997.²⁵



*Fort Selkirk, Yukon
Selkirk First Nation photo*

Doolí

“Doolí, or traditional law, covers all aspects of the traditional lifestyle and survival of the Northern Tutchone people. Traditional values of respecting, caring, sharing, and teaching serve as a foundation for Selkirk people.

Showing respect to people and animals are very important practices of the Selkirk people. A man's success as a hunter can be very much endangered should he fail to be respectful towards the animals he is hunting. Traditional laws are still followed today by Selkirk people, especially when it comes to harvesting their food, respecting animals, and the death of a Selkirk member.

Traditions

Education

The education of children took place within the setting of the family and close relatives. Children learned about the world around them and how to make a living by helping their parents, and by listening to their stories. It was the Elders who were the disciplinarians for children. The Elder's stories also provided children with a system of values, guidelines, and models for appropriate behaviour.”



Pelly River & the Community of Pelly Crossing, Yukon
Photographer Lauren Wallingham

The Graduating Class

The Traditional Ceremony is led by our community Elders. Our late Elder Tommy McGinty, conducted the ceremony in this way during the first Eliza Van Bibber School Graduation held in 1993...

Traditional Graduation Ceremony

The drummer begins to drum.

The graduates come in and go to the center of the room.

The community forms a complete circle around the graduates.

The drummer continues to drum as the community members dance, circling the graduates.

This is an opportunity for the community to dance/ walk into the centre to pass on best wishes and congratulations to these young people and for the placing of gifts/cards at the feet of the graduates.

This is the Northern Tutchone way of showing or giving honour.²⁶

**First Nation:
Community:**

**Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC)
Whitehorse**

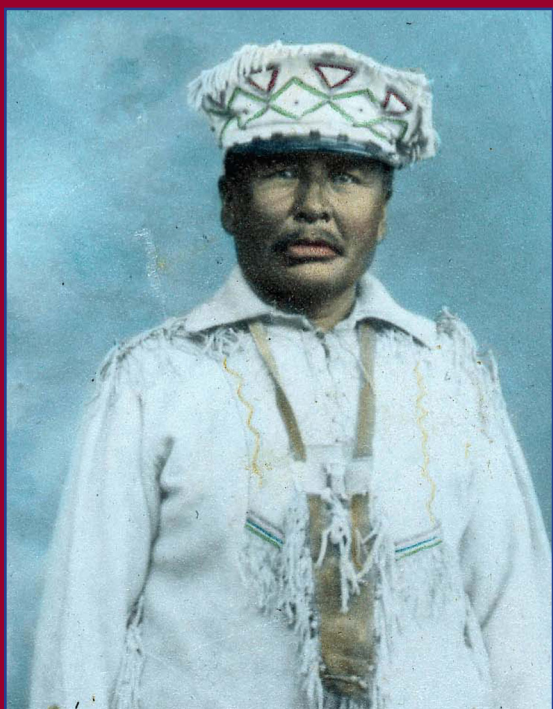
First Nation Contact Information:

Address: 117 Industrial Road
Whitehorse, YT
Y1A 2T8
Website: www.taan.ca

Community Population: ~25,000
TKC Population: ~430
First Nations Languages: Southern Tutchone

Lake Laberge, which is right in the heart of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council's traditional territory, is called *Tàa'an Män* in Southern Tutchone. Members of the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation can trace their ancestry back to the Southern Tutchone, Tagish and Tlingit people. Their traditional territory is made up of approximately 12,000 square kilometers.

January 13, 2002 marked the signing of the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation Final Agreement. January 13, 2002 also marked 100 years to the day since Jim Boss wrote a petition letter to the Department of Indian Affairs.²⁹



*Chief Jim Boss, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council,
Ta'an Kwäch'än Council photo*

As thousands of non-Aboriginal people were coming into the Yukon at the height of the Klondike Gold Rush, Chief Jim Boss recognized the importance of protecting his peoples' land and hunting grounds. He petitioned the Government of Canada "seeking compensation for the hardships his people had suffered as a result of the influx of strangers into their country."⁵⁴ His petition to William Ogilvie, the Commissioner of the Yukon in 1900, and his letter to the superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa in 1902, are recognized as the first attempt at land claim negotiations in the Yukon.

Chief Jim Boss is known as one of the most outspoken and influential leaders of Yukon First Nations.²⁹



*Lake Laberge, Yukon
Photographer Lauren Wallingham*



*Culture Camp
Ta'an Kwäch'än photo*



*Family and Student Appreciation Day
Ta'an Kwäch'än photo*



*Culture Camp, Singeing Porcupine
Ta'an Kwäch'än photo*



*Spring Culture Camp, Snowshoeing
Ta'an Kwäch'än photo*



*Spring Culture Camp, Ice Fishing
Ta'an Kwäch'än photo*

First Nation: Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC)
Community: Teslin
School: Teslin School

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 133
 Teslin, YT
 Y0B 1B0
 Phone: (867) 390-2532
 Fax: (867) 390-2204
 Website: www.ttc-teslin.com

Community Population: ~415
 TTC Population: ~750
 First Nations Languages: Inland Tlingit

The name Teslin, which comes from the Tlingit word *tás t?en*, means “long and narrow like sinew.” This refers to the long and narrow Teslin Lake. The Inland Tlingit can trace their ancestry back to the *Taku Qwan* from the coast. In the early 1700s the *Taku Qwan* began to move away from their coastal relatives and eventually settled inland by the end of the 19th century. Over time the Inland Tlingit intermarried and shared their culture with their new neighbours. In Yukon the Tlingit language is mainly spoken in the communities of Teslin and Carcross.³⁰

The Teslin Tlingit Council, which is one of the first four First Nations to sign a Final Agreement in the Yukon, signed their Final Agreement with the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government on May 29, 1993.³⁰

The Teslin Tlingit Council follows a Clan system of government. By incorporating both traditional Tlingit Clan culture and contemporary organizational and management principles, the Government of the Teslin Tlingit Council provides a more holistic and culturally relevant system of government.³⁰

“Under the Constitution of the Teslin Tlingit Council:

- Citizenship and organization of each Clan is determined by the customs inherited and observed by the Clan and acknowledged by the other Clans
- Each Clan has a leader and Elders recognized as such by the Clan membership
- The Teslin Tlingit Clans have emblems which are part of their tradition”³⁰



Teslin Tlingit Council Administration Building, Teslin, Yukon

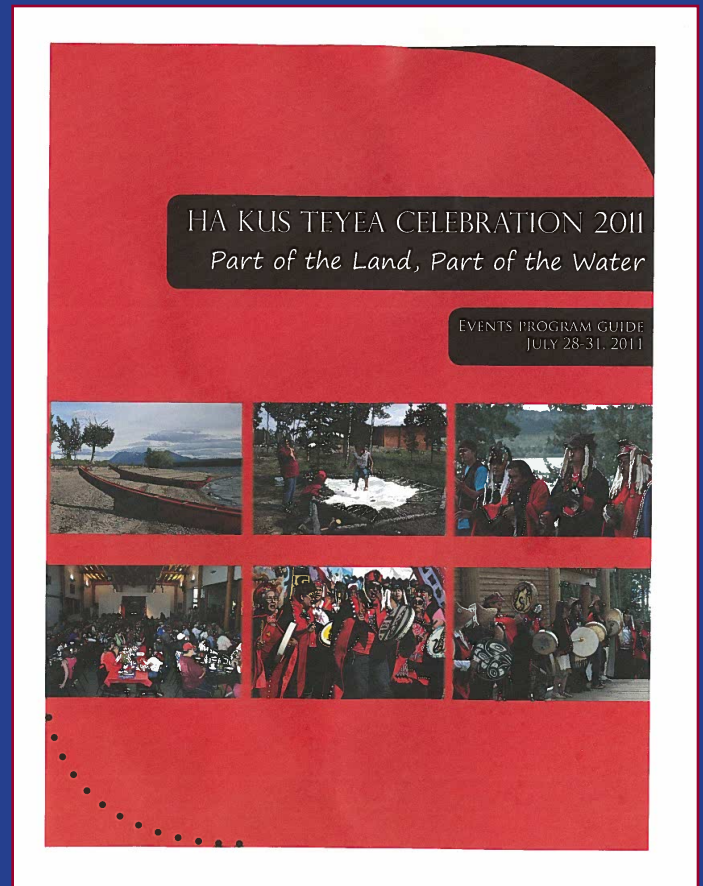


Tlingit carver Keith Wolfe-Smarch created the posts that symbolize the five Clans—Kukhhittan (Raven Children), Ishkitan (Frog), Yanyedi (Wolf), Deshitan (Beaver), and Dakhlawedi (Eagle).

These five posts also represent elements of land, water and air; “and their raising, more indomitably, signifies the ‘standing up’ of the people.”³⁰

Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre, Teslin, Yukon

On February 21, 2011, the Teslin Tlingit Council signed an agreement that recognizes the Teslin Tlingit Council's jurisdiction to administer, enforce and adjudicate its own laws in a manner that reflects Teslin Tlingit culture and values. All Self-Governing Yukon First Nations have the ability to sign an Administration of Justice Agreement, but the Teslin Tlingit Council is the first Yukon First Nation to take this step. Through this agreement, the Teslin Tlingit Council will set up a court system, which is expected to be up and running within four years. The Peacemaker Court will look at justice in a more holistic way.



*Teslin Lake & the Village of Teslin, Yukon,
Teslin Lake is ~78 miles (125 km) long, ~2 miles (3km) wide and reaches a maximum depth of ~700 feet (213m)
Photographer Lauren Wallingham*

First Nation:
Community:
School:

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH)
Dawson City
Robert Service School

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 599
Dawson, YT
Y0B 1G0

Phone: (867) 993-7100
Fax: (867) 993-6553

Website: www.trondek.ca & www.trondekheritage.com

Community Population: ~1,319

TH Population: ~1100

First Nations Languages: Hän

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, "People of the River" in Hän, are based in Dawson City, Yukon. The citizenship of nearly 1,100, roughly 350 of whom live in Dawson, includes descendants of the Hän-speaking people, who have lived along the Yukon River for millennia, and a diverse mix of families descended from Gwich'in, Northern Tutchone and other language groups.

Yukon First Nations set the land-claims process in motion during the 1970s. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in began negotiating their individual land claim in 1991. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement was signed on July 16, 1998, and came into effect on September 15, 1998.



Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Singers John Semple and Ronald Johnson Perform for the opening of the new School of Visual Arts in Dawson City, 2007, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Heritage Department photo



Opening ceremonies of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in biennial Moosehide Gathering, 2008, Moosehide Yukon, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Heritage Department photo

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government ensures a strong and healthy future for citizens while maintaining connections to traditional knowledge and the land. The First Nation is governed by an elected Chief and four councilors, who rely on direction from the Elders' Council, a body comprising all Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people aged 55 and over. The General Assembly—all voting-age citizens—gather at least once a year to pass extraordinary resolutions, approve legislation and provide direction to political leaders.



*Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Elder Angie Joseph Rear teaches youth to cut salmon at the Tr'ondek Hwëch'in First Fish camp at Moosehide, 2008
Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Heritage Department Photo*



*Allison Anderson defleshes caribou with a knife, Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Hide Tanning Camp, Dawson City, 2006
Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Heritage Department Photo*

Government departments established since the effective date of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in agreements include the following:

- Administration—oversees the general operations of the government.
- Finance—administers the financial responsibilities of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.
- Health and Social Programs—delivers wellness programming and community support.
- Heritage—cares for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in heritage resources, both on the land and in government holdings.
- Housing and Capital—manages the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in housing program and guides new home construction.
- Human Resources and Post-Secondary Education—deals with government staffing and training as well as education and training issues.
- Implementation—assists the First Nation in exercising their authority under the final and self-government agreements.
- Natural Resources—directs land-based work and wildlife monitoring and conservation programs.
- Tr'inke Zho Childcare Centre—provides early childhood education, preschool, afterschool, and Aboriginal Head Start programming
- Education—provides youth and family advocacy, ensures culture and language programming, and directs public school programming for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in also have an independent economic-development arm, Chief Isaac Inc., that is a Yukon leader in the areas of commercial-property rental and management; residential and commercial construction; freight-line trucking; and forest-fire-suppression services.



Klondike River and the Yukon River joining at Dawson City, Photographer Michael Edwards



*Grade 2 Moosehide Slide Storytelling, 2011, Moosehide Yukon,
Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Heritage Department photo*



*Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Heritage Department staff at Robert Service
School, 2023, Dawson City, Yukon,
Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Heritage Department photo*



*Tr'ondek Hwëch'in First Hunt camp at Cache Creek, Waylin Nagano,
2005, Cache Creek, Yukon,
Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Heritage Department photo*



*Peggy Kormendy demonstrates to Grade 1 students how to cut moose
meat for drying, Robert Service School, 2012, Dawson City, Yukon,
Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Heritage Department photo*



*Victor Henry leads students in a jigging club performance at Robert
Service School, 2012, Dawson City Yukon,
Tr'ondek Hwëch'in Heritage Department photo*

First Nation:
Community:
School:

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN)
Old Crow
Chief Zzeh Gittlit School



Chief Zzeh Gittlit students at Spring Culture Camp, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation photo

In the spring the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation hosts an annual Culture Camp for the students of Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in their traditional territory. It is based on a three year rotation: Year 1- Traditions and Science, Year 2- Traditions, History and Geography, Year 3- Traditions, Arts and Trades.

Local traditional teachers and Elders teach traditional knowledge, while Chief Zzeh Gittlit School teachers compliment these teachings with Western knowledge.

Last spring completed the first rotation, with a focus on Traditions, Arts and Trades.⁶³ Some of the highlights from the 2012 Culture Camp include muskrat trapping, rabbit snaring, and an Iron Chef competition.⁶³

For more information see page 26.

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 94
Old Crow, YT
Y0B 1N0

Phone: (867) 966-3261
Fax: (867) 966-3800

Website: www.vgfn.ca

Community Population: ~280
VGFN Population: ~750
First Nations Languages: Gwich'in

The Vuntut Gwitchin, which means “The People of the Lakes,” is named after the thousands of lakes found in the Old Crow Flats, a vital area for hunting, fishing, and trapping.⁶² Vuntut Gwitchin is one of the 19 Gwich'in communities that live in northern Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories.³³

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation was one of the original four Yukon First Nations to sign a Final Agreement with the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government in 1993.³⁴

The community of Old Crow is named after one of their leaders from the 1800s, *Deetru' K'avihdik*, which when translated from Gwich'in means “Crow May I Walk.” *Deetru' K'avihdik* was also known as Chief Zzeh Gittlit, which means “in the corner.” The school in Old Crow has been named after Chief Zzeh Gittlit.



Culture Camp Setup, Photographer Tracy Rispin

First Nation:
Community:
School:

White River First Nation (wrfn)
Beaver Creek
Nelna Bessie John School

First Nation Contact Information:

Address: General Delivery Phone: (867) 862-7802
Beaver Creek, YT Fax: (867) 862-7806
Y0B 1A0
Website: www.wrfn.yk.ca

Community Population: ~100
WRFN Population: ~220
First Nations Languages: Northern Tutchone, Upper Tanana

The people of the White River First Nation are descendents of Upper Tanana and Northern Tutchone people. Their traditional territory covers approximately 13,000 square kilometers on the Canadian side of the border, and it overlaps 100% with the Kluane First Nation.³⁷

The White River First Nation has not negotiated a Final Agreement under the Umbrella Final Agreement because the First Nation is unable to support the Umbrella Final Agreement at this point. In light of this, the White River First Nation is working toward advancing interests under the Indian Act.³⁷



*Pickhandle Lakes Habitat Protection Area,
Photographer Michelle Sicotte*



Beaver Creek, YTG photo

Throughout the school year, Nelna Bessie John School and the White River First Nation have encouraged regular participation in cultural activities consistent with White River First Nation's traditional knowledge, history, language, seasonal practices, and cultural protocols.

Some activities include:

- Harvesting berries with Elders and community members;
- Harvesting, preparing, and preserving traditional foods, such as moose, fish, berries, and roots, with Elders and community members;
- Participating in an annual Snag Creek Culture Camp and Muskrat Camp, where students have the opportunity to participate in seasonal hunting, trapping and fur preparation, and fishing.