

Nę K'ə Dene Ts'ı́ı Forum Meeting Notes

July 12, 2017, 1:07 pm-4:15 pm approximately

Notes by Joe Hanlon

Participants

Forum Members

Leon Andrew (Chair), Michael Neyelle (DRRC), Jimmy Dillon (DRRC), Ed Reeves (DRRC), Gordon Yakeleya (TRRC)

Other Participants

Deborah Simmons (SRRB), Joe Hanlon (SRRB), Jordan Lennie (SRRB), Frederick Andrew (SRRB)

Vandermeer (GNWT-ENR, Norman Wells), Stephanie Behrens (GNWT-ENR, Norman Wells), Lise Dolen (GNWT-ECE, Norman Wells), Bruce Hanna (GNWT-ENR, Yellowknife), Tonya Makletzoff (GNWT-ENR, Yellowknife)

Kirsty Gurney (Environment and Climate Change Canada, Saskatoon), Karen Dunmall (DFO, Winnipeg, 2:00-2:30)

Andrew Spring (Wilfred Laurier University), Mary-Ann Neal (Royal Roads University), Audrey Giles (University of Ottawa), Chris Cannon (Alaska), Alex Jaker (Yellowknife)

Thom Stubbs (Headwater Group, Calgary), Jessie Curell (digital storytelling)

Agenda

- Opening prayer, introductions, review of agenda
- Living On the Land – way of life and programming in the Sahtú Region
 - Short presentations about community on the land initiatives, Presentations by funders, Capacity needs and how to address them, Approach to coordination and supporting successful programs.
- Revised Nę K'ə Dene Ts'ı́ı Forum Terms of Reference
- Researcher updates
 - Dene astrology – Chris Cannon and Alex Jaker
 - Acoustic land bird and amphibian monitoring – Julia Shonfield and Michelle Knaggs (University of Alberta)
 - Youth leadership training – Mary-Anne Neal (Royal Roads University)
 - Dene Kedə to Dene Ts'ı́ı Knowledge Synthesis – Faun Rice
- Research licence applications - Joe Hanlon (SRRB)

Meeting Notes

Opening prayer, introductions, review of agenda (1:07 PM)

- Deb – review of invited guests who are not able to attend this meeting

Living On the Land – way of life and programming in the Sahtú Region (1:17 PM)

- Deb - The first part of the agenda is a snapshot of on the land programs, initiatives underway, dreams people have, programs that are available. So we will do a go-around of people around the circle. But people who are organizing on the land activities could take the first turns. Maybe start with the mountain caribou thing because that is coming up soonest. Leon, could you talk about this and I will fill in as needed? (Leon's call dropped so Deb goes ahead).
- Deb – About to send a briefing note about the mountain caribou management planning workshop, SRRB is organizer/sponsor, has been in the works since 2014, started with meeting in Ross River in 2014 to address concerns from both Sahtu and Ross River Dena about concerns relating to increased access at Mile 222 and Howard's Pass, changes in environment, and so on. We have a report on that meeting that is about ready to be finalized and published pending Ross River validation. There were some resolutions that came out of that workshop about the need to develop a plan for the mountain caribou. Coincidentally, the Sahtu region in 2016 came up with a really clear approach to supporting community conservation planning and this is the first time we're doing a three-community collaborative process. Last September there was another meeting in Tulita, and the report is being worked on. For months and months now since that meeting we have been preparing the funding for a camp at Dechenla Lodge. So we have organized two charters, one from Norman Wells and one from Tulita with space for 18 Sahtu participants. There will also be a delegation from the Whitehorse side. So we're hoping the majority of the participants will be from Tulita and Norman Wells but there will also be some representation from the other communities including a couple youth from each community. The reason for including all five communities is because it is a training opportunity. We are having Stewart Cowell, a trainer in community conservation planning with indigenous communities from Australia, is coming to do hands-on training to learn about approaches to community conservation planning. The camp is from July 26 to August 2, so we'd be grateful to confirm all the participants as soon as possible. Any questions or comments?
- Gordon – Two things. One, with my board at our meeting last week, we are talking about something big, the caribou, the board said we are not going to go across there until we have a meeting with our own members. I don't know if we ever attended meetings in Tulita about caribou. Two, the date is the same as SSI's AGM and that is a conflict for us.
- Deb – Leon, as you'll recall, we planned this meeting a long time ago, and the main reason was that the group including the forum, which met to talk about the date, knew

that we had to book people well ahead of time so that they wouldn't get busy with other things. SSI booked their AGM afterwards. We are supporting people who are available to come to the Dechenla Lodge meeting. But we are supportive of RRCs participating.

- Leon – I suppose, there are two meetings at the same time, but we have planned this for a long time, since last year, and it is hard to change that. So from my point of view we have to stay with the schedule and see what we can go with. To reorganize would take another year.
- Deb – This person traveling all the way from Australia, we are super fortunate they found their own travel funding, so there were a lot of things that fell into place, hopefully this will be a successful camp.
- Gordon – We're identified as a body under the land claim in the Sahtu, TRRC, we have about five bodies in our community, the mandate given to us – there's lots of activity with research. We only get 87k a year and it is important for us to go to SSI and lobby for money. Today it is unbelievable how we are working. I have an office and it is overcrowded, we have four workers in there. So we are not saying no to it but we need to get more funding.
- Michael – (comments in Slavey). One, SSI is working on RRC funding and has made a request for RRC funding and the SRRB is also looking for extra RRC funding. Two, at the Dechenla workshop, we want to put a plan together for the mountain caribou. Once we get the plan done we can bring it back to our community. And then let the other leaders know as well what we came up with.
- Deb – I am informed by the folks in Ottawa that RRC funding is scheduled to double within the year. All the lobbying that can be done has been done and is successful and has been approved through the Treasury Board, so we're just waiting for the official notification. Jennie – Is that one time or permanent? Deb – Core funding for the next 10 years.
- Deb – SRRB also has funding for TRRC after the camp, but could apply before the camp if the TRRC would prefer that. Gordon – Yes, agreed. Deb – SRRB totally understands especially with recent elections.
- Jennie – Charter dates? Deb – Departs both communities on July 26, one plane. Returns August 2nd. It is with Tintina (sp?) out of Whitehorse.
- Michael – Do we need to bring tents or anything? Deb – No, Dechenla is taking care of that. Frederick – They have very nice cabins for us there.
- Deb – Have the Ross River Chief attending. Also Micheline Manseau who worked with Jean Polfus, Janet Winbourne who has worked with the SRRB as a technical writer, and Tracy Williams (TNC) and Tee Lim, as well as lead trainer Stewart Cowell.
- Michael – We're not just looking at mountain caribou, but other training as well?
- Deb – We are going to be talking about guardian programs for conserving caribou, so it is all nested within the plan. We had an idea of supporting youth to stay out a little

longer but had to cancel that because of all kinds of complexities. We'll apply the funding elsewhere.

- Deb – Lise, I wanted to recognize ECE specifically. Lise – We're happy to be involved and get the word out and work with all the interested parties. Deb – As I understand it, the ECE funding is literacy funding, correct? Lise – Correct, literacy funding can fit to basically any project so we're happy to get it out there.

Short presentations about community on the land initiatives

- Lise Dolen (GNWT-ECE, Norman Wells) – Culture is an important part of ECE work, and we have had some good meetings with other government departments about working towards cofounding these projects that are very beneficial to the Sahtu.
- Deb – Lise, thanks for your vision about this. Jennie Vandermeer was also present and helped make that meeting happen. The hope is that staff people will join the forum calls and will also have little caucuses on the side to try to do some homework so that we can be more helpful during meetings like this. Would you like to add anything, Jennie?
- Jennie – There are several government departments that have overlapping mandates for on the land programming – ECE, ITI, ENR, MACA, etc. So we are forming a regional interdepartmental working group. Sometimes we get proposals that don't meet one department's mandate but could work for another, or could have funds pooled for it.
- Jennie – Second item, doing a 2018 on the land calendar, taking submissions.
- Deb – SRRB supporting hiring an on the land coordinator. So this is a good moment to introduce Audrey Giles from the University of Ottawa to talk about the on the land project she is working on with the SRRB.
- Audrey – I did research in Deline several years ago working with community members on boating safety. So Deb and I put in an application for search and rescue funding through Public Safety Canada to fund an on the land camp with a focus on safety. So if you can avoid search and rescue, you're in a good place. Talking with numerous people, it was decided the focus would be on different types of safety – first aid, canoeing, firearm safety, etc – and each instructor will be paired with a Sahtu Dene or Metis expert. That is the last week of August and the first week of September at Bennet Field.
- Deb – We've gone through our first round of recruitment for that camp as well and we've also had our first meeting, lessons learned from February's Dene Tsili School and planning for the summer version, including some risk management planning. (also mentions some other camp activities).
- Audrey – Attached to the camp comes some research, which is really more of an evaluation. So we have the ethics form and research licence in, we just need the letters from the various communities. SRRB is in charge of the research and process but we need the letters of support.
- Deb – Additional camp information and update will go out shortly. Would be ideal to get some comments from the communities. Will email and call with info.

- Gordon – It is a very good thing that you guys started. The young people need to know the land that they are going to. You need to go to different areas. ENR did something like this in the past but it never went anywhere.
- Joe – Cross Cultural Research Camp is being combined with the mountain caribou management planning this year, but there are still youth and researchers involved. It cycles between districts each year, so this year was the Tulita district's turn. Second, Audrey's project is an additional camp with a lot of additional research and on the land opportunities for youth.
- Gordon – Want to see the camp moved around to different locations. Joe – Agreed, SRRB can move around as long as we have a community partner working with us to arrange the necessary details (and this is true for both camps, research camp and youth camp).
- Deb – We would also really benefit from help with youth recruitment.
- Stephanie – Why those dates, when youth are going back to school? Deb – we're targeting the youth that are not in school.
- Gordon – What training is being offered? Deb – wilderness first aid, firearm safety, canoeing, language, cold water survival, navigation, digital storytelling – very full agenda. Will be doing this in smaller groups.
- Stephanie – How many students? Deb – 10 to 15. Stephanie – Posters are too lengthy to post on facebook. Also potential conflict with hand games. Deb – Understood, we know that there will be conflicts as multiple events will be going on
- Gordon – If one of the organizations wanted to host one, would it be a particular time? Or just one course for the whole year? Deb – We need to plan a year ahead of time. Gordon – Would be good to send a letter to all the organizations letting them know about this. Deb – We are glad to have you as the president so you can work with us on these things.
- Deb – Andrew Spring from Wilfred Laurier University can talk about how he has been involved in on the land initiatives. I've been working with Deline for the last couple years, and we know that on the land camps are how the community wants to work and we are looking for opportunities and ways to support that. Right now we are not involved in the Sahtu for this year but we would like to support on the land work and getting some of our scientists to offer training or assistance.
- Kirsty Gurney (Environment and Climate Change Canada) – We worked in Fort Good Hope this year, talked about natural resources, visited the school, did a field trip with James Caesar. Looked at field methods and data collection. Norman Pierrot (FGH RRC) participated. Goal is to get a plan for wetland monitoring.
- Jimmy Dillon – What a great program, setting up and showing students at the school. That is really good and we should encourage more of those kinds of programs.
- Stephanie – Would be great to get amphibian monitoring included in that. Kirsty – James mentioned that to us and we considered it. Some issues getting into the

Ramparts, which would let us put out a recorder to record audio sounds of wildlife including amphibians. Stephanie – And those would be set up year round? Kirsty – They may not last a winter, but yes. Stephanie – I had one up for 3 years and it survived the winters. Kirsty – OK! Bird monitoring group asked us to install them, I hadn't used them before. Anyway, one issue is access – ramparts were helicopter only because of water level on river. We didn't put them in this year but hopefully will do so next year. So that will tell us a little bit about the amphibians and for school kids is really good. (more discussion with Kirsty and Stephanie about this).

- Deb – (tells Kirsty about work in Tulita with ARUs for bird monitoring).
- Kirsty – Long term goal is community-based monitoring, and this kind of monitoring can be supported by research dollars by tying into research. Stephanie – This is where Guardian program would work perfectly.
- Deb/Kirsty discuss Facebook post/group about their project.
- Gordon – Very important to talk to elders and run it through the community before you do any work on any insect or animal. So I want to make that known to you guys.
- Deb – I noticed that Jessie Curell joined and invite her to talk about digital storytelling.
- Jessie – Hello and thank you. Digital storytelling is about the messages in all of the content, thinking about that content, deciding if it is true, if we agree with it, if it represents us, unpacking all of that, and asking if we had a chance to create our own media, what might we say? We can work on the theme and topic if we want; we teach them photography composition, video editing, using their voice to give narration. Focus a lot on identity – who we are, where we want to go. It's open to creativity and their own expression, and I work as a facilitator. At the Dene Tsili School in February a lot of the students were taking photographs and using it as an opportunity to consider the experience they were having. Can also share online if the students decide to – it can be an exciting and powerful experience. Can also stay private and act as a personal diary.
- Deb – Can you talk about what is useful about doing this work on the land?
- Jessie – They are learning so much at the camp as a whole, so the digital storytelling is a great way to reflect on their experiences as they go along. They can also document their activities or what they are seeing in the courses. The land is the classroom.
- Gordon – Why would you document, why wouldn't they do it? If you want to learn you have to actually do it. Jessie – Agrees, documentation supplements the experience.
- Mary-Ann Neal – We've already implemented some similar strategies in Colville Lake. In a recent leadership training, we used the community as the classroom, looking at things that the participants appreciated about the community and how they could improve it. The entire curriculum was Dene centered and about what they feel their needs are. Response was very positive.
- Gordon – On the land programs are done in the past by a few individuals in different locations and lots of school students went and never got to even see the land. They wanted to teach the kids about the land. First thing they did, the instructor was from

Tulita, was how to survive. We still need that. We all travel by vehicle today – what happens if you break down and have to build a fire.

- Andrew – Would be good to get a calendar of on the land programs that the communities are proposing

Revised Ne K'ə Dene Ts'ı̄ Forum Terms of Reference

- Delayed until next meeting.

Researcher updates

Dene astrology – Chris Cannon (anthropologist) and Alex Jaker (linguist)

- Chris Cannon – previous work mostly in Alaska but also in Dettah and Ndilo, current work builds on his master's work. Has worked with 10 northern Dene language groups at this point. Identified star names and basics of astronomy. Doing research in books, found only one name, that of the big dipper. So did work with people to find more names, worked in Alaska and then with a lot of other groups since 2009.
- Gordon – Big Dipper used in the past because there was no time, and they used it as the time at night. We call it (slavey name). Fred – There's a story behind it too. I can talk about it later on.
- Chris – Language situation in Canada is really interesting compared to Alaska, where we have fewer speakers. In Yellowknife, almost everyone we spoke with knew something about the sky and had something to contribute. In Alaska it is a lot more challenging to find someone with that knowledge.
- Michael – The stars have their own stories to tell, just like us as Dene people.
- Chris – Thank you for that comment. Very excited to work here. Work focuses on how people use the sky to do things like navigate, predict weather – there are many ways we can work with this depending on what people want to say and their comfort level. I'm very interested in how people use their knowledge on the land.
- Alex – I work in Yellowknife on Tlitcho and Chippewan language. I would make sure we spell everything correctly, get the tones and nasals right, make sure the transcriptions are good, maybe work with local interpreters, and make sure to give that information back in an accessible format for reading material or education. Planets and stars are part of the dene kedeh (sp?) curriculum.
- Deb – Suggests a spelling bootcamp with Michael and Walter and consider some of the standardization things that were developed with community linguists in the past and think about ways forward.
- Michael – Is the research team prepared to pay for elders and translators? Chris – Yes, some funding from ARI and the rest from the National Science Foundation, but it has to get through that system first so we're waiting for now. Timeframe is sometime before the end of November.
- Leon – Very interesting topic and part of our life, I am glad you are looking into it, thank you.

- Frederick – begins to tell the story about the moon and the weather.

Acoustic land bird and amphibian monitoring – Julia Shonfield and Michelle Knaggs (University of Alberta)

- Not present at the meeting, also discussed part of this previously in this meeting during the

Tracking Change – Leon Andrew

- Leon gives an overview of Tracking Change project.
- Deb gives overview of Tracking Change work that has been done in Deline, and Chelsea Martin (grad student) who is involved.
- Gordon – Questions about planning and proposal process. Deb – Leon and I will work on it and present it to you for comment. Leon – Correct.
- Fred – Question for Leon – (in slavey)

Youth leadership training – Mary-Anne Neal (Royal Roads University)

- Mary-Anne – SSI 25th anniversary, signing of land claim agreement next year, looking for people who remember the process, not much material available and we want to make sure that this historic event is chronicled and documented and gets into the libraries and schools and onto the curricula. Very interested in the conversations people had and the considerations that led to the land claim being signed. Deb – Notes high interest in how/why lands were selected. SRRB could contribute some of our work with our land claim mandate. Good to consider vision the elders had rather than the vision lawyers had. Notes SRRB’s recent strategic planning process and reinterpretation of our land claim mandate.

Dene Kedə to Dene Ts’ıli Knowledge Synthesis – Faun Rice

- Deb provides a quick overview.

Approved and open research licence applications since last forum meeting (May 12) - Joe Hanlon (SRRB)

Note from Joe: Each bulleted item below includes the application number and date of application, and the licence number and date of the licence. They may help you find these documents in your email or files.

Approved research licences

1. 3750 Apr 12 – 16117 Jul 11 – Mr. Geoffrey GL Kershaw, Wilfred Laurier University, A Mass-Energy Analysis of Permafrost and Vegetation Change Across a Mackenzie Mountain Treeline Ecotone: 1944 to 2017 (multi-year 2017-2020)
 - No comments.
2. 3728 May 16 – 16120 June 29 – Dr. Robert H Rainbird, Natural Resources Canada, Geological Survey of Canada, Coppermine River Transect (single year)
 - Mike – Flags this for the DRRC.

3. 3774 May 24 – 16134 Jul 11 – Mr. Philippe X. Normandeau, Northwest Territories Geological Survey, Quaternary stratigraphy in the Redstone River area (single year)
 - Gordon – Flags this for the TRRC.
4. 3780 May 24 – 16131 July 10 - Dr. Kirsty E. Gurney, Environment & Climate Change Canada, Understanding changes in aquatic ecosystem health and water quality in the Fort Good Hope – Ramparts Area (multi year 2017-2019)
 - Presented at the meeting today.
5. 3757 May 24 – 16140 Jul 12 – Ms. Trish Fontaine, University of Alberta, Community involvement in technology infrastructure in Northern Canada (single year)
 - Presented to forum at a previous meeting and had support from forum
6. 3668 Feb 27 – 16109 June 8 – Dr. Karen Bakker, Sustainable Water Governance and Indigenous Law Project (multi year 2017-2021)
 - No comments.
7. 3730 Mar 31 – 16118 June 29 – Dr. Alejandra Duk-Rodkin, Natural Resources Canada, Geological Survey of Canada, Glacial limits of western Northwest Territories (single year)
 - Gordon flags this for the TRRC.

Open research licence applications

8. 3746 May 16 – Dr. Audrey R. Giles, University of Ottawa, Culturally Appropriate Search and Rescue (SAR) Prevention and Survival Training in the Sahtú Region, Northwest Territories: An On-the-Land Program (single year)
 - Presented at the meeting today.
9. 3801 May 31 – Dr. Elizabeth Turner, Laurentian University, Neoproterozoic stratigraphy, Mackenzie Mountains (multi year 2017-2019)
 - Deb – Notes that the geologists have often not been very responsive and we could try to get them to work with us more.
 - Deb – Suggests submitting a comment on behalf of the forum.
 - Fred – Story about bikers coming out of nowhere on the winter road.
 - **Forum requests that Dr. Turner presents at a future forum meeting.**
10. 3803 June 13 – Dr. Gary Holton, Traditional Sahtú Dene and Yellowknives Dene Astronomy and Sky-Related Knowledge (single year)
 - Presented at the meeting today.
11. 3781 June 13 – Ms. Michelle L Goldman, Princeton University, Health Care Access and Health Outcomes in the Northwest Territories of Canada (single year)
 - Joe – I flagged concerns with this and immediately contacted Ms. Goldman. She was very receptive to the concerns. I do not think that the research will proceed this summer but I will contact communities if any of my concerns are not addressed.
12. 3798 June 16 – Dr. Brenda L Parlee, University of Alberta, Tracking Change... Local and Traditional Knowledge in Watershed Governance (Renewal for year 2 of 5)
 - Discussed at the meeting today.

13. 3813 June 28 – Ms. Jenica von Kuster, Husky Oil Operations Limited, EL494 Surface Water Monitoring Program 2016-2018 (Renewal for year 2 of 3)
 - No comments.
14. 3823 June 30 – Dr. Duane G Froese, University of Alberta, Glacial lakes McConnell and Mackenzie reconstructed from Pleistocene deltas of the Mackenzie River tributaries (Year 2 of 2)
 - Deb – Asks Joe to email this information to Andrew Spring.

Wildlife Study Permits

15. Fish Net Sampling (eDNA) – Karen Dunmall – DFO / SRRB
 - Joe – Presents the proposal and will email letters to the DRRC/DGG and NWRRC right after this meeting.
16. Willow Lake Duck Banding – Steve Olson – USFWS / SRRB
 - Joe – I will speak with Gordon about this outside of the meeting, as only Tulita is involved. Other communities are welcome to talk to us about it or review any of the annual reports.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm approximately.