

GWIJÀAK'ÌH

THE GWICH'IN GOVERNMENT NEWS MAGAZINE

April 2021
Vol. 1

What is Gwijàak'ìh?

Gwijàak'ìh means "We are making fire" in Gwich'in, and is the title for our new news magazine for the Gwich'in Collaborative Government.

The news magazine looks to inform, share and act as a resource to give Participants information, news, backgrounders and fun facts to help our Participants, whether inside or outside the Gwich'in Settlement Area, make their own informed decisions about the future direction of Gwich'in Nation.

FEATURED STORIES



A Message from Grand Chief
Ken Kyikavichik



A Visit with Annie Rose MacNab
in Yellowknife

TAKING THE 'SELF' OUT OF GOVERNMENT

Grand Chief Ken Kyikavichik

I am pleased to write you as your new Grand Chief of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and as of late October 2020, our Lead Negotiator for our Gwich'in Collaborative Government team. You will see us make a direct effort to shift away from calling this process 'self-government' as we have known it for over 20 years. Moving forward, we will generally refer to this process as Gwich'in Government. This is a shift to signify the new approach to our discussions with the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories (NWT). This will also help us to prepare for the potential new form of government that we have the opportunity to create for our communities and Participants as outlined in our Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA).

Before we do this however, we need to reconnect with our Participants on just what Gwich'in Government may be and what this means for each of us as individuals and communities. Our Gwich'in Collaborative Government team will be working to engage with our Participants in our communities in a face-to-face manner over a cup of tea/coffee. This is the way we have always informed our people and is the most effective for us as Gwich'in. Of course, for those who live outside of our

communities, we have our website and social media presence to share updates, history and information in written and video format. For all Participants, there will be a way for you to connect with the Gwich'in Collaborative Government team to ask direct questions either directly through our personnel who will be present in our communities, or through our website at www.gwichincollaborative.ca and Twitter @gwichincollab.

The Gwich'in Collaborative Government represents the governance aspirations for Participants belonging to the Ehditit Gwich'in Council in Aklavik, the Tetlit Gwich'in Council in Teet'it Zheh (Fort McPherson) and the Gwichya Gwich'in Council in Tsiigehtchic. Participants belonging to the Nihtat Gwich'in Council in Inuvik are being represented by their own community-led model of negotiations that was agreed by the Gwich'in Annual General Assembly in 2018. If both models are formed, a collaborative community-based Gwich'in Government and the Nihtat Gwich'in Government, we intend to create a Joint Gwich'in Authority that would collaborate on governance issues within the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA) as a whole.

The formation of a regional Gwich'in Government is the realization of our original intentions when we finalized the GCLCA in 1992. The management and ownership of land and resources within our traditional territory was the first step, now we need to finalize our governance model to support our dream of self-determination for future generations. We will not do this however, by placing our rights and interests at risk or simply changing from administration by the Government of the NWT to



the Gwich'in Government. We certainly will not be rushing to finalize an Agreement. What we create must work for our communities and Participants over the long-term and must be reflective of our historical methods of governance. Our Gwich'in Government must also be adequately funded and as a result we will not 'negotiate' for what is rightfully our responsibility.

If Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories are not truly committed to finalizing an Agreement with the Gwich'in Collaborative team, then we are prepared to pause our discussions until such time that they are ready. In the meantime, we will be working to take a grassroots approach to advising our communities of:

- Where we are at in the process;
- Provide an overview and the key areas and issues with the current draft of the Agreement-In-Principle (AIP); and,
- Seek feedback on our negotiations with Canada and the NWT for a regional Gwich'in Government delivered as close to a community level as possible.

We must also develop a realistic plan with milestones with our Participants such that our progress and relative success of discussions can be measured. Our success will depend upon the collective involvement of our Participants to guide our negotiations team.

My commitment to you is that our Gwich'in Government team will operate on a level of transparency, simplicity and accessibility. Our ask of you as Participants is to take interest again in the Gwich'in Government, get involved by reviewing the materials as they come available and contact us if you have any suggestions if we have not worked to reach out to you directly.

There is much work to undertake, however through inclusion and participation in the process I have no doubt of our ability to jointly achieve the progress we desire. I and our team are excited at the prospect of developing a model of governance in our communities to provide improved programming and services for our Gwich'in people.

In unity,

Kenny Kyikavichik
GTC Grand Chief and
Lead Negotiator, Gwich'in Collaborative Government





A Visit With Annie Rose MacNab In Yellowknife

"There are hundreds of Gwich'in living in the southern NWT and so many of us are related, so it's always nice to visit in the big city. There's lots of laughter"

It's just after 1PM. The office door in the Kellett Building on 49th Street opens and Annie Rose MacNab, the Yellowknife Office Manager for GTC steps through and smiles, anticipating a day spent sharing information, assisting people and chatting with Gwich'in Participants living in and visiting Yellowknife.

With 54% of Gwich'in land claim Participants living outside of the Gwich'in Settlement Area, this office plays an important role in providing connections to the homelands. The office is shared with Gwich'in Council International which looks after Gwich'in interests across the NWT, Yukon and Alaska.

Annie Rose has been working out of the office for the GTC for the past five years but is well-acquainted with the Yellowknife Gwich'in scene. As a member of the Executive for the Izhii Kaiikit Tat Gwich'in organization (Yellowknife Gwich'in Society), she has been putting together traditional events, programs, fundraisers and gatherings to support the community for the past 15 years.

The group tries to plan activities each month that invoke Gwich'in culture, traditions and just plain old fun. Everything from summer fish fries to Gwich'in Day celebrations, language and sewing classes, holiday parties and family excursions onto the land.

"It's so important for Gwich'in in Yellowknife to get together and participate in traditional activities as much as possible. There are hundreds of Gwich'in living in the southern NWT and so many of us are related, so it's always nice to visit in the big city. There's lots of laughter" says Annie Rose, smiling as she prepares some tea in the office.

Asked about the role she plays in the office three afternoons a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 1-4PM), she smiles and points to a poster board covered in job opportunities, "We offer services that include computer and Internet access for Participants to use for job-hunting and office-skills training and I probably help 4-5 people a week to use that service. Many folks stop by to pick up information packets and newsletters from the GTC - on what the GTC is doing and now what's happening on self-government. And of course, we have some regulars who stop by for some tea and conversation just like back home."

The Yellowknife office for the Gwich'in Tribal Council is the second floor at 4912 49th Street (across from Shopper's Drug Mart) and is open three afternoons a week (M, W, F) from 1-4PM. Drop by for a visit with Annie Rose and have some tea, update your information, use the job/education/training computers, and pick up materials on GTC activities - and find out where things stand with the Self-Government Agreement-In-Principle and current status of the negotiations.





Anna Leon (GTC) helping prep the takeout containers.



Nihtat President Kelly McLeod on the grill for Gwich'in Day.



Happy Gwich'in Day 2021 from Inuvik!

Nihtat Director Chris Smith, Nihtat President Kelly McLeod and GTC Grand Chief Ken Kyikavichik enjoying Gwich'in Day in Inuvik





tell us about the logo.

The beaded flower is distinctively Gwich'in and while each flower is unique, many minds contributed to the Gwich'in design. This was chosen as the symbol for the collaborative government as the process similarly involves Gwich'in as a collective working towards a common goal.

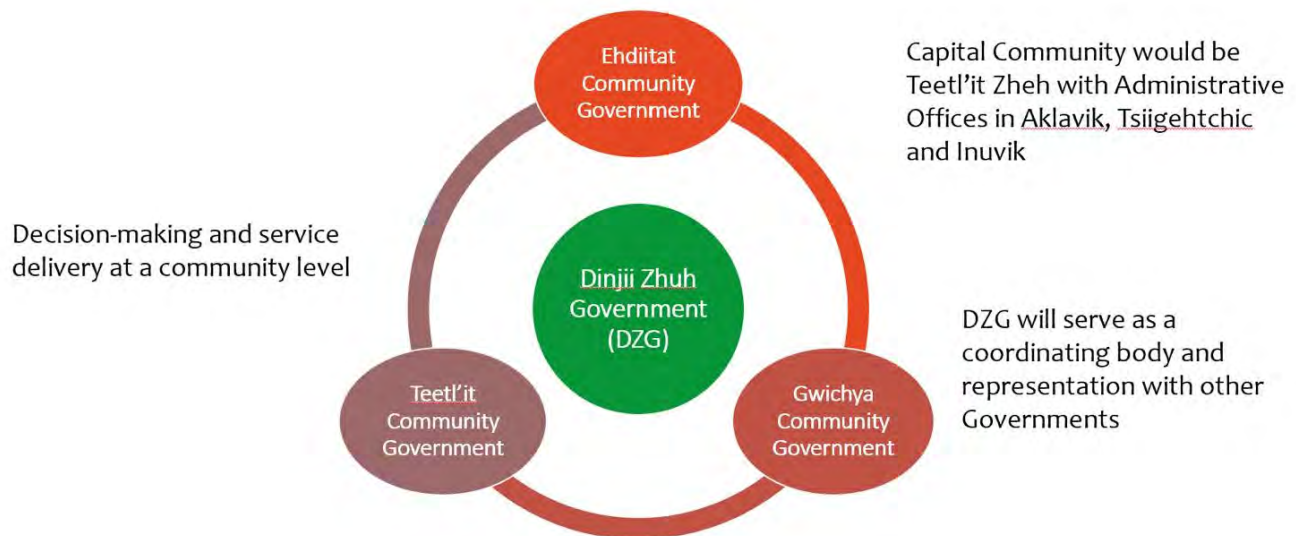
The particular design and colours were inspired by this pair of slippers made by Lucy Anne Kay (Carroll).



GWICH'IN
COLLABORATIVE
GOVERNMENT



GIVE US YOUR INPUT

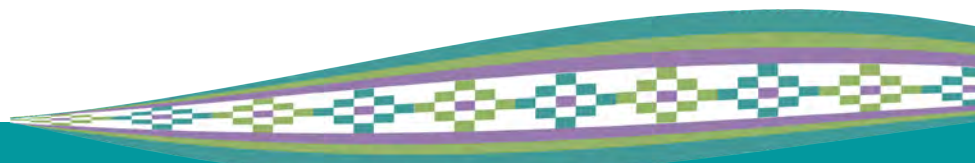


This is a graphical depiction of what our potential Gwich'in Government model may look like.

You will see the community governments in each of Aklavik, Teet'it Zheh and Tsiigehtchic supported by a regional Dinjii Zhuh Government that will eventually replace the GTC.

We would seek to have our regional governance centre in Teet'it Zheh with a main administrative office in Inuvik and support offices in Aklavik and Tsiigehtchic.

This is conceptual at this point and we would like to hear your input and feedback either in person or on our website at gwichincollaborative.ca.



WHAT ARE THE COMMON OBJECTIVES OF GWICH'IN GOVERNMENT



01

Establishment of an Effective Governance System

Using historical methods and models of governance through elected Chief & Council at a Community Government level, and Executive & Chiefs at a regional Dinjii Zhuh Government level.

02

Reconnection to Land, Culture and Heritage

Ability for the Gwich'in to pursue cultural activities and stewardship on its lands as outlined in the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement.

03

Language

The revitalization, preservation, and strengthening of the Gwich'in language to achieve a level of fluency amongst citizens and those working in the institutions for Gwich'in Government.

04

Promotion of Health and Well-Being

Provision of accessible health care and supports in Gwich'in communities along with an appropriate level of care and support, in accordance with Gwich'in values, for children, non-resident populations and respected Elders.

05

Development of Sustainable Communities

Healthy Gwich'in communities with leading infrastructure, quality homes and food & water security.

06

Unlocking Potential

Quality education and training for Gwich'in citizens, particularly Youth, to succeed in the modern economy while retaining Gwich'in values.

07

Economic Prosperity

Support development of a sustainable economy in Gwich'in communities and creation of generational wealth to close the socio-economic gaps between Gwich'in and non-Gwich'in residents of Canada.

08

Inclusive

Support, promote and involve Youth and Elder populations in all levels of government and decision-making.



Far More Information

On Gwich'in Government

news
videos
faqs
surveys
backgrounders
information

www.gwichincollaborative.ca

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