



FEBRUARY 2005 NEWSLETTER

Sahtu Renewable Resources Board - To protect, conserve & manage renewable resources

The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board is proud to present the first of many stories by Dr. Norman Simmons on the life and times of Mountain Dene. Dr. Simmons is an alternate member of the Sahtu renewable Resources Board and spent many years working and living with the local people. Here's his story.

A LONG TIME AGO IN THE MOUNTAINS ...

... there were nomadic people who traded here at the junction of the Bear and Mackenzie Rivers. The mountain people travelled on foot with pack dogs in the summer, and they trapped marten and other fur animals all the way into the Yukon, travelling with dog teams and sleds in the winter. They would take their furs to traders who lived here on the bank of the Mackenzie. Back then, the mountain people would make canoes from spruce bark to travel down the rivers, for there were no big birch trees from which to make safer birch bark canoes. The spruce bark canoes were small and dangerously tipsy in fast water.

One day, the mountain people met a trapper from the Fort Rae area. He travelled in a canoe made from caribou skins, a canoe he used for trapping muskrats. He showed the curious nomads how it was made. Later they talked excitedly around the fire about making a canoe from skins, about how much better skins would be than spruce bark. But how about a really big canoe for carrying meat and furs down the fast rivers? And maybe a canoe of moose hide – larger and tougher than caribou hides?

Next spring, way up high on the Gravel River, above the Twitya River junction, the people skinned their seventh moose and began to cut young spruce trees for the frame of the first ever moose skin canoe. They didn't know it then, but they were about to revolutionize



travel on the rivers of the Mackenzie Mountains. Let us follow them on their first journey down the Gravel River. Did the big, heavy canoe hit a boulder and break up? Did a sharp rock tear the moose hide and sink the canoe? What did people do when

they came to the dangerous “bad place” on the river?

To be continued...



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THANK YOUSE!!!!

Thank you very much to Mr. Scott Lyall of Rolf C. Hagen Inc. for the generous donation of a Waterhome 32-Euro fish tank. This equipment will be used for conservation education projects about at Ehtseo Ayha School.

Thank you also, to Buffalo Airways for donating the cost of freight and delivery to Deline.

Finally, I wish to thank all the teachers and principals of the Sahtu for their continued co-operation, support and interest in promoting conservation education, wildlife health education, and traditional back on the land education.



The Sahtu Wildlife Health School Tour 2005

The 2005 Sahtu Wildlife Health Community Tour spoke to all five schools last month. Participants and contributors included Dr. Susan Kutz of the University of Saskatchewan, Veterinary Medicine; Dr. Brett Elkin, RWED, Yellowknife; Alasdair Veitch, Supervisor, Wildlife Management, RWED, Sahtu; Richard Popko, Wildlife Technician, RWED, Sahtu; and Glen Guthrie, Communications, SRRB. Funding was provided by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board, NWT Cumulative Impacts and Monitoring Program, and NSERC PromoScience.



This year, Dr. Aleksija Neimanis and Dr. Emily Jenkins, both Graduate Students of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, joined the tour. Aleksija was up here to evaluate the Wildlife Monitor Training Program as part of her graduate degree. This very important program was first introduced in Deline during last year's tour. This year, we trained an additional 4 monitors, two in Colville Lake and two in Fort Good Hope, bringing the Sahtu total, to three of the five communities. Next year, Wildlife Monitors will be trained in Tulita and Norman Wells. Emily gained invaluable experience in Northern community Wildlife Health issues. Both Emily and Aleksija, along with Susan, Brett and Richard, led students from all five schools through marten dissections. Sixty-nine students participated in the dissection labs. As martens were the focus of this year's tour, Richard and Alasdair told the students all about this important fur-bearing animal. Remember: Martens need to eat 3 voles a day: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner!



Presentations were given to 457 students in total (Colville Lake: 26; Fort Good Hope: 87; Tulita: 137; Deline: 108; Norman Wells: 99). They included cool CSI style (Based on the popular TV show Crime Scene Investigations) marten examples, that allowed the students to figure out "Who done it?". Other presentations included marten biology, their diet and habitat, and parasites that live in northern animals and how they can affect YOU. Like last year, Dr. Susan brought her jars of worms and other parasites.

This year's tour was highlighted by the generous donation of state of the art digital dissecting microscopes, courtesy of Enbridge (NW) Ltd. Every school got one of these microscopes that let the teachers project images of specimens onto a wall or screen. This way, everyone can see at the same time without having to line up for a look. This is the first of a 3-year, \$15,000.00 commitment by Enbridge (NW) Ltd. to increase and replace equipment in the science classrooms of the Sahtu.

Next year's tour will feature SNOWSHOE HARES. See you then!



Back on the Land—Deline

Under the direction of Mr. Fred Bonnell, ?Ehtseo Ayha School is undertaking an ambitious Back on the Land Program that is teaching students survival and traditional skills, while earning credits towards their graduation. This program is just in the starting phase, but already more than 15 students have been through the program. And from all reports, Loving It!!! Special thanks to Mr. Bonnell for all his hard work. This project would not be possible without his dedication. Mahsi!

The 2005 Sahtu Regional Science Fair

The 2005 Sahtu Regional Science Fair will be held at Mackenzie Mountain School on March 4th and 5th. This year, all five schools are planning on challenging Norman Wells and Deline by entering their projects in the competition. The winning entries will compete at the National Science Fair in Vancouver on May 15th to 22nd. Good luck to everybody entering a project. We'll show those southerners, who's best!

The 2005 Harvest Study Calendar is now available!!!
For more information, contact Janet Bayha at 588-4040 (collect).