

Currents

One People

One River

Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council

APRIL 2004



www.yritwc.org

Special points of interest:

River Network's River Heroes Award

Celebrates rivers and those who protect them by recognizing some of our victories and honoring those who provide us with leadership and inspiration along the way.

YRITWC Advocacy Seminar

Brought together Tribes and First Nations throughout the Watershed to discuss the use of advocacy.

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From left to right: Leslie McDiarmid, Roberta Auston, Albert Genier for Chief Steve Buyck, Jessie Dawson, Karen Kriska, Geraldine Pope, Clarence Alexander, Sam Donnissy, Chief Peter Captain Sr., Harold Gatensby, Mary Andrews, Chief Darren Taylor, & Edna Hancock.

ADVOCACY SEMINAR 2004 - HIGHLIGHTS



"This week has been very inspiring!" Chief Peter Captain Sr.

"We got power now! What are we going to do with it?" Harold Gatensby

"If we are persistent and don't back down, the alliance will get stronger." Chief Darren Taylor

"I have to pass these tools onto my grandchildren." Leslie McDiarmid

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2004 RIVER HERO

Paul Erhart



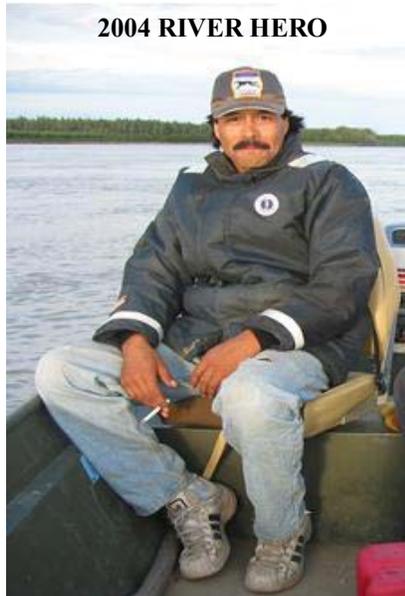
Under the ice research.

The goal of the River Network is helping people understand, protect and restore rivers and their watersheds.

Award recipients will be honored during a celebratory banquet at River Network's River Rally. Honorees will receive a scholarship to attend the River Rally, a plaque of commendation, acknowledgement on River Network's web page and in River Network publications, a 1-year River Network Partnership and additional gifts from River Network.

Paul, how does it feel to be honored by the River Network?

"I am overwhelmed right now, and so very touched. It's a real good feeling to be honored for doing something that I have such passion for; this is not just a job for me its my life because my people all live and eat off the Yukon River."



2004 RIVER HERO

Working on the Yukon River.

In a recent edition of "Currents", Paul Erhart stated:

"You need to have a lot of passion for what you do. There is nothing like doing a job that you love to do. I love my job! It is for the good of the people and the good of the river. What could be better than that?"

RIVER NETWORK'S RIVER HERO BACKGROUND:

All too frequently, individuals and groups involved with natural resource conservation fail to celebrate their hard won successes. Too often, important victories are allowed to be overshadowed by the next issue or threat. Challenges always lie ahead, but we need to take time each year to celebrate our achievements and the people who make them possible. This year Paul Erhart will be recognized by the River Network as a River Hero as they feel he successfully worked to improve the Yukon River and it's watershed and has made a substantial contribution to the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council. We agree - CONGRATULATIONS PAUL!

Paul Erhart



Waiting to send a sample on the next plane.

2004 RIVER HERO

Unity of Yukon River Indigenous Governments Gain Momentum during Institute for Tribal Government Advocacy Training

By Rob Rosenfeld, Alaska Region Director

More than 100 highly motivated and experienced elected Indigenous leaders, Tribal Administrators, and Environmental Workers, and a line up of 20 trainers including Native Law experts, Washington D.C. insiders, and Internationally recognized Native visionaries, came together in Fairbanks to offer inspirational guidance, deepen relationships and to develop strategic approaches to continue the clean-up and preservation of the Yukon River Watershed for future generations of Indigenous Peoples and for the continuation of traditional Native ways of life.

Tribal Leaders spoke of coming down the Yukon River in traditional vessels to build support in communities, to educate locally and to inform the world of the unique work of the Indigenous peoples of the Yukon River Watershed. New relationships of solidarity were built with the Institute for Tribal Government led by Roy Sampsel / Chairman of the Board and by the Honorable Elizabeth Furse / Director. The Institute for Tribal Government generously covered the costs of the travel, lodging, food, materials, and speakers while the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council assumed the lead coordinating role of the event. Reciprocal exchanges were the daily norm as leaders taught leaders, leaders taught trainers, and trainers taught leaders. The famous Billy Frank, Jr., founder of the Northwest Indian Fish Commission, appeared to encourage the leadership in their quest towards a clean and healthy future. Billy Frank Jr. encouraged the Yukon River leadership to be in Washington D.C. where the decisions are being made and to continue on their path of working together. Simply put, Billy Frank Jr. stated, "the River will clean itself once people stop poisoning it." The Honorable Elizabeth Furse, a 3-term Congresswoman from Oregon, humanized members of the Congress and the Senate and told leaders of the importance of getting to know Congressmen and Senators as individuals, while being very strategic with the use of their time in D.C. Former Congresswoman Furse taught how to influence members of the legislature while her former Legislative Director Chris Porter taught how exactly to acquire appropriations and how to follow the process through YourCongress.com, an internet website he created. These presentations were followed by a talk on the power of the Native Vote.

"We are doing a great thing here!"

Edna Hancock

Russ Lehman of the First American Education Project talked about exercising power through elections and the importance of remaining united on key issues, the importance of being united in Washington D.C., and within the state. Elizabeth Furse echoed the power of constituents as a former elected official and highlighted the fact that Native peoples in Alaska represent 16% of the statewide vote. Elizabeth strongly stated that if anyone came into her office representing 16% of the vote she would drop everything and give her undivided attention and follow-up to meet requests.

The stage was set on the first day as 1st Chief Randy Mayo of Steven's Village Tribal Council, Bob Anderson of the Native American Law Center, Don Wharton of the Native American Rights Fund, Brian Macdonald / Attorney from the Champagne-Aishihik First Nation, and George McKenzie Grieves of Environment Canada explained the importance of government-to-government relationships while they explained the history of laws that apply to Indigenous peoples in Alaska and the Yukon Territory. Clarity and enthusiasm were apparent as Roy Sampsel, founding director of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, did a masterful job in facilitating the meeting while new strategic ideas and momentum continued throughout the event.

Ten indigenous governments arrived to the training with recent signatures on the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Accord, resulting in 55 current government signatures on the Inter-Tribal Accord!!! Tribes indicated their excitement about the training and future work of the Watershed Council as a motivator to signing the historic agreement between Aboriginal governments.

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YRITWC 50 YEAR VISION:

"To be able to drink water directly from the Yukon River."



UPCOMING EVENTS



EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
<i>Building Your Community's Environmental Program</i> May 11-13, 2004	Bethel, Alaska	Ellen Kazary RurAL CAP 800-478-7227 ext 338
<i>River Rally</i> May 21-25, 2004	Wintergreen, Virginia	River Network www.rivernetwork.org
<i>Phase I, Water Quality Course</i> May 24-25, 2004	Anchorage, Alaska	Karen Stickman, NAFWS 907-222-6005
<i>13th Annual Protecting Mother Earth Conference</i> June 17-20, 2004	Bear Butte, South Dakota	877-436-2121 www.ienearth.org
<i>YRITWC Leadership Meeting</i> August 10-13, 2004	Nenana, Alaska	<u>See article below.</u>
<i>National Museum of the American Indian - Grand Opening</i> September 21, 2004	National Mall Washington D.C.	 www.nmai.si.edu

LEADERSHIP MEETING: On behalf of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council and the Nenana Tribal Council, we are pleased to invite you to the Leadership Meeting **August 11th-12th, 2004** (Aug. 10th & 13th will be travel days). The Leadership Meeting will be held in the homelands of the Nenana Tribe in **Nenana, Alaska**.

There are three main objectives for the Leadership Meeting: 1) To review and approve consultation protocols for the future Advocacy work of the Watershed Council, 2) To review and approve an updated strategic plan for the Watershed Council, 3) To receive new resolutions and report on actions taken on resolutions from the 4th Summit in Ft. Yukon. Leadership meetings and Summits are very significant as they provide the Indigenous leaders on the Yukon River an opportunity to gather and share successes and concerns with one another. There will also be a ceremony to welcome new signatories to the Inter-Tribal Accord between Yukon First Nations and Alaskan Tribal Governments living along the Yukon River or within the Yukon River Watershed. The Accord defines the First Nations and Tribes relationships with the Yukon River and each other and states a willingness to work together to continue the protection of our own and future generations of our Tribes/First Nations and for the continuation of our traditional Native way of life.

We respectfully invite you to send a representative from your Leadership to this important event. The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council will be contacting all the First Nations and Tribes that reside on or along the Yukon River Watershed and its major tributaries. We will be working hard to make it possible for the First Nation and Tribal Leaders to attend this very important gathering. **At this time, we are asking all of the First Nations and Tribal Governments to allocate necessary travel funding to send one to two leaders to this meeting. We are hopeful that your Government has the finances to send 1-2 representatives.** We will be coordinating all of the charter flights from our Alaska Office. It is important to contact us, so that we can confirm with the airlines the number of people that we need to transport to Nenana and assist us in organizing one payment from our office to the Charter company

Additional information will be available in the coming months. Please feel free to contact us.
 Alaska Office 907-451-2530
 Rob Rosenfeld, Alaska Region Director
 Darcie Warden, Special Projects Coordinator
 Nenana Tribal Council (907)-832-5461 ext 231
 Bear Ketzler, Tribal Administrator

Some thoughts on Solid Waste and Contaminants in the Watershed

by Harold Frank, Jr. Alaska Operations Manager with Assistance From Susan Alvarez, Senior Civil Engineer, Arizona Operations Manager - Ridolfi Inc.

They say that “water is life” and so it is in the Yukon River watershed. The Yukon River is one of the more pristine rivers in Alaska and the Yukon Territory that has many different uses. The River has one of the richest backgrounds in human history. The river serves as home to many people, a subsistence resource for all, a recreation area and transportation corridor for the inhabitants of the river now and forever. How we address solid waste and other contaminants in watersheds can have far-reaching impacts on our lives, and the lives of our children and grandchildren.

If the river could speak of all the events it has endured through the millennia, what would the river say about our society? It seems the more advanced the civilized world becomes, the more pressure we have placed on our most precious resource, Mother Earth. It was not that long ago the river people moved around gathering subsistence resources. This nomadic lifestyle offered minimum impacts to our environment.

Our contemporary culture has introduced a more sedentary lifestyle; we do not move from camp-to-camp as we used to. Along with settling down, solid waste and contaminants have become a part of our every day lives. Times have changed and so have our habits, and our wastes. We now generate garbage that includes many manmade products such as plastics, heating and motor oil, baby diapers, just to name a few. These advances in necessity and convenience that we purchase at the grocery stores create persistent byproducts such as plastic packaging that, when burned, can create dioxins and other harmful chemicals.

One very common theme amongst our rich cultures both now and in the past has been the ability to adapt to change. In my village of Angoon, Alaska, my father remembers when the first fiberglass rod and reel with monofilament line came to town. Before that time, the old tried and true method of cloth twine, one pound leads for sinkers, piano wire for leaders and hooks for bait were the standard. Men from the village, and some women, rowed around in small boats trying to catch king salmon for food and profit. When the fishermen were fortunate enough to catch a king salmon on their line with the tried and true method, it was like a wrestling match to get the fish in the boat and, often, the fish got away. That all changed one summer, when some teachers at the BIA school came out to fishing grounds and used the new technology and proceeded to catch six kings in a very short time and then went home. The proud men of Angoon were humbled by watching the wife of the government teacher catch six king salmon, barely breaking a sweat. The next year, every fisherman from Angoon had a rod and reel. Shortly thereafter, outboard motors became the norm, also. This change in technology happened almost overnight. We all have wonderful stories and memories of some of the changes we have seen.

In this day and age, there are organizations and networks available to address issues related to solid waste and other contaminants in Indian country. There are also many professionals that will guide us through the complex rules and regulations promulgated to clean up and mitigate the damage to the environment. Decision makers, engineers and scientists have created some of the situations we see in this day and age. Decision makers, engineers and scientists are now beginning to help. We can start with what we know and that is.... taking the garbage down to the beach at low tide won't work anymore.

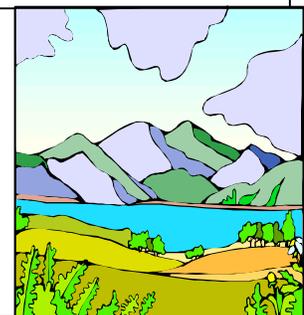
Current and past issues of YRITWC's newsletter, 'Currents', are available on our website at:

www.yritwc.com/newsletters.htm

Help save a tree by requesting an electronic copy of "Currents".

YRITWC WEBSITE:

Are you looking for another community's contact information within the Yukon River Watershed? Check out our website at www.yritwc.org and click on CONTACT US and then chose either Alaska or Yukon Contact information. There you will find addresses and phone & fax numbers.



REDUCEREUSE***RECYCLE***

Aluminum Can Recycling

Reproduced with permission from the Nulato Tribal Council Environmental Newsletter- March 2004.



The Environmental Program at the Nulato Tribal Council is re-starting the Aluminum Can Recycling Program through ALPAR Flying Cans. If you would like to participate please save your pop or other aluminum cans and bring them to the Teen Rec, YOG CCenter, and upstairs to the Tribal Office to crush.

Did you know that if you throw your aluminum cans in the dump they will last for 500 years? Reducing the amount of trash that you throw into the dump will protect our environment and our health. Please re-consider what you throw away and ask yourself: can I re-use this?

The IGAP has also bought material so the AKD Shop Class can build 20 wooden can crushers. This construction is set to begin in a few weeks. After the construction of the can crushers are done we will decide what to do with the can crushers.

Additional information about the Nulato Tribal Council recycling program can be obtained by calling Shirley Kriska or Gloria Patsy at 907-898-2339.

-RECYCLING NEWS-

If you use Hewlett Packard (HP) products such as printers in your office, HP will recycle used print cartridges for free. Most packages contain pre-paid postage, but if not check out the following site:



www.hp.com/recycle

ADVOCACY TRAINING CONTINUED...

Former General Thomas Case of the 11th US Air Force and current Dean of the College of Business and Public Policy at the University of Alaska Anchorage, 1st Chief Peter M. Captain Sr. and Eleanor Yatlin of the Loudon Tribe, Herbie Edwins and Kathleen Peters-Zuray both of the Tanana Tribe, Agatha Napoleon of the Paimut Tribe, Colonel Steve Armstrong of the 611th US Air Force, Georgeanne Reynolds of the Army Corps of Engineers and Steve Boardman of the Alaska District Corps of Engineers spoke about progress that has been made in the area of clean-up and remediation on former used defense sites resulting from collaboration and government-to-government relations. Chief Peter M. Captain Sr. spoke about the strategic use of inter-agency working groups and the importance of timing, persistence, and tenacity while respectfully applying pressure to those that are responsible for clean-up. For-profit ventures were highlighted as a way in which Native peoples can be trained and contracted to take the lead in remediation and monitoring work. Kathleen Peters-Zuray spoke passionately about the work that still remains despite many years of advocacy work, while she expressed the real hardships that her people have suffered and endured as a result of contaminants to traditional foods and water sources. Agatha Napoleon demonstrated the ability and tenacity of 4 tribes near the mouth of the river in dealing with the horrors of extreme contaminants on their traditional territories. Agatha spoke of unique partnerships that were formed with the World Wildlife Fund and the Yukon – Kuskokwim Health Consortium in examining human health changes and the relationship to contaminants on their lands and waters. While hearts weighted heavy with the knowledge of extensive contaminants on the Yukon River watershed, hope was articulated by many, as success stories and new approaches and strategies were shared.

The training continued with Deborah Williams of the Alaska Conservation Foundation and Ken Margolis, former Director of the River Network (currently working for the YRITWC). Ken and Deborah broke important ground as they spoke about the importance and the usefulness of developing strategic alliances between conservation groups and indigenous governments and entities.

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YRITWC Executive Committee

YUKON REGION

DAHKA TLINGIT NATION: Harold Gatensby,
Carl Sydney - Alternate

VUNTUT GWITCH'IN/TR'ONDEK
HWECH'IN: Chief Darren Taylor, Deputy Chief
Clara VanBibber - Alternate

NORTHERN TUTCHONE: Chief Steven Buyck,
Chief Lucy McGinty & Chief Eddie Skookum -
Alternates

KASKA TRIBAL COUNCIL: Sam Donnessey

SOUTHERN TUTCHONE: Geraldine Pope,
Chairperson Bonnie Harpe - Alternate

KWANLIN DUN: Leslie McDiarmid

ALASKA REGION

YUKON FLATS: Clarence Alexander, James
Nathaniel Sr. - Alternate

TANANA RIVER: Edna Hancock, Chief Charlie
Stevens - Alternate

MIDDLE YUKON: Chief Peter Captain Sr., Pat
Sweetsir - Alternate

KOYUKUK RIVER: Karen Kriska, Chief Wil-
liam Derendoff - Alternate

LOWER YUKON: Chief James Landlord, Mary
Andrews - Alternate

INNOKO REGION: Roger Hamilton Sr., Chad
Walker - Alternate

*"Faith provides enough to sat-
isfy every man's need, but not
every man's greed."*

Mohandas K. Gandhi quoted in EF
Schumacher, Small is Beautiful.

ADVOCACY TRAINING CONTINUED...

The issue of trust was brought up as past negative experiences were remembered. Deborah Williams, Ken Margolis, and Elizabeth Furse all did a superb job in pointing out where partnerships have made the difference, while Deborah asked that "all conservationists not be painted with one brush." The term strategic alliance was examined and described as two groups coming together for a moment in time to work together on a specific issue of common concern. It was clear that the speakers were not encouraging marriages between tribes and conservation groups but instead they encouraged strategically coming together for an occasional "date" driven by a clear and mutually beneficial purpose.

Most important to the success of this powerful training were the experiences shared by strong native leaders such as Jamie A Pinkham of the Nez Perce Tribe, Billy Frank Jr. of the Nisqually Tribe and Roy Sampsel of the Choctaw and Wyandotte Tribes. Those of us at the Watershed Council are completely inspired by the trainers and participants and the fact that 58 Indigenous governments came together to exchange their wisdom and brilliance.

We sincerely appreciate the hard work of the staff of the Institute for Tribal Government and the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council. Thank you to Darcie Warden, Marjie Lundell, Jean Edwards, Marilyn Sampsel, Tija Karklis, Kip Cronk, Brian Hirsch, Frontier Airlines and Pike's Waterfront Lodge for a successful and galvanizing event. Clearly the momentum is gaining. We will see you in Nenana in August!!!!



Jaime Pinkham, Nez Perce Tribe

LISTEN.
RESPOND.
INNOVATE.

*We are Engineers
and Scientists
Concerned with
the Earth.*



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The YRITWC would like to thank the following for their contributions and support!

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River Network
True North Foundation
Sweet Grass Foundation
Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation
Sustainability Network
Yukon Fish & Wildlife Enhancement Trust
Brainard Foundation
Lannan Foundation
Alaska Conservation Foundation
Hewlett Packard Foundation
First Nations Development Institute
Philanthropic Coop
Oak Foundation
SEVA Foundation
Tozitna Limited Native Corporation
Frontier Flying
Mead Foundation

Yukon Training Trust Fund
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
US Environmental Protection Agency
Dept. of Indian Affairs & Northern Development
Environment Canada
Canadian Rural Partnership Program
Community Animation Program
Institute for Tribal Government
Yukon Territorial Government
US Bureau of Land Management
Yukon Building Corporation
Dana Naye Ventures
Skookum Jim Friendship Centre
Yukon Fish & Wildlife Management Board
Project AWARE
Norcross Foundation
North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation
Ridolfi Engineering
Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
Tanana Chiefs Conference Inc.
Dana Nossov
Laris Karklis

YRITWC WEBSITE NEWS: Stanley James' Interview is now available at www.yritwc.com/stanleyjames.htm

Conservation Tips

Golden Heart Utilities, Fairbanks, Alaska

Interested in seeing how fast a small drip can amount to a large amount of water? Visit www.waterwiser.org and try their “drip calculator”.

Toilets: The toilet is the biggest household water bandit; averaging 4-7 gallons per flush! Low volume toilets, available for about \$100, can save over 5 gallons per use. Placing a weighted plastic bottle in your tank will also help reduce the amount used in each flush. Leaks can waste hundreds of gallons of water a day. Check for leaks by placing a drop of food coloring in the tank. If the color shows up in the bowl without flushing, the toilet has a leak.

Showers: Even if you prefer long showers, you can still save water. A low flow shower head will save 50 gallons of water during a 10-minute shower. You can also use a flow restrictor for the shower or faucet.

Water Facts

80% of the earth’s surface is water; but only 1% is suitable for drinking.
The human body is roughly 66% water.
People use about 50 gallons of water per day.
One gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds.
Brushing your teeth uses 2 gallons of water.

Under the Ice Research Update

By Paul Erhart

This winter we have completed three under the ice samples for the YRITWC. We sampled for fecal coliform, heavy metals, (fourteen metals), ice thickness and water temperature. Climate change being what it is, ice thickness and water temperature are very important indicators to show trends.

There is very little under the ice research on the Yukon River, and it is covered 200 days of the year with ice. It would be advantageous to research the trends that happen in the Yukon River as it is covered with ice most of each season.



Signatories to the YRITWC Inter-Tribal Accord

Current as of April 20, 2004

- Alakanuk Traditional Council
 - Alatna Village Council
 - Algaaciq Tribal Government
 - Allakaket Traditional Council
 - Anvik Tribal Council
 - Arctic Village Council
 - Asa’carsarmiut Tribal Council
 - Beaver Tribal Council
 - Birch Creek Tribal Council
 - Canyon Village Council
 - Carcross Tagish First Nation
 - Chalkyitsik Village Council
 - Chevak Native Village
 - Chuloonawick Native Village
 - Circle Village Council
 - Eagle Traditional Council
 - Emmonak Traditional Council
 - Evansville Tribal Council
 - Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich’in Tribal Government
 - Grayling IRA Council
 - Holy Cross Traditional Council
 - Hooper Bay Native Village
 - Hughes Village Council
 - Huslia Tribal Council
 - Iqurmiut Tribal Council
 - Kaltag Tribal Council
 - Kotlik Traditional Council
 - Koyukuk Tribal Council
 - Kwanlin Dun First Nation
 - Liard First Nation
 - Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation
 - Louden Tribal Council
 - Marshall Traditional Council
 - Mentasta Village Council
 - Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation
 - Native Village of Bill Moore’s Slough
 - Native Village of Minto
 - Nenana Native Council
 - Nulato Tribal Council
 - Ohogamiut Traditional Council
 - Paimiut Traditional Council
 - Pilot Station Tribal Council
 - Pitka’s Point Traditional Council
 - Ruby Tribal Council
 - Selkirk First Nation
 - Shageluk IRA Council
 - Ta’an Kwach’an First Nation
 - Taku River Tlingit First Nation
 - Tanana Tribal Council
 - Teslin Tlingit First Nation
 - Tr’on Dek Hwech’in First Nation
 - Venetie Village Council
 - Vuntut Gwichin First Nation
 - White River First Nation
 - Yupit of Andreafski
- 55 SIGNATORIES!!!!**

YRITWC Newsletter

Yukon Inter-Tribal Watershed Council

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We are on the web:
www.yritwc.com
www.yritwc.org



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PASS IT ON

Please share this issue of "Currents" with others.



PLEASE RECYCLE

"We all have in common the water that we need to save." Sam Donnessy

"The river is a way of life - it is life itself!" Joseph O'Brien

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The YRITWC's Fairbanks & Whitehorse Offices are looking for volunteer help from June until October to help around the office answering phones, filing, labeling, etc...

If you are interested, please call

Rob Rosenfeld, Fairbanks, 907-451-2530

Roberta Auston, Whitehorse, 867-393-2199

Grant Writing Tips by Darcie Warden

Writing proposals to gain funding for projects is exciting. Before the writing process we determine what the community needs are. During the writing process we get to plan for our projects, think about how the money will be spent, and determine exactly how those goals will be met.

The not so fun part is the details associated with grant writing. Sometimes the smallest details are the ones that will hold us up in the end. Here are a few examples of what to look out for when submitting your next grant.

1. Be sure all forms are signed by the authorized personnel for required signatures.
2. Resolutions sent with the proposal are the ones supporting the work.
3. Always check the deadline date for arrival of proposal versus the postmark date.
4. Thoroughly read the guidance for what the grant **will not** fund.

I have found that most granting agencies are more than happy to have a conversation with me when I'm getting ready to write the grant. I recommend contacting your grant coordinator when you have any questions or need clarity when writing your proposal. The YRITWC is also available for support so give us a call. Good luck and happy grant writing!