

Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council

Developing a river-wide Tribal partnership for the conservation of the Yukon River Watershed

Fall 1999

Volume 1, Issue 2



Overview

By Rob Rosenfeld, Acting Executive Director

Welcome to the Watershed Council's first newsletter. Much has happened since the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Protection Summit in December of 1997.

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The steering committee selected at the first summit has met several times to guide the formation of the Watershed Council. Staff was hired (see page 2), funding from the Environmental Protection Agency was obtained for operating expenses, and an office in



Steering Committee & Staff

The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council has five steering committee members: one from each area of the river (Lower, Middle, Upper Yukon and the Headwaters) as well as a new member to represent the Tanana River. They have meet quarterly to develop the Watershed Councils' organizational structure and guiding principles.

<u>Lower Yukon Representative:</u>	<u>Middle Yukon Representative:</u>	<u>Upper Yukon Representative:</u>	<u>Headwaters Representative:</u>	<u>Tanana River Representative:</u>
Chief James Landlord <i>Kuigpagmiut, Inc.</i>	Chief Peter Captain, Sr. <i>Louden Tribal Council</i>	Chief Clarence Alexander <i>Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments</i>	Mr. Harold Gatensby <i>Carcross/Tagish First Nation</i>	Chief Jerry Isaac (interim member) <i>Tanacross Village Council</i>

Rob Rosenfeld is currently the Acting Executive Director of the Watershed Council. Rob has a Masters Degree in Sustainable Development / Non-Profit Administration from the School for International Training. He has lived in Alaska for 6 years having previously lived in Central America for two years working as a Consultant in Nicaragua, Honduras, and Mexico. Rob is originally from N.Y. and his grandparents and parents are Russian Jewish.

Jill Klein, a student from the School for International Training has been with the Watershed Council since July. She is here for a six-month internship that will complete her Masters in Intercultural and International Management. Previously, she lived in Israel for three years, working to bring Arabs and Israelis together to solve environmental problems. When finished, she hopes to continue living in Anchorage and working with intercultural conservation efforts in Alaska.

Carolyn Hogan begin working with the Watershed Council in mid-May. She was funded by the Indian Law Resource Center to work on drafting an Inter-Tribal treaty, based on already existing unwritten agreements among people of the Yukon River. She is staying on to work as the Treaty Development Coordinator and will work on coordinating and implementing current grants within The Watershed Council.



We Would like to Hear From You...

In order for us build a strong, culturally- and community-based organization, we need input from all the Tribes and First Nations on the Yukon River. Please contact us with the environmental concerns of your communities and suggestions on ways that the Watershed Council can be of assistance. Program updates will enhance our work to clean up and protect the Yukon River watershed. You can contact us in Anchorage to share your concerns, suggestions and information.

Building a Healthy Organization through Strategic Planning

By Jill Klein, Intern for the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council

A Joint Strategic Planning and Steering Committee Meeting was held in Yukon Territory, Canada this past August 10-14, 1999. A gathering took place to discuss ideas and build upon goals and objectives from the May Summit. Strategic planning is good for three important reasons: 1) It gives us a final product of outlined steps to take in order to reach desired goals and objectives. 2) Strategic planning is a dynamic process that builds capacity within the administrative structure of an organization. 3) Most importantly, strategic planning produces a work plan or a road map to help accomplish organizational needs.

The Watershed Council chose to hold the meeting on the Yukon Territory portion of the River. It was then decided to stay at the Nares Mt. Wilderness camp, which is situated on the traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, near Carcross, Yukon Territory, Canada. Harold Gatensby, one of our Steering Committee members, his family and community were our hosts. He and his brother Phil Gatensby run peacekeeping and circle keeping training at the camp and host groups on a regular basis. It was an honor for the Watershed Council to gather in this unique and sacred place.

The Watershed Council wanted to meet in Yukon Territory to become more familiar with the headwaters of the Yukon River. Working to protect an international waterway, such as the Yukon River takes an extra effort in learning about international freshwater boundaries and laws. The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council needs to become familiar with Canadian policies, environmental organizations, funding agencies and First Nations of the Yukon. One of the ways to do this is to appoint a coordinator for the Yukon side of the River. Learning about and sharing ideas with First Nations in Yukon Territory works to strengthen the efforts of the Watershed Council to effectively protect and preserve the watershed.

Each new day began with a Morning Prayer and cleansing smudge, while the eagle Feather was passed around the circle for participants to share comments. The loosely set agenda for the strategy sessions were to discuss our fifty-year vision, and to strategize about



objectives to meet our long-term goals and directives. Other discussion topics included: Yukon Territory priorities, river-wide assessment, and staff needs and priorities. Our immediate needs for diversified funding and a solid administrative structure to support the Councils' efforts were brought to the surface.

This joint strategic planning and Steering Committee meeting was a major step towards completion of a strategic plan for the Watershed Council. The discussion topics, and goals & objectives are all central components of the organizational development of the Watershed Council. We have started to accomplish some of these by creating sub-committees for treaty development and a communications strategy. These sub-committees are moving forward in their efforts. The treaty development sub-committee met in Anchorage this month (please see related article) to review a draft treaty for the villages working together along the Yukon River.

The Yukon River is part of a vast and enormous watershed from the headwaters to the mouth at the Bering Sea. Further strategic planning meetings need to be held to visually map out the future directions of the Watershed Council. The efforts of the Watershed Council can only be strengthened by a strategic plan that is rooted in value, held together by family, and treated with respect. To compliment this, a strong administrative structure, and a secure funding base will lead the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council to meet its goals.

Can we be of assistance?

The YRITWC has the capacity to lend technical assistance to Tribes and First Nations that are interested in pursuing specific actions. The Watershed Council can also lend assistance in developing fundraising strategies and grant-writing skills as well as training in other areas. Our mission involves

supporting the efforts of Tribal Environmental Programs in whatever way we can. If we do not have the expertise, we can help you find what you need!

Please contact us for more information on the assistance the Watershed Council has to offer.



For Your Information....

The Watershed Council has gathered information on events, workshops, and grant opportunities that might be useful for your environmental programs. If you hear of interesting or helpful opportunities for strengthening Tribal Environmental programs, please share them with us so that all the communities along the Yukon River can learn.

Conferences:

December 5th-9th, 1999: Seattle, Washington

"Effective Partnerships for Wetlands Protection, Management and Restoration". American Water Resources Association's Annual Water Resources Conference. Conference topics will include a wide variety of topics such as watershed analysis, water quality, hydrology and water policy. A major track will be *Watershed management to Protect Declining Species*, which is dedicated to Endangered Species Act programs and water management. E-mail: Info@awra.org for more information.

February 7th – 11th, 2000: Anchorage Alaska

"Alaska Forum for the Environment 2000". **who puts it on?

February 7th, 2000: Anchorage, Alaska

"Youth Watershed Congress". Hosted by Alaska Cooperative Extension. There is no cost to attend the congress, but travel to Anchorage is not covered. Scholarships are anticipated. Organized to bring students from all over Alaska to share views and values from their communities and create a future vision for Alaska's water resources. Students will have the opportunity to work with EPA administrator Carol Browner. Contact A.S. (Meg) Burgett at asb@micronet.net for more information.

February 8th & 9th, 2000: Anchorage Alaska

"Watershed Roundtable". The first two days of the Forum on the Environment will be presentations by watershed practitioners. Topics will include the watershed approach, principles of sustainability, forming a watershed group, defining goals and objectives of your watershed planning, communication, education, facilitation skills, bio-monitoring, legal issues, building partnerships and using environmental indicators. Contact Paul Jackson at pjackson@TNC.org for information.

Workshops:

- ✂ **Watershed Management To Protect Declining Species**
-December 5th - 9th in Seattle, Washington

- ✂ **Alaska Watershed Roundtable Workshop**
February 10th, 2000 in Anchorage

The "watershed approach" to natural resource planning and management is a concept that is likely here to stay in Alaska. Many state and federal agencies, environmental groups and organizations, tribes and communities are taking this approach to protecting and managing the resources in their watersheds. However, doing so can be a complicated and frustrating process. The barriers, challenges and opportunities are often the same no matter where you are from. Most people seem to agree that we need a collaborative, systematic approach to meeting these barriers and opportunities. The **Alaska Watershed Roundtable Workshop** will be devoted to discussing these matters and how something like an **Alaska Watershed Institute** might be the answer in helping watershed practitioners in Alaska with their planning and management efforts.

Internet & Newsletter

- The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals has a web-site and Newsletter titled "Native Voices". For regular updates on grants, workshops, environmental education outreach and interesting updates, contact Mansel A. Nelson at mansel.nelson@nau.edu to subscribe to the newsletter or go to <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu> for more detailed information.
- Another index of Native American resources on the internet is <http://www.hanksvilles.org/Naresources/>, features a comprehensive list of links to Native Americans, Alaskans, Hawaiians, Canadian aboriginals and Latin American Tribes. The focus is on intertribal organizations, cultural sites, issues of social justice, tribal law and other topics.

Grant Opportunities:

- ✂ **Brownfields** - EPA is now accepting application proposals for the National Brownfields Assessment demonstration Pilot program. The Brownfields Assessment Pilots (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years) test innovative assessment, cleanup and redevelopment planning models and facilitate coordinated efforts at the tribal, federal, state and local levels. For more information, visit <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>
- ✂ **Solid Waste** - For a copy of *Grant Resources for Solid Waste in Indian Country*, call the RCRA/Superfund/EPCRA hotline at 800/424-9346. This publication lists public and private funding sources for solid waste projects. (EPA Document #EPA530-R-96-051)
- ✂ **Mobile Source Outreach Assistance (Air Pollution)** - US EPA is now accepting proposals from tribal, state, local and multi-state air pollution control agencies for mobile sources-related public education and outreach projects. The funding will be allocated by EPA's Office of Mobile Sources through the competitive process described in the Federal Register notice. The proposal is posted at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-AIR/1998/December/Day-23/a34047.htm>
- ✂ Visit EPA's Grant Writing Tutorial at: <http://epa.gov/seahome/grants.html> for assistance.



Funding Overview

Secured Funding for October 1, 1999 – September 31, 2000

- \$70,000. EPA Wetlands Protection Grant. Awarded to the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments on behalf of the Yukon River inter-tribal Watershed Council. This grant pays for the Executive Director salary at ¾ time and operational office maintenance (phone, fax, e-mail, copies, supplies) in Anchorage.
- \$65,000. EPA Office of Waste and Chemicals Management. Discretionary funds were awarded directly to the Yukon River Inter-tribal Watershed Council. Seventeen Tribes on the Yukon River will conduct Waste Stream Assessments to obtain a better understanding of the current influences, overall conditions and priority needs of the landfills in respective communities. This grant also pays for the Executive Director salary at ¼ time.
- \$10,000. Northern Contaminants Program of Canada. Awarded funds to the Carcross/Tagish First Nation in order to conduct a meeting of First Nation Leaders of the Yukon Territory. This meeting will focus on priorities for Yukon Territory, plans of action for creating a Canadian office and hiring a Coordinator, and the definition of future funding needs. Planning for the 2001 Summit in Teslin will also take place.



Funding Strategy

In order for the Watershed Council to successfully meet its goals, a secure and diversified funding base must be attained. This is important for the stability of the Council as a non-profit organization relying primarily on grant monies for program implementation. With this in mind, the Watershed Council is looking to utilize already known resources, research new funders and pass this information to those of you on the River. In response to this, Administrative staff in Anchorage are pursuing new opportunities.

Recently submitted proposals include third year funding from the EPA Wetlands Protection Grant Program. This proposal aims to assist Tribal Environmental Programs in the Yukon Flats Region in the development of a Wetlands prioritization guide. In addition, the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council plans on assisting Tribes in becoming “cooperative partners” in the area of regulatory responsibilities of Wetlands and Watershed Resources.

In addition to this, a fundraising trip to the Pacific Northwest is scheduled for the end of November. Ken Margolis, Director of River Network has been instrumental in helping the Watershed Council identify Foundations that fund environmental and Tribal efforts in Alaska. River Network is a National organization in the US, Canada and Mexico that helps people to protect and restore their rivers. He is honored to help plan, implement strategy, and find resources to work together with the Watershed Council.

It is important to balance our funding needs with the goals and objectives of the Watershed Council. It is also important to realize that money is not the driving force, protection and conservation of the Yukon River is the driving force. The endeavors of the Watershed Council are strengthened by a diversified funding strategy, but also by our mission preserve the Yukon River for the protection of the our own and future generations of our Tribes/First Nations and for the continuation of our traditional way of life.



May Summit Overview



Treaty Development

Historic Signing of Inter-Tribal Agreements

By Carolyn Hogan, Treaty Development Staff

GIS computers? Fisheries education? Water Chemistry? The Internet? Changing Waste for Changing Times? What is the link that joins these diverse pieces? Students in the Yukon River Village of Galena are using all of these in a new community-wide watershed education and stewardship program. The project is developing through a partnership between the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), the Loudon Tribal Council, and the Galena City Schools. Dr. Rick Foster, Rob Rosenfeld, UAF student Karin Lehmkuhl, and Laurel Devaney, from US F&WS are part of this team working to advance watershed stewardship in this village community.

The watershed stewardship program, called *Our Land Speaks*, will facilitate a non-point source watershed pollution and watershed stewardship education program designed for and by the village. This program, funded by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, will incorporate watershed awareness lessons, non-point water pollution monitoring materials, and activities to promote appropriate behavioral skills for the school and community. It will do this by expanding and updating Shirley Moses' excellent environmental education program, *Changing Waste for Changing Times*. Non-point watershed pollution activities will be incorporated into the program by focusing on the biological and physical aspects of watersheds. Students will take part in their community's environmental planning assessment, monitor the chemistry of the snow found around their community; and develop action plans for solving

problems or preventing pollution. Plans are for students will evaluate their efforts in the spring and celebrate with a community clean-up and celebration.

The watershed project started in March 1998 when a Memorandum of Agreement was formed between Galena City Schools, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Loudon Tribal Council. The watershed program team, guided by input from school district teachers, began planning a program of workshops, community projects, and program kits. The first teacher in-services took place in the fall of 1998. Classroom and individual science fair watershed education projects created as a result include: surveying the community and portions of the watershed; conducting community pollution patrols; and identifying community pollution sources. Teachers requested maps to aid their lessons. So, TCC provided Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, database, and training. But it did not stop there, because students and teachers were so excited with the hands-on experience interactive program of topographic maps; two-dimensional relief maps; vegetation, land use, and ownership data; and aerial photos, that are now moving-on to the next level ArcView. With this software they can develop their own spatial databases, inputting data children collect, and then analyze it and make resource decisions. They are launching quickly into the 21st century with technology and resource management.

Project G.L.O.B.E. (Global Learning in Observations to Benefit the Environment) will soon be incorporated

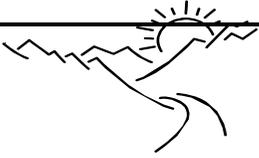


Waste Stream Analysis Training

The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council is pleased to announce an upcoming training. The award from the Office of Waste and Chemicals Management discretionary funds includes a 3-day training that will focus on assessing the negative influences into landfills. Waste stream analysis

Our 50-year goal is to be able to safely drink the water from the Yukon River without the threat of becoming sick or without the water having to be treated for purification. Clean water is also important to ensure that our food source is protected and preserved





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Developing a river-wide Tribal partnership for the conservation of the Yukon River
watershed

Yukon River Summit Tribal Watershed Council

Tribes and First Nations along the Yukon, Koyukuk and Tanana Rivers were invited to the YRITWC's second summit at Mountain Village, Alaska this May 4-7, 1999. The purpose of this gathering was for Tribal Leaders to formulate a plan of action that the Watershed Council and communities of the Yukon River watershed can follow to preserve and protect the resources within their environment. The Tribes and First Nations used this opportunity to share knowledge about establishing various projects within their local watersheds.

Participants committed to a range of activities that they would begin.....such as,....

*"Protect the environment and it will take care of its' people,
all people"*

-Cynthia Sidejohn