

Public Comment & Question, DAY 1: Community Hearing Behchokò

Mr. Tony Rabesca: My name is Tony Rabesca. I work as a cultural practice under Tlicho Government. One (1) of the questions I have is, there was a lot of good things said about [how] we could support our next generation. One of the things that I've been looking at, it's been almost seventeen (17) years since the beginning of the mining open. During the seventeen (17) years, a lot of young people have lost their cultural and their way of life based on the land due to the fear of contamination, due to the fear of confronting their fear of the land.

In the past, Elders used to say that – we usually go out on the land. We overcome the fear and we become trapper hunters. But today, I...I just...I don't see anything saying something about wellness and health.

If you look at wellness and health, you're looking at holistic approach healing, environment healing, animal healing, community healing.

So I don't know if there's anything that's based on that program or anything that you have in place that's based on health and wellness. It's very important that what we're doing here – our next generation also – they also need healing because for seventeen (17) years of fear, they haven't gone on – on the land.

So what is the government as well as the mining have in place to support the next generation to revive their cultural way of life? Masi.

GNWT response:

Thank you, Madame Chair. And I'd also like to thank Mr. Rabesca from the Tłı̨chǫ region for bringing up the importance of healing and wellness, and the Tłı̨chǫ Government for their response.

As per the final agreement, the Tłı̨chǫ Government administers and delivers certain wellness programs and receives direct funding from the federal government to do so, in addition to related support from the GNWT. The Tłı̨chǫ have a wealth of traditional knowledge and indigenous approaches to healing that inform their work and their efforts to support the next generation in getting on the land and maintaining their connection to their cultural way of life. We commend them on their important work and approach and the learning they have provided us.

The GNWT has several initiatives and programs in place that speak to Tony's concerns about healing, healing on the land, and the health and wellness of the next generation.

Specifically, the Department of Health and Social Services (GNWT-HSS) funds Indigenous Governments to deliver *On the Land* healing programs that are community driven and designed to best respond to community identified needs. The *On the Land Healing* program started in 2013-14. Since this time, GNWT-HSS has allocated 1.23M annually for the *On the Land Healing Fund* to support community-led, land based initiatives to promote mental wellness and healing from addictions.

In 2019-20, the On the Land Healing Fund will be approximately \$1.96 million, which will be available to community and Indigenous governments to support the delivery of land based wellness programming. The GNWT-HSS works with Indigenous Governments to support them in delivering these programs, including developing a list of contractors if they choose to focus on the delivery of addictions related wellness programming.

A number of the impacted Indigenous governments have received GNWT support for their on the land programs, including in 2018/19 the Tłı̨chǫ Government, the NWT Métis Nation, and the Akaitcho Territorial Government.

To further assist communities to deliver *On the Land* programming, GNWT-HSS worked with other partners to create the NWT *On the Land Collaborative*, which pools resources from philanthropic organizations, companies, Indigenous and other governments to support *On The Land* programming. The Department commits a minimum of \$200,000 annually to the Collaborative. These projects support and promote the programs and activities related to promoting and reviving cultural way of life. It should be noted for the board that Diavik Diamond Mine is one active partner involved in the *On the Land Collaborative* fund. In its work with diamond mining companies, GNWT-HSS promotes the support of this funding collaborative and encourages mining companies to support cultural opportunities for wellness that are led by Indigenous governments and communities and based on their knowledge and experiences.

To provide the board and the public with a better understanding of these programs and the transformative power of Indigenous led on the land healing, the GNWT would like to provide the most recent On the Land Collaborative annual report – which describes the breadth of programs supported by this unique and important funding group – and a literature review prepared by Dr. Nicole Redvers (ND) by the GNWT on land-based programming for wellness.



What the research says about land-based programming for wellness, mental health and addictions treatment

Introduction

There is a great deal of evidence from a variety of fields that points to positive health benefits from time spent in natural environments. The evidence is not always clear why natural environments bring positive health benefits to individuals and groups, but researchers from many fields are continuing to investigate (1-7). The rest of this document outlines the current evidence on how land based programming positively contributes to health and wellness, with a special focus on northern Aboriginal people.

Known health benefits of natural environments

Indigenous **Traditional Knowledge** (TK) makes it clear that the land heals (8). Western-based research supports this. For example, in the discipline of psychology, everything from self-confidence, mood, stress responses, and memory have been shown to improve from time in contact with nature (3).

This research includes studies documenting outcomes such as the mental and cognitive benefits of sunlight in the office (9), forest views out of a window (10), walks in urban **greenspace** (11), or spending time on extended wilderness trips (12).

A summary of established health benefits from nature exposure and activities includes:

- Decreased attention fatigue in healthy adults (3)
- Improved attention and mental restoration, including scoring higher on verbal working memory tests and concentration tasks, including in children with ADHD (13, 14)
- Increased self-esteem, improved mood, memory span, less rumination on negative thoughts, and remission of symptoms in major depressive disorders (4, 5, 11, 15) and improved mood and less distress in adolescents with mental health challenges (12)
- Beneficial impacts on clients with allergies or respiratory diseases (16)
- Reduced stress and inflammation levels in the body (16)
- Preventative physiological effects for cardiovascular disorders in elderly (17)

Theories behind health benefits of natural environments

Two major theories dominate why the natural world is so important for human health and wellbeing: **Attention Restoration Theory (ART)** and **Stress Reduction Theory (SRT)**.

One basic premise of ART is that urban environments are filled with lots of stimulation that captures and directs our attention, for example, to avoid being hit by a car. This makes urban environments more attention demanding and less mentally restorative, whereas natural environments contain less interruptive stimulation and allow our attention a chance to replenish so that we can focus more on future tasks (13).

While ART looks at nature's effect on our brain, SRT research looks at nature's benefits to our nervous system. Because humans evolved in natural environments, it seems that some of our basic physiological and cellular processes are impacted by natural environments (2). Biomedical research is beginning to show some of these underlying physiological processes through laboratory samples at the cellular level. For example, researchers have seen that breathing in certain forest particles is beneficial for our immune systems (16).

Using natural environments and nature as therapy

Outside of the nature-based health literature, formal wilderness therapy programs exist all over the world and have been the subject of years of research. The goal of research into these programs is to show how they contribute to mental wellness (18). **Outdoor behavioral healthcare (OBH)** programs have been operating in the United States for decades. Many different versions of wilderness, adventure and nature therapies exist (19-22). Most OBH programs have focused on adolescents with behavioral issues, substance use issues, and/or mental health disorders, but are now expanding into young adult populations and family therapy, and involve directed supervision from a mental health professional (23, 24).

Reported outcomes of OBH programs have included reduced criminal offences in adolescents (25), and reduced behavioural/ emotional issues and reduced substance use for up to 12 months post program, even in adolescents who had a low willingness to change at the beginning of treatment (26). Research is still ongoing to continually validate and refine OBH as an effective treatment option for youth and other age groups (18, 23, 26).

It is important to note that even wilderness activities outside of formal OBH therapy in the areas of outdoor education, recreation, or leadership, have demonstrated changes in health outcomes for youth with mental illness or other challenges. For example, outcomes such as increased self-esteem, self-image, self-control, empowerment, and impulse control have been found in various outdoor wilderness programs and activities (12, 15).

Unique benefits of land based programming for Aboriginal people

Though it is well established that natural environments are healing, most of the research being done in the area is not specific to the Indigenous perspective on land and healing, which includes a strong cultural understanding and relationship. The Aboriginal connection between *health and culture* is very well documented (27). Because Aboriginal culture is centered around a connection to land (28), it should be no surprise that health, culture and land are closely tied for Aboriginal populations.

Land-based programming is distinct from programming in natural environments, nature therapy, or wilderness therapy/programming. Land-based programming is specific to

Indigenous cultural settings, where programming takes place in and on traditional territories and involves activities aimed at cultural connection and revitalization.

There is no common definition of land based programming, although the breadth and depth of these programs have grown in recent years. In Canada, initiatives such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have helped bring to light the injustices imposed on Aboriginal peoples and practices, and mental health research has highlighted the importance of revitalizing Aboriginal culture for improved health outcomes (29). Organizations such as the Aboriginal Healing Foundation* (which closed in 2014) have provided dedicated funding for culturally relevant healing options, and local community groups, governments, and others are also following suit (30).

With this movement towards revitalization and reconciliation, a whole new body of evidence is beginning to surface on the benefits of land-based programming for Aboriginal people, from the fields of Indigenous studies, education, anthropology, treatment, and psychology (31-42). These programs have also been effective in non-Aboriginal populations, for example in providing cultural understanding to outsiders working within the healthcare or education professions in the north (43).

Theories behind land based programming as therapy for Aboriginal peoples

Most of the research so far is very specific to the program being studied – this kind of ‘case study’ research is a necessary first step to building the evidence for the health benefits of land based programs for Aboriginal people in Canada. Some examples of the early findings from Canadian case studies include:

- A wilderness program organized by the Atikamek community of Manawan in Quebec for local adolescents was found to have increased cultural pride, fostered positive behaviour and empower First Nation youth (34).
- An outdoor leadership program for adolescents from the Wikwemikong Indian Reserve in northern Ontario over two summers promoted resilience over the short-term (44).
- A Land-based program organized by the Cree Nation of Chisasibi helped individuals in distress to deal with pain and self-hurt (45).
- Land-based program components such as fishing, sweat lodges, nature outings, and berry picking, have been documented to be common to many forms of substance abuse treatment programs across Canada and the United States (40).

Within Aboriginal populations the land-based connection is central, as health and land are inseparable from cultural practices like food harvesting, use and development of language, and development and use of important skills for life on the land. The main differences in thinking about land-based programs versus nature or wilderness therapy programs are the ideas of **cultural revitalization** and **cultural identity**.

Recent research (46) has shown that the most common reported outcomes in land-based programs in northern Canada are:

* <http://www.ahf.ca/about-us>

- Increased cultural understanding and practice (*strong land-skills, cultural identity*)
- Foster interpersonal skills/ positive social interaction (*'people just get along better'*)
- Increased short and long-term wellbeing (*mood, happiness*) and mental and cognitive health outcomes (*learn better, lower stress, improved mood*)
- Physical health (*active living, healthy diet/country food, substance free*)
- Increased self-confidence (*empowerment, identity, and clarified role in community*)
- Positive changes in behavior (*reported by self, parents, and staff post program*)

These outcomes come from a variety of sources (35, 44, 46-51) and are consistent with findings from other land-based programs and the wilderness/nature based therapy research internationally. Each of these outcomes can support **resiliency** at the individual and community level (46).

Within mental health and addictions the concept of **resilience** is well-established. Resiliency is the collection of characteristics (protective factors) that allow individuals and communities to stay healthy in the face of significant challenges, or to “overcome adversity” (52-55). Resiliency can help us understand why land-based programming would contribute to improved health outcomes in Aboriginal populations in the north through strengthening key protective factors in Aboriginal populations such as ‘positive connections and relationship’, ‘meaningful participation’, ‘cultural identity’ or ‘title to traditional lands’ which have all been shown to improve health outcomes including suicide rates (55-59). Due to the holistic nature of land-based programs, one program has the potential to support multiple protective factors at once.

Land based programming and Aboriginal youth

Cultural revitalization and reconnection to culture are strong tools for improved resilience in Indigenous populations, especially for youth (52, 54, 60-62). Land-based programs offer an ideal setting to pass on cultural knowledge, practices and skills, and build cultural identity in the process.

Bush camps can open up a culturally safe place to share and be heard, provide a space for healthy lifestyle and to learn useful life skills like cooking, leadership, and hunting knowledge. They can offer access to healthy mentors, intergenerational relationship building, a substance-free lifestyle, provision of healthy food, physical exercise, improved attention and learning, and mental restoration.

By incorporating cultural, social, environmental, and educational activities and philosophies, well designed and executed land based programs provide a holistic and integrated approach to health and wellness that is in line with Aboriginal understandings of health and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.

Land based programming as an alternative to traditional treatment

Land-based healing programs can also offer an alternative treatment option for clients who don't feel comfortable, or aren't being served by conventional residential treatment for addictions or substance abuse issues. In the north, they allow clients to stay near or in their

traditional territories and learn their own local cultural practices (as opposed to other cultural traditions in the south).

Early research has shown mixed, but positive results post-land based treatment program, including increased resilience measures and increases in self-ratings from clients (63, 64). The importance of providing more recovery support options after returning from land-based treatment has also been highlighted (49, 63). Research into land based programming as an addictions or substance abuse treatment option is still quite new.

Conclusion

Being outside in natural environments is healing for *all people*. Why this is the case is the subject of scientific research internationally, and many health and wellness benefits have been recorded through this research.

In addition to the recognized benefits of natural environments for all people, being on the land can provide particular benefits to Aboriginal people. When land based programming takes place in traditional territory, engages participants in culturally relevant and revitalizing activities, and connects participants with cultural leaders and peers, it provides opportunities for cultural healing that is beyond what the general population experiences through exposure to natural environments.

This is likely due to the connection between culture, land and health that has been documented in research on Indigenous health. Early research findings also suggest that land based activity is a powerful way to build resiliency in Aboriginal populations. This further suggests that land based activities are both healing and have preventative health benefits for Aboriginal populations.

Reference List

1. James P, Banay RF, Hart JE, Laden F. A Review of the Health Benefits of Greenness. *Current Epidemiology Reports*. 2015;2(2):131-42.
2. Bratman GN, Daily GC, Levy BJ, Gross JJ. The benefits of nature experience: Improved affect and cognition. *Landscape and Urban Planning*. 2015;138:41-50.
3. Freeman E, Akhurst J, Bannigan K, James H. Benefits of walking and solo experiences in UK wild places. *Health Promotion International*. 2016.
4. Barton J, Pretty J. What is the Best Dose of Nature and Green Exercise for Improving Mental Health? A Multi-Study Analysis. *Environmental Science & Technology*. 2010;44(10):3947-55.
5. Bratman GN, Hamilton JP, Hahn KS, Daily GC, Gross JJ. Nature experience reduces rumination and subgenual prefrontal cortex activation. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2015;112(28):8567-72.
6. Hartig T, Mang M, Evans GW. Restorative effects of natural environment experiences. *Environment and Behavior*. 1991;23(1):3-26.
7. Nieuwenhuijsen MJ, Kruijze H, Gidlow C, Andrusaityte S, Anto JM, Basagana X, et al. Positive health effects of the natural outdoor environment in typical populations in different regions in Europe (PHENOTYPE): a study programme protocol. *BMJ Open*. 2014;4(4):e004951.

8. Richmond C. The relatedness of people, land, and health: Stories from Anishinabe Elders. In: Greenwood M, de Leeuw S, Lindsay NM, Reading C, editors. *Determinants of Indigenous People's Health in Canada: Beyond the Social*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press; 2015. p. 47-63.
9. An M, Colarelli SM, O'Brien K, Boyajian ME. Why We Need More Nature at Work: Effects of Natural Elements and Sunlight on Employee Mental Health and Work Attitudes. *PLoS ONE*. 2016;11(5):1-17.
10. Sop Shin W. The influence of forest view through a window on job satisfaction and job stress. *Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research*. 2007;22(3):248-53.
11. Berman MG, Kross E, Krpan KM, Askren MK, Burson A, Deldin PJ, et al. Interacting with nature improves cognition and affect for individuals with depression. *J Affect Disord*. 2012;140(3):300-5.
12. Barton J, Bragg R, Pretty J, Roberts J, Wood C. The Wilderness Expedition: An Effective Life Course Intervention to Improve Young Peoples Well-Being and Connectedness to Nature. *Journal of Experiential Education*. 2016;39(1):59-72.
13. Berman MG, Jonides J, Kaplan S. The Cognitive Benefits of Interacting With Nature. *Psychological Science* (0956-7976). 2008;19(12):1207-12.
14. Faber Taylor A, Kuo FE. Children With Attention Deficits Concentrate Better After Walk in the Park. *Journal of Attention Disorders*. 2009;12(5):402-9.
15. Maier J, Jette S. Promoting Nature-Based Activity for People With Mental Illness Through the US "Exercise Is Medicine" Initiative. *Am J Public Health*. 2016;106(5):796-9.
16. Mao GX, Lan XG, Cao YB, Chen ZM, He ZH, Lv YD, et al. Effects of Short-Term Forest Bathing on Human Health in a Broad-Leaved Evergreen Forest in Zhejiang Province, China. *Biomedical and Environmental Sciences*. 2012;25(3):317-24.
17. Mao G-X, Cao Y-B, Lan X-G, He Z-H, Chen Z-M, Wang Y-Z, et al. Therapeutic effect of forest bathing on human hypertension in the elderly. *Journal of Cardiology*. 2012;60(6):495-502.
18. Russell KC. An assessment of outcomes in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare (OBH) treatment. *Child & Youth Core Forum*. 2003;32(6):355-81.
19. Roberts SD, Stroud D, Hoag MJ, Combs KM. Outdoor Behavioral Health Care. *Journal of Experiential Education*. 2016;39(3):288-302.
20. Ritchie SD, Patrick K, Corbould GM, Harper NJ, Oddson BE. An Environmental Scan of Adventure Therapy in Canada. *Journal of Experiential Education*. 2016;39(3):303-20.
21. Berman D, Davis-Berman J. The Role of Therapeutic Adventure in Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Children and Adolescents: Finding a Niche in the Health Care Systems of the United States and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Experiential Education*. 2013;36(1):51-64.
22. Neill JT. Reviewing and benchmarking adventure therapy outcomes: Applications of meta-analysis. *Journal of Experiential Education*. 2003;25(3):316-21.
23. Bettmann JE, Russell KC, Parry KJ. How substance abuse recovery skills, readiness to change and symptom reduction impact change processes in wilderness therapy participants. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. 2012:1-12.
24. Tucker A, Widmer M, Faddis T, Randolph B, Gass M. Family Therapy in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare: Current Practices and Future Possibilities. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*. 2016;38(1):32-42.
25. Castellano TS, Soderstrom IR. Therapeutic wilderness programs and juvenile recidivism: A program evaluation. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*. 1992;17(3/4):19-46.

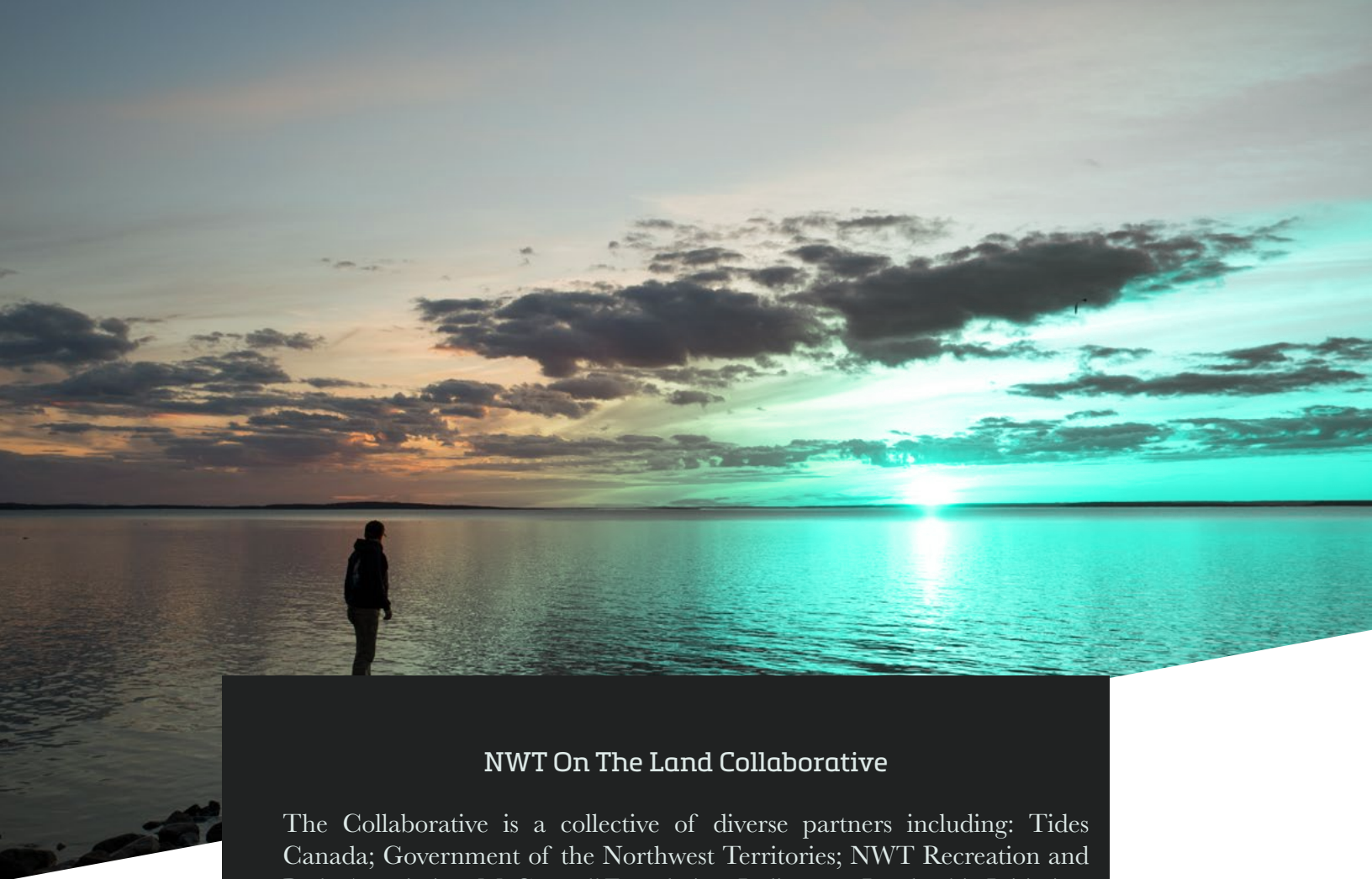
26. Russell KC. Adolescent substance-use treatment: Service delivery, research on effectiveness, and emerging treatment alternatives. *Journal of Groups in Addiction & Recovery*. 2008;2(2-4):68-96.
27. Wexler L. The importance of identity, history, and culture in the wellbeing of Indigenous youth. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*. 2009;2(2):267-76.
28. Burgess CP, Johnston FH, Berry HL, McDonnell J, Yibarbuk D, Gunabarra C, et al. Healthy country, healthy people: the relationship between Indigenous health status and "caring for country". *The Medical Journal of Australia*. 2009;190(10):567-72.
29. Lavalley LF, Poole JM. Beyond Recovery: Colonization, Health and Healing for Indigenous People in Canada. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*. 2009;8(2):271-81.
30. Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Summary Points of the AHF Final Report. 2006.
31. Wildcat M, McDonald M, Irlabacher-Fox S, Coulthard G. Learning from the land: Indigenous land based pedagogy and decolonization. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. 2014;3(3):I-XV.
32. Roue M. Healing the wounds of school by returning to the land: Cree elders come to the rescue of a lost generation. *Social Sciences*. 2006;58(187):15-24.
33. Lowan G. Exploring place from an Aboriginal perspective: Considerations for outdoor and environmental education. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*. 2009;14:42-58.
34. Janelle A, Laliberte A, Ottawa U. Promoting traditions: an evaluation of a wilderness activity among First Nations of Canada. *Australasian psychiatry : bulletin of Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists*. 2009;17 Suppl 1:S108-11.
35. Takano T. Connections with the land: Land-skills courses in Igloodik, Nunavut. *Ethnography*. 2005;6(4):463-86.
36. Simpson LB. Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. 2014;3(3):1-25.
37. Whitbeck LB, Walls ML, Welch ML. Substance abuse prevention in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*. 2012;38(5):428-35.
38. Alfred T. The Akwesasne cultural restoration program: A Mohawk approach to land-based education. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. 2014;3(3):134-44.
39. Kingsley Y, Townsend M, Phillips R, Aldous D. "If the land is healthy...it makes the people healthy": The relationship between caring for Country and health for the Yorta Yorta Nation, Boonwurrung and Bangerang Tribes. *Health & Place*. 2009;15:291-9.
40. Rowan M, Poole N, Shea B, Gone JP, Mykota D, Farag M, et al. Cultural interventions to treat addictions in indigenous populations: finds from a scoping study. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*. 2014;9(34):34.
41. Blignault I, Zulumovski K, Haswell M, Fitzpatrick S, Pulver J. Case study of the Balunu Indigenous youth healing program: Strengths, challenges and implication for policy and practice. UNSW Sydney: Muru Marri, School of Public Health and Community Medicine; 2013.
42. Kant S, Vertinsky I, Zheng B, Smith PM. Social, cultural, and land use determinants of the health and well-being of Aboriginal peoples of Canada: A path analysis. *Journal of Public Health Policy*. 2013;34(3):462-76.
43. Jong M. Learning about Indigenous health immersion and living with Elders in northern Canada. *Focus on Health Professional Education*. 2011;13(1):44-51.

44. Ritchie SD, Wabano M-J, Russell K, Enosse L, Young NL. Promoting resilience and wellbeing through an outdoor intervention designed for Aboriginal adolescents. *Rural and Remote Health*. 2014;14(1):1-19.
45. Radu I, House LM, Pashagumskum E. Land, life, and knowledge in Chisasibi: Intergenerational healing in the bush. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. 2014;3(3):86-105.
46. Redvers JM. Land-based practice for Indigenous health and wellness in Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary; 2016.
47. Luig T, Ballantyne EF, Scott KK. Promoting well-being through land-based pedagogy. *International Journal of Health, Wellness & Society*. 2011;1(3):13-26.
48. Carey J. Taiga adventure camp: National Aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy case study evaluation October 2010. Yellowknife, NT: J. Carey Consulting Evaluations Plus Ltd. for Taiga camp, and prevention services Department of Health and Social Services GNWT; 2010.
49. Laurie V. Land based treatment programs: Promising practices, key considerations, and ideas for action. Whitehorse, YT: Council of Yukon First Nations, Health and Social Development Department; 2013.
50. Mearns C, Healey G. Makimautiksath youth camp: program evaluation 2010-2015. Iqaluit, NU: Quajigairtiit Health Research Centre; 2015.
51. Noah JL, Healey GK. Land-based youth wellness camps in the north: Literature review and community consultations. Iqaluit, NU: Quajigairtiit Health Research Centre; 2010.
52. Zolkoski SM, Bullock LM. Resilience in children and youth: A review. *Children and Youth Services Review*. 2012;34(12):2295-303.
53. Wexler LM, DiFluvio G, Burke TK. Resilience and marginalized youth: Making a case for personal and collective meaning-making as part of resilience research in public health. *Social Science & Medicine*. 2009;69(4):565-70.
54. Kirmayer L, Sehdev M, Whitley R, Dandeneau SF, Isaac C. Community resilience: Models, metaphors and measures. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*. 2009;5(1):62-117.
55. Riecken T, Scott T, Tanaka MT. Community and culture as foundations for resilience: Participatory health research with First Nations student filmmakers. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*. 2006.
56. Kirmayer L, Dandeneau SF, Marshall E, Phillips MK, Williamson KJ. Rethinking resilience from Indigenous perspectives. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. 2011;56(2):84-91.
57. Tousignant M, Sioui N. Resilience and Aboriginal Communities in crisis: Theory and interventions. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*. 2009;5(1):43-61.
58. Wexler L, Moses J, Hopper K, Joule L, Garoutte J, Team LC. Central role of relatedness in Alaska Native youth resilience: Preliminary themes from one site of the Circumpolar Indigenous Pathways to Adulthood (CIPA) study. *Am J Community Psychol*. 2013;52(3-4):393-405.
59. Allen J, Hopper K, Wexler L, Kral M, Rasmus S, Nystad K. Mapping resilience pathways of Indigenous youth in five circumpolar communities. *Transcultural psychiatry*. 2013:1-31.
60. Connor H. Culture is healing: A design for youth suicide prevention in northern Manitoba [Thesis]2011.

61. MacDonald JP, Ford JD, Willox AC, Ross NA. A review of protective factors and causal mechanisms that enhance the mental health of Indigenous Circumpolar youth. *International journal of circumpolar health*. 2013;72:21775.
62. Sherwood J. Colonisation - It's bad for your health: The context of Aboriginal health. *Contemporary Nurse: A Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession*. 2013;46(1):28-40.
63. Hanson G. Rebuilding connections: Final evaluation report Kwanlin Dun First Nation. Whitehorse, Yukon: Kwanlin Dun First Nation; 2011.
64. Hanson G. Strong woman's voices: Final report Jackson lake land based healing women's program August-September 2012. Whitehorse, Yukon: Kwanlin Dun First Nation; 2012.



2018 REPORT



NWT On The Land Collaborative

The Collaborative is a collective of diverse partners including: Tides Canada; Government of the Northwest Territories; NWT Recreation and Parks Association; McConnell Foundation; Indigenous Leadership Initiative; Dominion Diamond Corporation; TNC Canada; Diavik Diamond Mine; The Gordon Foundation; and Community Advisors representing regional Indigenous governments from across the territory.

www.nwtontheland.ca

CONTENTS

- Who We Are1
- How We Work2
- Thank You3
- Welcome4
- Featured Projects5
 - Hide Tanning Camp6
 - Grade 9 Canoe Trip7
 - Sahdeh Camp8
 - Ka'a'gee Tu Youth Camp9
 - Back-to-the-Land Culture Camp10
 - Nisto Nankat Tr'iqwandaih11
- Appendix A13
- Appendix B15
- Appendix C19

WHO WE ARE.

The NWT On The Land Collaborative (the Collaborative) was created in 2015 to promote and support on the land initiatives in the Northwest Territories.

The Collaborative brings together government, charitable, corporate, and other partners to combine efforts and make it easier for communities to access money and other resources for on the land projects.

The Collaborative is comprised of Community Advisors, Funding Partners, and an Administrative Team.

Community Advisors are appointed by regional Indigenous governments to serve as representatives for the Collaborative in their region. They provide on-the-ground support to projects throughout the application

process, while also assisting in the selection of recipients. One of the priorities of the Collaborative is to reflect local priorities and ways of working. From the beginning, community representatives have been at the table, articulating the need for a collaborative approach to funding, but also what that approach should look like.

Funding Partners provide both monetary and in-kind support to successful applicants. They include governments, philanthropic organizations, industry, and non-profits. Each Funding Partner appoints a representative to attend meetings and be their voice at the table.

The Administrative Team includes representatives from: GNWT Departments of Health and Social Services and Environment and Natural Resources; Tides Canada; and the NWT Recreation and Parks Association. The Administrative Team oversees the management of the Collaborative's internal processes; communication with grant recipients; partner engagement; and communications.

HOW WE WORK.

Collaboration: We believe collaboration: increases available funding for land-based initiatives by drawing on diverse sectors; reduces the administrative burden for communities, which means more time for program delivery; and creates shared learning and evaluation opportunities. Our goal as a collaborative is to make the best use of financial, human, and other resources to better support the delivery of on the land programming in the NWT.

Consensus: Every member of the Collaborative, regardless of their position or how much they contribute to the funding pot, has an equal voice at the table and plays an important role in determining how we work.

Creativity: We intentionally place few limitations on proposals in order to encourage innovation, but also to allow communities to deliver programs that acknowledge the interconnection of social, cultural, economic, and environmental outcomes. Each year, we are inspired by the beautiful, creative, and diverse approaches that communities across the territory are using to revitalize connections to land, as well as local traditions and languages.

Community: Our open approach to project design is also meant to respect local needs. We believe strongly that communities are best positioned to determine what will work for them. We are committed to supporting local expertise and objectives. We value on the land projects that strengthen relationships within and between communities, and enhance community capacity.

Connection: One feature of the NWT On the Land Collaborative are learning trips - immersive and interactive experiences that connect Funding Partners and Community Advisors with grant recipients. Learning trips reflect the belief that successful collaboration depends on good relationships and good relationships are built through face-to-face interactions and shared experiences.

The NWT On the Land Collaborative is always looking to improve how we work. The Funding Partners, Community Advisors, and Administrative Team meet regularly to discuss prospective partners; explore new opportunities; review feedback from applicants; and prepare for the next grant cycle. We welcome suggestions for how we can enhance the Collaborative, grow the fund, and better support grant recipients.

THANK YOU, AND WELCOME...



The NWT On the Land Collaborative wishes to acknowledge the unique contributions of a very special person in the creation and success of the Collaborative. **Debbie DeLancey**, the former deputy minister of Health and Social Services, was a driving force behind the vision for more partnerships and enhanced coordination of resources in supporting on the land initiatives. Her commitment to bringing people together, and to recognizing that we achieve better health and wellness outcomes when people are able to be on the land on their own terms, laid the foundation for what the Collaborative has become. On behalf of the partners, we extend our deepest thanks to her for her vision and trust.



This year, two of the **Community Advisors** who have been with the Collaborative from the start will be moving on. The partners wish to recognize and thank **Kyle Napier** and **Meghan Etter** for their work over the last few years, for their commitment and diligence, for their appreciation of the land, and most of all for their dedication to supporting the people of the NWT. Kyle will be missed for his enthusiasm and passion, as will Meghan for her steady, confident leadership. We look forward to continued partnership with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the NWT Métis Nation, and to welcoming their new representatives.



New Partner – Education, Culture and Employment

Jackie Siegel and Angela Young

“Identity, language and culture are rooted on the land and the places we come from. The projects funded by the NWT On The Land Collaborative support students in connecting their physical, mental, spiritual and emotional selves through land-based learning.”



New Partner – Industry, Tourism and Investment

Brenda Dragon

“Being on the land allows for growth for the connectedness of our humanity to the natural world. By creating easier access and purpose by providing opportunity, the NWT On the Land Collaborative allows Northerners to more easily do what our ancestors have done since the beginning of time. Living in ways that use our cultural and traditional skills is authentic to who we are. People who spend time in nature learn to love and care - it has been shown they will then naturally protect and preserve the integrity of the land, water and animals for both themselves and for future generations.”



New Community Advisor – Inuvialuit Region

Jimmy Ruttan

“Being on the land is such a big part of who we are, who I am. Getting out on the land or spending time in the bush calms me. It also reminds me of the simpler things needed to be whole. The land helps to secure my identity; allows me to rest and relax; it challenges and teaches me.”



Featured Projects



HIDE TANNING CAMP Łútsēlk'é | Akaitcho

Objective: To keep the ancient art of hide tanning alive by bringing together community members and visitors to work together in a cultural camp setting.

Description: The Łútsēlk'é Women's Group hosted the fourth annual hide tanning camp on the shores of Tu Nedhe, a short ride from the Dēnesuḡné community of Łútsēlk'é, in June 2017. Approximately 50 people from across the North of all ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds attended the camp to work on hides or support the tanners. The camp is a wonderful opportunity for people of all abilities to learn how to tan a variety of hides using traditional methods. Elders on site act as instructors and advisors. In addition to hide tanning, the camp featured drum making and hand games.

Successes: There is a real sense of comradery amongst the hide tanners; the women really enjoy spending a week in such a supportive, positive, and encouraging environment. The camp has strengthened the practice of hide tanning in Łútsēlk'é (and beyond!), while also allowing community members living in urban settings to come home and reconnect with the land, people, and cultural teachings. Children are growing up around hide tanning again, a practice that was almost lost just a few years ago. Local carvers and tool makers are also starting to make bone tools again and are making them available through the camp.



GRADE 9 CANOE TRIP

Fort Smith | South Slave

Objective: To provide grade nine students with an opportunity to spend time on the land and to develop/strengthen canoeing and camping skills.

Description: In mid-June, nine students in grade nine at PWK High School in Fort Smith paddled the Hornaday and Slave Rivers, ending at Fort Fitzgerald. Over the course of the three-day trip, the students, with the help of a local guide and their teachers, learned different canoe strokes, communication signals, and wildlife safety. Perhaps most importantly, they learned how to travel safely in moving water and in a range of environmental conditions, encountering everything from calm water to stiff headwinds to small rapids to choppy waves. All of the students took part in camp tasks such as cooking and cleaning; gathering wood and maintaining the fire; and hauling water. Evenings were passed by the fire telling stories.

Successes: The canoe trip was resurrected this year to fill a gap in on the land programming for grade nine students at PWK. It builds on land-based skills learned in earlier grades, such as setting up camp and building fires, while also providing students with minimal paddling experience the opportunity to learn how to safely travel by canoe. Students were proud of their accomplishments on the river from paddling into a headwind to making delicious food. They were also grateful for the opportunity to spend time together as a family.

SAHDEH CAMP

Behchokò | Tłı̨chǫ

Objective: To transmit traditional knowledge from Tłı̨chǫ Elders to youth through land-based activities in a camp setting.

Description: Sahdeh was a three-week cultural immersion camp near Behchokò. Tłı̨chǫ youth aged 8-23 learned about all aspects of living on the land including setting up and maintaining camp, harvesting and processing fish and animals, and boat safety. In addition to learning survival skills like wildlife awareness and dryfish making, youth participated in cultural activities like sewing, traditional games, and storytelling. The camp also provided participants with opportunities to develop leadership skills and to work together.

Successes: Twenty-seven of the thirty-three participants attended all three weeks of the camp. Youth participants reported feeling more confident on the land when the program ended. Through discussions and workshops on topics such as grieving, youth developed a deeper understanding of themselves. They also learned how to better manage their emotions. The wide range of ages proved to be a benefit. Older participants took on leadership roles, teaching and mentoring the younger participants.





KAÁ'GEE TU YOUTH CAMP

Kakisa | Dehcho

Objective: To create an opportunity for youth to build relationships with each other, Elders, and the land.

Description: Though the week long camp was cut short by weather, youth participants still had lots of opportunities for learning. They learned from the Elders about where they are from and how to integrate themselves into the environment. They worked alongside the local AAROM Coordinator and university researchers to gather data and samples for a fish monitoring project. A geocaching activity was the perfect way to learn how to use GPS, while waste sorting activities familiarized them with the community's new waste management system.

Successes: The youth enjoyed their time with the Elders, learning more about their childhoods and families. Working alongside the researchers introduced the youth to some of the projects currently underway in the community and gave them an opportunity to engage with and ask questions about these initiatives. They also learned new skills. On top of all of this, they had fun!



BACK-TO-THE-LAND CULTURAL CAMP

Rádeyílkóé | Sahtú

Objective: To offer land-based culture camps that will support community members in leading healthy and resilient lives.

Description: Thirty-six community members participated in the program, which took place at a bush camp 130km from the community; 21 were full-time participants. The camp took place during the yearly spring hunt, so participants had an opportunity to learn more about harvesting animals from Elders and knowledge holders. Participants also worked on moose hides, processed beavers and ducks, and made dry geese. Part of the time was spent at a satellite camp. Morning prayers, nightly sharing circles, one-on-one time with Elders, and drumming were also important parts of camp life.

Successes: The community as a whole has made a commitment to being healthier; the camp has been important in working toward this goal. The camp gave participants an opportunity to abstain from drugs and alcohol. While that was very challenging for some, none of the participants quit. Some of the youth who participated in the camp have left the community to continue their healing journey through treatment programs. Since the camp, there are more students in school and more community members of all ages participating in sharing circles and support groups.



Appendices

NITSO NANKAT TR'IQWANDAIH

Teet'it Zheh | Beaufort Delta

Objective: To provide opportunities for students of all ages to be immersed in traditional Gwich'in culture and land-based practices.

Description: Nitso Nankat Tr'iqwandaih (Land of the Midnight Sun Project) is a series of land-based activities tailored to students of different ages. In June 2017, a group of grade 7-12 students travelled up Teet'it Gwinjik (Peel River). They learned: about spring water travel; how to identify and gather medicinal plants; how the seasons and time of day dictate hunting and trapping practices; traditional place names; and survival skills. In September, day camps for the younger grades

gave students opportunities to: work with moose meat and hides; pick berries; gather medicines; and listen to stories from the Elders.

Successes: As they travelled Teet'it Gwinjik, the high school students gained a deeper understanding of the rhythms of the land, as well as learning the full process of trapping and harvesting animals in a land-based context. Younger students also deepened their understanding of the land through different hands-

on activities. Time with the Elders is important for all of the students' mental and emotional wellbeing. Nitso Nankat Tr'iqwandaih, which employs local land-users and Elders, strengthens the school's ties with the community. Being on the land also contributes to strong working relationships between the students and teachers.

Appendix A

- Partners

Appendix B

- Funded Projects

Appendix C

- The Numbers

COMMUNITY ADVISORS.

Inuvialuit Regional Corporation	Meghan Etter/Jimmy Ruttan
Gwich'in Tribal Council	Susan Ross
Sahtú	Vacant
Tłı̨chǫ Government	John B. Zoe
Akaįtcho Territory Government	Diane Giroux
Dehcho First Nations	Misty Ireland
NWT Métis Nation	Kyle Napier

FUNDING PARTNERS.

Tides Canada	Steve Ellis
GNWT – HSS	Kyla Kakfwi-Scott
	Sabrina Broadhead
	Kara Guzzo
GNWT – ENR	Erin Kelly
	Sarah True
NWT Recreation and Parks Association	Jess Dunkin
Indigenous Leadership Initiative	Steven Nitah
TNC Canada	Tracey Williams
Dominion Diamond Corporation	Rebecca Plotner
McConnell Foundation	Pamela Ouart-McNabb
Diavik Diamond Mine	Winter Haley
The Gordon Foundation	Carolyn DuBois
GNWT – ECE	Angela Young
	Jackie Siegel
GNWT – ITI	Brenda Dragon

FUNDED PROJECTS.

APPLICANT	PROJECT	TYPE
Community Government of Whatì	Ice Fishing	Indigenous Organization
K'àlemì Dene School	Beaver/Muskrat Camp	School
Foster Family Coalition of the NWT	Canoe Guide	NGO
Angik School	On the Land Gathering	School
Rainbow Sage Gay Straight Alliance	Rainbow River Retreat	NGO
Salvation Army Mental Health Support Services	Outdoor Recreation Programming	NGO
Hay River Métis Government Council	Bringing Youth and Elders Together	Indigenous Organization
Alexis Arrowmaker School	Christmas Camp	School
Children First Society	First Steps on the Land	NGO
ʔehtseo Ayha School	Engaging Students Through On the Land	School
Janelle Nitsiza	Gonaewo: Traditional Moosehide Camp	Individual
Elizabeth Mackenzie School	On the Land Trips	School
Chief Albert Wright School	On the Land at Clement Lake	School
YWCA NWT	Youth Leadership Cultural Day Trips	NGO
Ulukhaktok Community Corporation	Summer Language Camp	Indigenous Organization
Łútsělk'ė Women's Group	Łútsělk'ė Hide Tanning Camp	NGO
Princess Alexandra School	Improving Opportunities for On the Land Activities	School
East Three Secondary School	On the Land Programs	School
Chief Julius School	Trıncedłaiı Gwıts'al Kheetak Tragwatsii	School
Inuvik Youth Centre Society	Youth Land Leadership Series and Exploration Trips	NGO
Yellowknife District Education Number 1	Northern Excursion Club	School
Tułıt'a Dene Band	Re-Introduciung Traditional Culture	Indigenous Organization
Yamozha Kue Society	South Slavey Immersion Camp at Sandy Creek	Indigenous Organization
PWK High School	On the Land Programs	School
Behdzi Ahda First Nation	North End Spring Camp	Indigenous Organization

COMMUNITY	REGION	GRANT AMOUNT
Whatì	Tłıchq	1,000
N'dıłq	Akaiicho	4,300
	NWT	5,000
Paulatuk	Beaufort Delta	5,200
	South Slave	6,610
	NWT	7,000
Hay River	South Slave	8,000
Wekweèù	Tłıchq	8,750
Inuvik	Beaufort Delta	9,400
Déłne	Sahtú	9,460
	Tłıchq	10,000
Behchokq	Tłıchq	10,000
Tułıt'a	Sahtú	11,900
Yellowknife	Akaiicho	12,600
Ulukhaktok	Beaufort Delta	12,825
Łútsělk'ė	Akaiicho	13,000
Hay River	South Slave	13,400
Inuvik	Beaufort Delta	13,500
Teet'ıt Zheh	Beaufort Delta	13,500
Inuvik	Beaufort Delta	13,708
Yellowknife	Akaiicho	15,000
Tułıt'a	Sahtú	15,000
	South Slave	15,000
Fort Smith	South Slave	15,400
Colville Lake	Sahtú	18,611

APPLICANT	PROJECT	TYPE
Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee	On the Land Learning Our Culture	Indigenous Organization
Inualthuyak School	On the Land Program	School
Judy and Michel Lafferty	Fish Camp for Families and Single Moms	Individual
Inuvik Community Corporation	Land Programs	Indigenous Organization
Chief Paul Niditchie	Rediscovering Traditional Paddling Routes on the Arctic Red River: Resilience & Capacity Building	School
Dél̄n̄e Got̄'̄n̄e Government	Dél̄n̄e On the Land Program	Indigenous Organization
West Point First Nation	Community Trip to Tathlina Lake	Indigenous Organization
Pehdzeh Ki First Nation	Youth On the Land	Indigenous Organization
Community Government of Gamèti	Youth On the Land Experience	Indigenous Organization
Dene Nahjo	Rites of Passage: Recognition of Being - Indigenous Women's Gathering	NGO
Deh Gáh Got̄'̄me First Nation	Mentoring Youth On the Land (Year 2)	Indigenous Organization
Yellowknives Dene First Nation	Dechita Naowo: Environmental Monitoring and Traditional Knowledge Application in the Digital Age II	Indigenous Organization
Akaiicho Territory Government	Life as Akaiicho Dene	Indigenous Organization
T̄h̄ch̄o Ł̄eàḡià Ts̄'̄ūl̄i K̄o	On the Land Healing for the Homeless in Behchok̄o	NGO
Ł̄úts̄el̄ K'̄é Dene School	Back on the Land Together	School
Colville Lake School	Spring Camp	School
Northern Youth Leadership	Summer Camps	NGO
Tūl̄it̄'a Dene Band	T̄h̄o Teni'a Tue Ts̄'̄i N̄aihekenáhde (Walk with Us to Tate Lake)	Indigenous Organization
Yellowknife Women's Society	Trauma-Centred On the Land Healing Program	NGO
Dehcho First Nations	Dehcho K'ehodi Stewardship & Guardian Program: On the Land Capacity Building	Indigenous Organization
Deh Gáh School	Experiential Culture-Based Education On the Land	School

COMMUNITY	REGION	GRANT AMOUNT
Aklavik	Beaufort Delta	19,530
Sachs Harbour	Beaufort Delta	20,000
Fort Good Hope	Sahtú	20,000
Inuvik	Beaufort Delta	21,132
Tsiigehtchic	Beaufort Delta	21,500
Dél̄n̄e	Sahtú	22,500
Hay River	South Slave	24,000
Wrigley	Dehcho	25,100
Gamèti	T̄h̄ch̄o	25,400
	NWT	27,000
Fort Providence	Dehcho	28,590
Chief Drygeese Territory	Akaiicho	32,000
	Akaiicho	33,500
Behchok̄o	T̄h̄ch̄o	33,650
Ł̄úts̄el̄k'̄é	Akaiicho	35,000
Colville Lake	Sahtú	38,000
	NWT	45,000
Tūl̄it̄'a	Sahtú	52,000
Yellowknife	Akaiicho	60,000
	Dehcho	60,000
Fort Providence	Dehcho	85,000

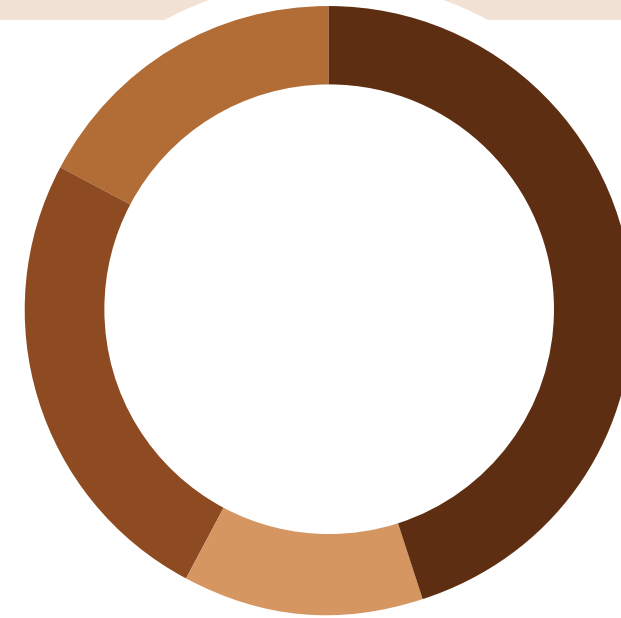
BY APPLICANT TYPE

	No. of Applications		Amount Requested		No. of Applications Approved		Amount Granted	
		%		%		%		%
Indigenous Organization	36	35%	\$1,656,071	45%	16	33%	\$394,658	39%
Individual	6	6%	\$479,260	13%	2	4%	\$30,000	3%
Municipal	1	1%	\$2,000	0%	0	0%		0%
NGO	32	31%	\$900,223	25%	12	25%	\$252,498	25%
School	29	28%	\$632,039	17%	18	38%	\$323,210	32%
TOTAL	104	100%	\$3,669,593	100%	48	100%	\$1,000,366	100%

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

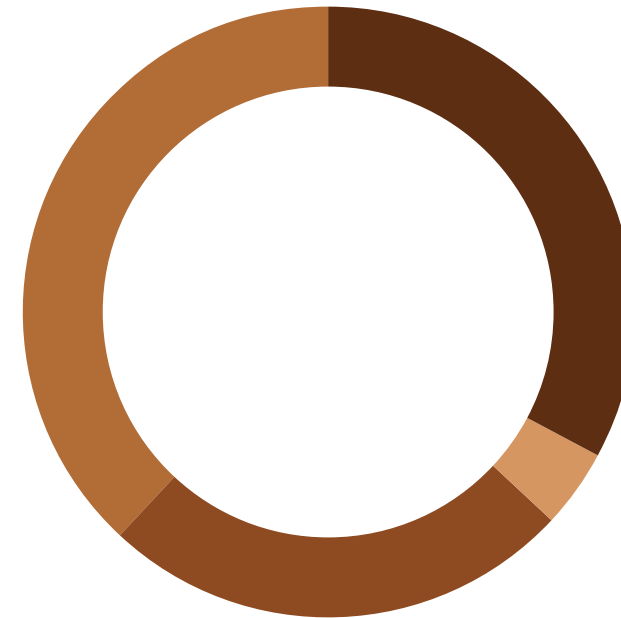


AMOUNT REQUESTED



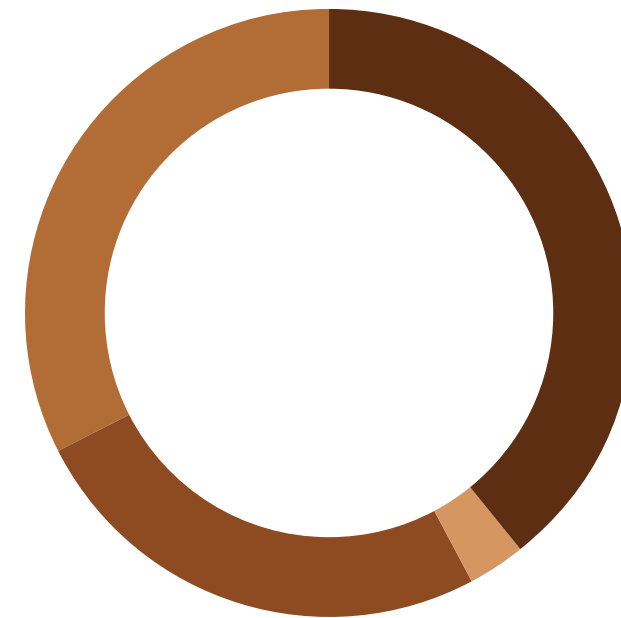
Indigenous Organization	45%
Individual	13%
NGO	25%
School	17%

APPLICATIONS APPROVED



Indigenous Organization	33%
Individual	4%
NGO	25%
School	38%

AMOUNT GRANTED

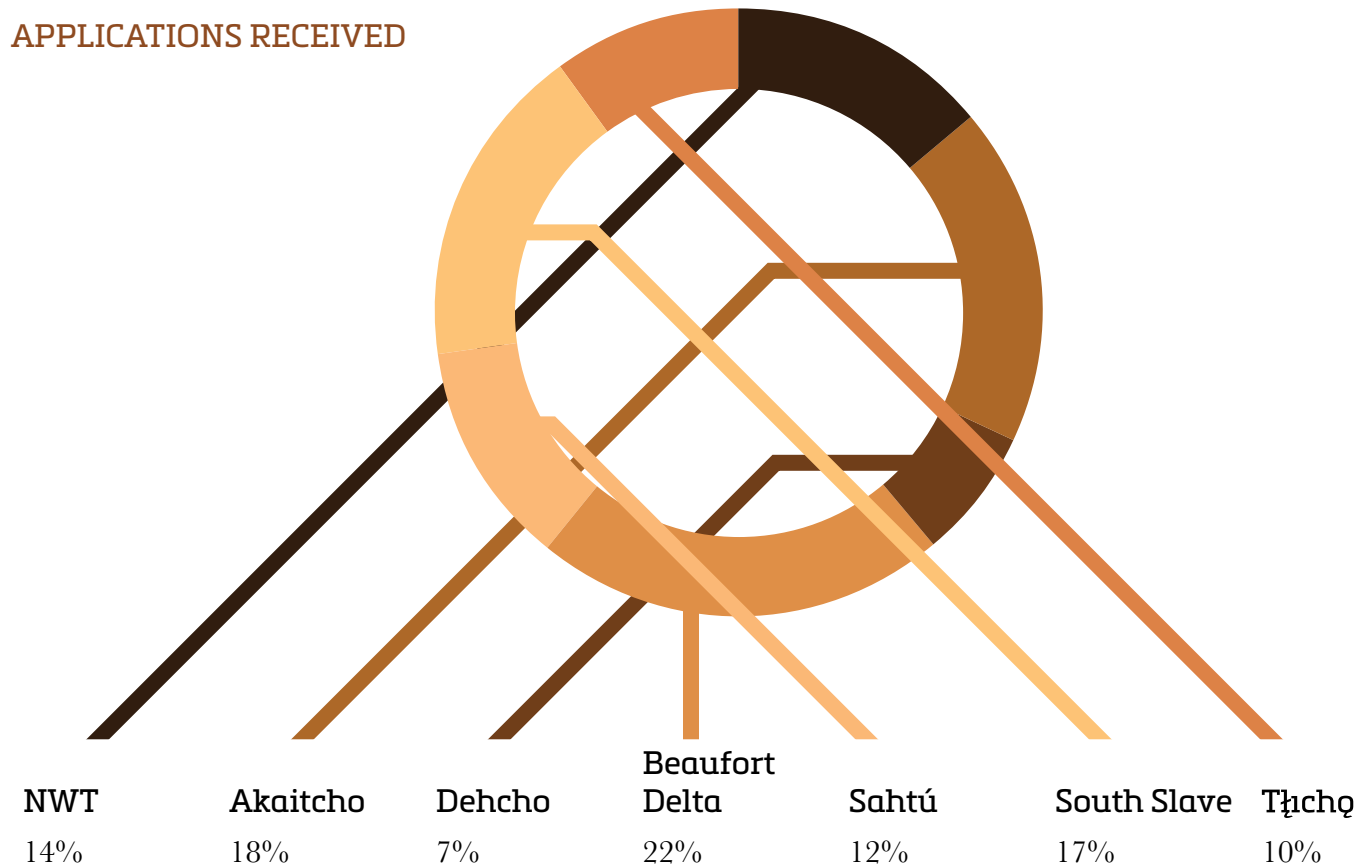


Indigenous Organization	40%
Individual	3%
NGO	25%
School	32%

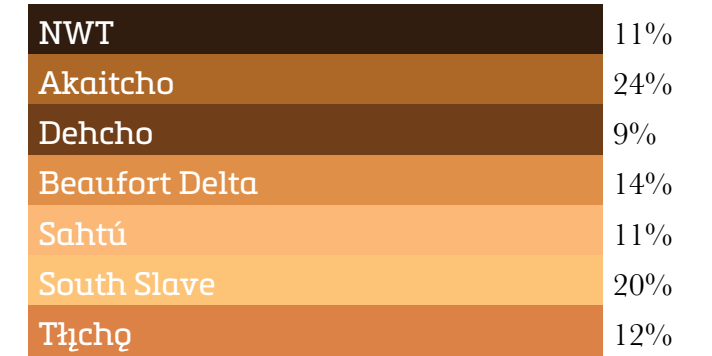
BY REGION.

	No. of Applications	%	Amount Requested	%	No. of Applications Approved	%	Amount Granted	%
NWT	15	14%	\$389,701	11%	4	8%	\$84,000	8%
Akaiicho	19	18%	\$880,375	24%	8	17%	\$205,400	21%
Dehcho	7	7%	\$329,738	9%	4	8%	\$198,690	20%
Beaufort Delta	23	22%	\$511,883	14%	11	23%	\$153,595	15%
Sahtú	12	12%	\$389,975	11%	8	17%	\$187,471	19%
South Slave	18	17%	\$722,870	20%	7	15%	\$82,410	8%
Tłıchǫ	10	10%	\$445,050	12%	6	13%	\$88,800	9%
TOTAL	104	100%	\$3,669,593	100%	48	100%	\$1,000,366	100%

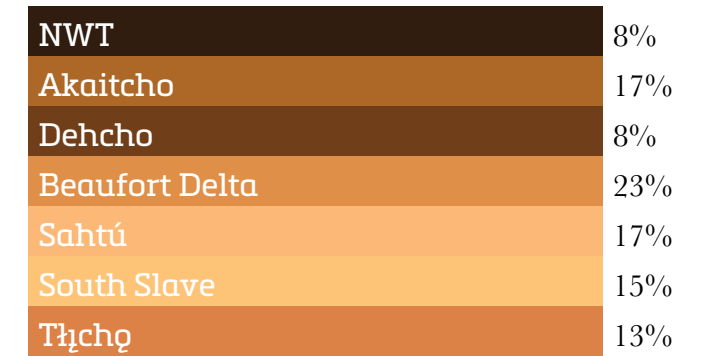
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED



AMOUNT REQUESTED



APPLICATIONS APPROVED



AMOUNT GRANTED





INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

