



Arctic Athabaskan Council Newsletter

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Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials Meeting 2007



Tromsø, Norway

April is generally a very busy time of year for Arctic Council's Member States, Permanent Participants, stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and observers. This year was no exception. The Arctic Athabaskan Council's four person delegation attended the Arctic Council's Senior Arctic Officials meeting in Tromsø, Norway on April 12th and 13th.

The two day meeting covered a wide spectrum of topics, not the least of which is the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) as mandated by the Arctic Council. The AAC made significant interventions in regards to the assessment work plan as presented by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna. The information resulting from the ABA may feed into the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD's) 2010 assessment. The ABA could potentially form a significant portion of the CBD Arctic chapter. In light of this short timeline, the AAC encouraged all Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials to hold an inter-plenary session to approve the proposed work plan in a timely fashion so that work on the assessment can begin sooner rather than later. All Senior Arctic Officials, with the exception of the Russian delegate, were open to holding a summer session to approve the work plan. In the meantime, the AAC's assessment team will begin working on the assessment in May, 2007. The team includes policy advisors Terry Fenge and Colleen Henry and research assistant Peter Wigen.

The AAC also tabled a document titled "Improving the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Arctic Council: A Discussion Paper". The document provoked a spirited discussion amongst the Senior Arctic Officials at the Tromsø meeting. The AAC cited Arctic Council Declarations, specifically the Salekhard Declaration from the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in November 2006. The AAC's paper was certainly the catalyst of a much needed discussion to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Arctic Council. More information will be made available as this discussion progresses.

Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat Management Board Meeting

The Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat held a Management Board meeting on the evening of April 11th in Tromsø. Delegates from each of the Permanent Participants were joined by the Chairman of the Senior Arctic Officials, Karsten Klepsvik and the Chairman of the Sustainable Development Working Group, Stein P. Rosenberg. The Permanent Participants used this opportunity to express their appreciation for the Norwegian Chair's support of the Permanent Participants on Arctic Council business and to express their positions on Arctic Council projects.

Additionally, the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat has a new chairperson, Patricia Cochran of the Inuit Circumpolar Council in Alaska. She is replacing Chief Gary Harrison of the AAC from Chickaloon, Alaska. We are very proud of the Chief Harrison's contribution to the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat during his period as the IPS Chairman. We extend our gratitude to Chief Harrison for his great efforts and his positive impacts on the Arctic Council.



Chief Gary Harrison of Chickaloon, Alaska





Elders Panel on Climate Change



Elders Panel participants gathered at CYFN in March 2007

The Elders Panel on Climate Change first developed in 2002 through a series of workshops. The purpose was to seek direction from Yukon First Nation Elders on processes and protocols for working on climate change, integrating traditional and local knowledge, and documenting observations of climate change impacts and strategies for adaptation.

The importance of traditional knowledge has long been recognized, however, the mechanisms to integrate it into scientific research and to use it as decision-making tool have not been adequately developed. In creating the Elders Panel on Climate Change, a forum is created in which Elders from various communities can pool their knowledge, experience and wisdom on how to move forward on climate change solutions. This may guide climate-change policy development for local, national and international decision makers.

The current members of the Elders Panel on Climate Change include: Charlie Burns (Kwanlin Dun First Nation); Johnson Edwards (Selkirk

Darcie Matthiessen, Climate Change Coordinator, (867) 393-9215

First Nation); Stanley James (Carcross/Tagish First Nation); Lena Johnson (Kluane First Nation); Pearl Keenan (Teslin Tlingit Council); and Joel Peter (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.)

We had 2 presentations at our last “meeting of the minds” in March of 2007. The first presentation was from Heidi Marion and J.P. Pinard of the Great Green Growers Cooperative (GGGC). The GGGC is a local Yukon farming cooperative whose intent is to provide Yukoners with a “home grown” option for fresh vegetables. By producing food locally and sustainably, they are taking almost 3000 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually out of the atmosphere and putting it into the Yukon’s soil. Furthermore, they are also providing Yukoners with local options for a secure source of food for the future.

The second presentation at the Elders Panel on Climate Change was from Bob Van Dijken, the Yukon Node for the International Polar Year. Mr. Van Dijken updated the Panel on the progress of the International Polar Year.

We would like to thank the Elders who are actively participating on the Elders Panel and to all those who are making a difference with regards to climate change in their communities. Mussi Cho!

New Climate Change Coordinator at CYFN!



Darcie Matthiessen

The Council of Yukon First Nations is pleased to introduce Darcie Matthiessen as the new Climate Change Coordinator. In this capacity, Ms. Matthiessen will work to assist Yukon communities with organizing meetings/workshops and with developing climate change projects to create an awareness of what people in the communities can do to mitigate or adapt

to climate change. The work with the communities is elemental as traditional and local knowledge is important to gauging the many changes that have been occurring on the land, and it is extremely important as it gives us a history of people, culture and their environment all coexisting together.

To date Ms. Matthiessen has facilitated a climate change workshop in Old Crow, Yukon. The Old Crow community members had the opportunity to give direction on their up-coming climate change risk assessment and to provide an analysis of the Vuntut Gwitchin Final

Darcie Matthiessen, Climate Change Coordinator, (867) 393-9215

Agreement. Old Crow community members also suggested that facilitators should travel to Crow Flats, an extensive wetland complex north of Old Crow, so they could see the climate changes first hand.

Discussions have also been initiated with the Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC) in Teslin, Yukon. With the help of the new Climate Change Coordinator, CYFN hopes to assist TTC in organizing a workshop this coming summer so that the community residents may gather to discuss changes they have seen, actions that can be taken to mitigate climate change and ways of adapting to potential concerns in the future. Furthermore, a food security project is planned in Teslin to explore the community’s reliance on country foods (e.g. moose, caribou, ducks) and to gauge impacts due to the changing climate.

Lastly, Ms. Matthiessen has facilitated a meeting of the Elders Panel on Climate Change in March, 2007. (Please see her article above).

The Council of Yukon First Nations and the Arctic Athabaskan Council are pleased that Ms. Matthiessen has joined our team. We look forward to working with her on these very important issues.

International Polar Year Update

International Polar Year officially began on March 1st, 2007. This two-year program of targeted science will see research being conducted in both the Arctic and Antarctic regions. There were IPY launch events held March 1st at regional, national and international levels with celebrations taking place in Whitehorse, Ottawa and Paris, France as well as other locations. Cindy Dickson attended the International launch event in Paris on behalf of the Arctic Athabaskan Council and made suggestions to the international Secretariat about the formation of an

Bob Van Dijken, Yukon IPY Coordination Office, (867) 393-9237



IPY Launch; Paris, France; March 1, 2007

- From Left to Right:**
 Cindy Dickson (AAC);
 Bob Van Dijken (AAC);
 James Allen (AAC);
 Claude Laverdure
 (Canadian Ambassador to France);
 Chief Joe Linklater (GCI);
 Moshi Kotierk
 (Nunavut Territorial Government);
 Taken Courtesy of Embassy Staff



International Polar Year Update Continued

indigenous IPY committee at the international level, evaluation of the effectiveness and relevance of IPY projects at a community level and the legacy component of IPY.

The Canadian government issued a call for proposals for IPY science research last year. The long process of determining which projects would be funded is just coming to an end. Thirteen of the forty-four funded projects will be doing work in the Yukon. Both the Vuntut Gwitchin and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations have received funding to undertake projects that they developed. The northern IPY coordinating offices have sent emails to the researchers notifying them of permitting and regulatory requirements for

Updates on IPY are available at the following websites:

Canadian IPY secretariat:

www.ipycanada.ca

Canadian Federal Program Office:

www.api-ipy.gc.ca

International IPY secretariat:

www.ipy.org

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their respective Territories. There is also a questionnaire being sent to each researcher to determine when they will be doing their research, the location of the research and if they will need students, guides, equipment, transportation or lodging. Information from the questionnaire should be available to share with First Nations and communities by the end of May.

There continue to be delays in getting the call for proposals for training, communications and outreach programs developed and circulated. The IPY Federal Program offices hopes to circulate a draft of the call for proposals for comment by the end of June with the call for proposals being distributed in September.



Bob Van Dijken

Contact Bob for more details.

AAC Receives Support from Canadian Foundation



News Release

March 30, 2007

Arctic Athabaskan Council gets major contract from Canadian foundation

WHITEHORSE and YELLOWKNIFE – The Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) announced today that the Toronto-based Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation had awarded the AAC a two-year contract worth \$140,000.

“This money will be used to train and mentor young First Nations citizens in international Arctic policy and to help strengthen the AAC’s contribution to key projects undertaken by the eight-nation Arctic Council,” said James Allen, the Council of Yukon First Nations’ representative on the AAC.

The council is embarking on a four-year assessment of the state of health of biodiversity in the circumpolar world and is expanding its work on programs and initiatives to help northerners adapt to the impacts and effects of climate change.

The Council of Yukon First Nations thanked the foundation for its support.

The Arctic Athabaskan Council would like to thank the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation for their support and recent ratification of an \$80,000 grant. The financial support ensures the Arctic Athabaskan Council can actively participate in advisory and authoring capacities for the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment mandated by the Arctic Council under the auspices of the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group. The AAC has appointed a three person delegation to the biodiversity assessment for the 2007/2008 fiscal year. More information will be available as the project progresses.

“The health and well-being of Athabaskan peoples in both Canada and Alaska are closely linked to what happens in other countries,” said CYFN Grand Chief Andy Carvill. “If our environment changes drastically, we suffer dramatically.”

The Government of Norway chairs the council until October 2008 but Canada is scheduled to take on that role in 2012.

Largely as a result of Canada’s efforts, the Arctic Council was established in 1996 as a “high-level forum.” And the AAC joined the council as one of six aboriginal “permanent participants” in 2000.

The council has done excellent technical work, such as preparing the 2005 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, which alerted the world to the northern dimension of this global issue

Allen, who lives in Haines Junction, committed the AAC to work with the government of Canada on biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change.

For more information contact:

Cindy Dickson, executive director of AAC, Whitehorse, at (867) 393-9214

Introducing AAC’s Summer Research Assistants



Peter Wigen

Peter Wigen has joined the AAC for the summer as an intern through Canadian Lawyers Abroad and will be supporting our work on biodiversity and cultural property. He is currently studying law at the University of Ottawa. Before enrolling in law school, Peter was a political assistant to the Federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and the Minister

of Human Resources and Skills Development. He also worked as a policy analyst for the Liberal Caucus Research Bureau. He has a degree in political science from the University of Victoria, and grew up on the south west coast of B.C.



Robin Urquhart

Robin Urquhart will be working in the Circumpolar Relations department for the summer on how climate change issues are affecting Yukon First Nations. He will be helping conduct a climate change issue scan and continuing work on the Climate Change Risk Assessment for the North Yukon. He is concurrently undertaking an MA in Natural Resources from the

University of British Columbia. Prior to working for CYFN, Robin was employed by the University of the Arctic in Rovaniemi, Finland. Robin was born and raised in the Whitehorse area and is excited to return and work on issues close to his heart and home.



Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat Intern Returns Home

Colleen Henry, Policy Advisor, (867) 393-9241



Colleen Henry at IPS

Colleen Henry from Whitehorse, Yukon recently returned home from the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS) in Copenhagen, Denmark. Colleen and three others were selected from northern Canada as Circumpolar Young Leaders, an internship program managed by the International Institute of Sustainable Development in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Her internship began in October, 2006 and ended in late March, 2007.



Centre Building: Nordatlantens Brygge, location of IPS office; This building has been completely renovated and now houses Faroese, Greenlandic, Icelandic and EU offices but at one time this building was a fish warehouse.

The AAC and the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat were both very supportive of Colleen's acceptance into the internship program. It is becoming increasingly important for northern Indigenous Peoples' in Canada to participate in the international arena as northern issues start to mould global policy changes. In keeping with that objective, AAC continues to look for opportunities for young northerners to participate in capacity building programs.



View of the Copenhagen from the "Round Tower" in the city centre

While at IPS, Colleen used her technical skills to maintain the Arctic Peoples' website and web server. Colleen also researched climate change and learned more about the secretariat's role in facilitating the Arctic Council Permanent Participants. While living abroad, Colleen was able to attend meetings for the *Arctic Portal* in Iceland, the *Indigenous Peoples International Polar Year* opening in Norway and the *International Expert Workshop on Indicators Relevant for Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Development Goals* in the Philippines. She will use the information she's gleaned and the relationships she's established to help her in her endeavors with the AAC for the 2007/2008 fiscal year.



A harbor near the Nordatlantens Brygge



Inspired by the close proximity of European countries, Colleen traveled to Stockholm, Sweden pictured above.

Colleen began working for the Arctic Athabaskan Council in 2005 when she began providing input on the Arctic Portal project on behalf of AAC. Since then the AAC has mentored Colleen in international relations, outside of her usual technical capacity, to diversify her skill set. She has been selected to begin working in a new position as Policy Advisor for the AAC. She will be working on the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment alongside fellow Policy Advisor Terry Fenge and Research Assistant Peter Wigen.



Student and youth protestors gathered in the Rådhuspladsen, Town Hall Square. Riots broke out on December 19, 2006 and again on March 1, 2007. In front of Town Hall police officers (Politi) line up to keep close watch over the protestors.

This internship was possible with the support of the International Institute of Sustainable Development in Winnipeg Manitoba. **Gunalchiish!**



If you or someone you know is interested in the international internship programs offered through the IISD, check out their website at <http://www.iisd.org>

