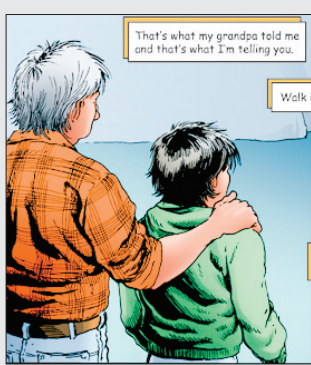


Canada skips Arctic Council meeting in Russia
Canada decided to take a “principled stand” against Russia by boycotting the Arctic Council meetings held in Moscow last week. *See page 2.*



Health Accord expiry raises concerns in NWT
Residents spoke out against the expiration of the 2004 Health Accord at a public presentation in Yellowknife last week. *See page 6.*



Fort Smith stories given life in new comic series
NWT-born author Richard Van Camp is publishing stories of Fort Smith in graphic novels illustrated by indigenous artists. *See page 9.*



Geocaching in NWT celebrates Wildlife Week
Environment and Natural Resources launched its first geocaching event in six communities in the NWT to mark Wildlife Week. *See page 14.*

NORTHERN Journal

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Photo: Nathalie Heiberg-Harrison

Aiden Kunnizzi, 18, tries out archery for the first time last week in Inuvik. The inaugural event of the new program, put on by the Inuvik Youth Centre on Wednesday evening, drew a wide range of ages to come try the traditional sport for the first time. See page 8 for more.

MGM shut-down opens up NWT oil leases *Pending sale will see new Canol shale play ownership*

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG
MGM Energy Corp. will be closing its doors forever within the next two months, but who will be taking over its shares - and leases in the Northwest Territories - has yet to be determined.
The oil and gas junior is hoping to have its remaining shares not already owned by former parent company Paramount Resources Ltd. returned to the mothership by June, pending shareholder approval.
MGM president Henry Sykes said the decision is in the “best interest” of the company, which has struggled for a decade attempting to make its mark in the territory’s

Beaufort and Central Mackenzie regions.
“Our experience has not been a positive one. Obviously we’ve spent hundreds of millions of dollars, drilled 11 wells and have nothing really to show for it today in terms of any cash flow-generating ability,” said Sykes, who predicted similar outcomes for other companies.
“Until there’s infrastructure in the North, until people can see a clear path to investment and return on investment, I think you’re going to find activity is going to be delayed, if not eliminated altogether,” he said.
MGM has been inactive in the Canol shale play since

drilling its single vertical well with Royal Dutch Shell in the winter of 2012-13, but continues to hold six leases in the Sahtu region around Norman Wells, Tulita and Colville Lake totalling approximately 318,000 hectares.
Two of MGM’s Sahtu leases are owned in partnership with Shell, while another lease is split 50/50 with an unnamed private company south of Tulita. Apart from its stake in the Canol, MGM also has a string of properties in the Beaufort Delta.
Shell pulled out of its partnership with MGM in late 2012 after their application to complete exploratory horizontal fracking in the Sahtu

was referred to environmental assessment. Both companies determined it was too early in the game to finance a full public review.
“We and Shell still own land together, and we’ll continue to work together, but you’re not going to see any activity on those lands at least in the next year, I would suggest,” Sykes said.
Shell will now have the option of advancing exploration with a company backed by larger finances, but whether or not that will be Paramount is uncertain.
The \$50-million deal on the table right now for MGM - one share of Paramount for every 300 shares of MGM

Energy - has full board approval, though MGM has until three days before the June shareholders meeting to strike a superior deal, in which case it would have to reimburse Paramount up to \$400,000.
Paramount was unavailable to comment on future plans for the Sahtu if its bid is successful.
MGM was created in 2007 to bring stranded oil and gas resources to market via the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, but when the pipeline was put on hold because of market conditions, the company decided to focus on its Canol properties.
See MGM on page 3.

NEWS BRIEFS

Métis win court appeal, obtain Indian rights under Constitution

Métis people have Indian rights under the Canadian Constitution, according to the Federal Court of Appeal. The court announced its landmark decision Thursday, upholding an earlier court decision in 2013 and tying up a case that began in 1999 when Harry Daniels, former Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' leader, took the federal government to court over the rights of Métis and non-status Indians, though the federal court's decision did not grant the same rights to non-status Indians. The federal government has spent \$9 million fighting the Harry Daniels case.

Alberta puts Gladue Reports in the hands of Native Counselling Services

The government of Alberta has announced new funding and changes to Gladue Reports - a criminal sentencing option for Aboriginals created by the Supreme Court of Canada - that will see the responsibility for the reports in the hands of the Native Counselling Services, instead of a government department. The government touted the \$200,000 funding and change of responsibility as a progressive step for the Alberta justice system that will see more "cultural support" for Aboriginal people to help decrease their chances of re-offending.

Fédération franco-ténoise appoints new director

Jean de Dieu Tuyishime has been appointed the new director of the Fédération franco-ténoise (FFT). Previously the acting director, Tuyishime's appointment was announced at the community forum in Yellowknife last week in front of representatives from all NWT francophone agencies. Tuyishime previously held the position of French NWT Health Network coordinator before moving to the FFT where he has been working for the last 10 years. FFT representatives praised Tuyishime following his appointment, saying the acting director was the best candidate for the position and brought the organization stability after it recently saw two CEOs leave on short notice.



A member of Greenpeace protests Arctic Council meetings in Yellowknife in March, which were closed to the public.

Politics Arctic Council

Canada skips Arctic Council meetings in Russia

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Skipping out on meetings supposed to address black carbon and methane emissions in Moscow, Canada decided to take a "principled stand" against Russia by boycotting the Arctic Council gathering last week.

Arctic Council chair and federal Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq announced last week that Canada would not be attending the three days of working group meetings because of Russia's military presence in Ukraine.

"As a result of Russia's illegal occupation of Ukraine and its continued provocative actions in Crimea and elsewhere, Canada did not attend working-group-level meetings in Moscow this week. Canada will continue to support the important work of the Arctic Council," Aglukkaq said in a statement.

Ottawa said the decision to avoid the meetings builds upon its "tough stance" against the occupation, including sanctions and travel bans.

Representatives from all eight Arctic Council member states, including a Russian delegation, attended senior official meetings in Yellowknife last month, where officials were adamant that Russian military action in Crimea would not affect circumpolar cooperation.

That seems to have changed with Canada's latest move, which Western Arctic MP Dennis Bevington believes could make the situation in Ukraine worse and threaten the efficacy of the Arctic Council.

"What Canada's done is at the very best premature," he said. "You could look at it as engaging a region into a conflict that really is just the wrong thing to do. The whole emphasis is to continue to work for international cooperation in the Arctic. A requirement of that is Russian participation, and without that, that situation can only escalate militarily. Canada's widening the conflict here."

He said the issues of black carbon and methane are critical ones for Canada to be involved in addressing, considering they are linked to the oil and gas industry, from extraction to flaring.

"The issue needs that participation. Canada's just

organization? Is the chair relinquishing her duties here by not taking a position that matches with the rest of the Arctic Council?" Bevington said. "By being chair of the Arctic Council, you're committing to consensus development in your actions."

The whole emphasis is to continue to work for international cooperation in the Arctic. A requirement of that is Russian participation, and without that, that situation can only escalate militarily.

Western Arctic MP Dennis Bevington

picking absolutely the wrong target here," Bevington said. "We're engaged with Russia in this particular area, it's an important area to be working on, and Canada removing itself - the chairman of the Arctic Council removing themselves - from participation I think is...at worst, completely wrongheaded."

Aglukkaq's announcement came a day after Prime Minister Stephen Harper blamed Russia for the separatist movement in Ukraine's eastern provinces, following weeks of imposed sanctions and halted bilateral activities between Canada and Russia's army. Harper is also seen to be leading international efforts to have Russia kicked out of the G8.

Bevington said last week's move calls into question Canada's chairmanship, as the decision was made without the consensus of the rest of the Arctic Council.

"Wouldn't you think the chairman of an organization would be responsible to test the waters of the whole

Arctic committee looks into council snub

The international standing committee of Arctic Parliamentarians is following up with the Arctic Council over a recent refusal to let the committee present to senior council officials at their latest meetings in Yellowknife.

Bevington, who serves as vice chair of the standing committee of elected Arctic officials, attended the senior Arctic Council official meetings as an observer, but for the first time in the history of the council was unable to address the meeting.

"We asked for an opportunity to give a report, and it was refused," Bevington said.

The standing committee, which predates the Arctic Council, sent a letter to Aglukkaq outlining its concerns.

Aglukkaq was invited to the last meeting of the Arctic Parliamentarians, where she was given an hour to address the elected officials and answer questions.



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Métis want co-management of East Arm park

NWT Métis Nation in talks with Parks Canada on Thaidene Nene

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The NWT Métis Nation is not only looking for impact mitigation when it comes to the proposed Thaidene Nene national park on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake; it wants to be part of the co-management model with the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN).

President Garry Bailey told *The Journal* last week that beyond wanting to preserve members' way of life, the Métis Nation wants to sit on the same board as Parks Canada and LKDFN, and be given the same economic opportunities as people in Lutsel K'e.

"For any board established, we'd be wanting equal representation," he said. "When we get into management of the park, we'd prefer one board."

The Métis began negotiating an impact benefit agreement (IBA) with Parks Canada in February. Those negotiations are expected to be completed within the next 18 months based on monthly meetings.

While the territorial



NWTMN president Garry Bailey, left, signs an agreement to negotiate an impact and benefit plan with Parks Canada on the national park proposed for the East Arm of Great Slave Lake.

government has voiced concern about the size of the park, the proposed boundaries of which total a land mass of 33,000 square-km, Bailey said the main concerns for

the Métis are access to traditional harvesting of wildlife, fish, plants and trees, and the way in which the park might impact economic opportunities.

"So far, we don't really have concerns about the size of the park; we're more concerned about how it's going to affect us, and we want to make sure that it

doesn't affect us," he said. "We don't want to end up with another Wood Buffalo National Park where they're kicking the Métis out of the park and stuff like that. That's our biggest fear, and that's why we're not signed on yet. We're actually negotiating a plan and hopefully it'll accommodate our interests."

The name of the park will also be under discussion, Bailey said.

LKDFN and Parks Canada have been formally negotiating the creation of the national park since 2004, with talks stretching back 30 years. The two parties signed an establishment agreement last year, and now are looking to finalize the boundaries.

The devolution transfer, which saw authorities for Crown land handed over to the territorial government on Apr. 1, has meant the GNWT will also have a spot at the negotiating table with LKDFN over the next two years before the interim land withdrawal for the park expires in 2016.

Negotiators for LKDFN said the agreement is between the First Nation and the federal government, and that any negotiations Parks Canada does with another Aboriginal government is separate.

While there are no meetings scheduled between the Métis and First Nation, Bailey said he is not opposed to sitting down.

"I imagine that once we've all agreed to what that park's going to be, where that park's going to be, then we're going to have to get together and hopefully see what kind of common interests we have," he said.

Bailey said the Métis have been trying to get to the table on Thaidene Nene since 2004.

"It's been a long time coming for us and finally we managed to get to the table. Lutsel K'e or the Akaicho are probably way ahead of us; we haven't seen their agreement or anything like that," he said. "The main thing is that we're there now."

Industry Oil & Gas

MGM president predicts rough go for stranded Northern resources

Continued from page 1.

Sykes said the unfortunate reality is that investors are reticent to back exploration projects in the North, even if those companies are sitting on trillions of cubic metres of oil or gas, which is due to lack of pipelines and other ways to get resources to market.

"We're sitting on billions of barrels of oil in the Sahtu, but there's no where to take any of it, and nobody can tell you when there might be a way to get any of it out of there," he said.

"(Investors) want to see that it's actually happening, that somebody's actually starting to put infrastructure in the ground, before they start making commitments, otherwise they just don't believe it. So that makes it impossible for companies like ours to raise money for Northern exploration, and I think that's really quite regrettable."

The struggle also stretches to bigger companies like ConocoPhillips and Husky Energy,

We're sitting on billions of barrels of oil in the Sahtu, but there's no where to take any of it, and nobody can tell you when there might be a way to get any of it out of there.

Henry Sykes
MGM Energy Corp.

both currently drilling in the Sahtu, Sykes said: "Almost everybody involved in the Sahtu is looking for partners to spread their risk around because it's too much money with no imminent prospect of return."

Sykes predicts spending will slow down once companies meet their initial spending commitments, as exhibited this month by ConocoPhillips. While the company plans to apply to drill up to 10 more wells in the Sahtu, it decided not to allocate any capital funding to winter drilling in 2014-15.

Although he sees great

strides being taken by the territorial government and the private sector to improve the energy investment situation in the NWT, Sykes said there's no contest for investors when a turnaround on profits in a well-developed area like the Bakken shale play takes months compared to years, or even decades, in the North.

"It's very hard for the North to compete with that. In fact, I would say that today it's impossible for the North to compete with that," he said. "Stranded resources are of no value to anybody."

May is Hard of Hearing Awareness Month

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) Yellowknife Branch is having an open house on May 15, 2014 at the Baker Centre at 6:30 p.m.

All are welcome to join. There will be equipment demonstrations and a talk by guest speaker Lynn La Saga.



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
Association des malentendants canadiens

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Letters to the Editor Policy

The Northern Journal welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must be signed and include a phone number so the author can be verified. Names will be withheld on request in special circumstances where the reasons are determined to be valid. The Journal reserves the right to edit letters for length, libel, clarity and taste. Opinions expressed in letters and columns are not necessarily those of the publisher or editor.



The Northern Journal is available in the following NWT communities:

Aklavik	Fort Resolution	Paulatuk
Behchoko	Fort Simpson	Sachs Harbour
Colville Lake	Fort Smith	Trout Lake
Deline	Gameti	Tsiigehtchic
Eagle Plains	Hay River	Tuktoyaktuk
Ekati Diamond Mines	Inuvik	Tulita
Enterprise	Jean Marie River	Ulukhaktok
Fort Good Hope	Lutsel K'e	Wekweeti
Fort Liard	Nahanni Butte	Whati
Fort McPherson	Norman Wells	Wrigley
Fort Providence		Yellowknife

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Atikameg	Fort MacKay	Prairie
Brownvale	Fort McMurray	Kehewin
Cadotte Lake	Fort Vermilion	Kinuso
Chard	Frog Lake	Lac La Biche
Chatch	Glenevis	Morinville
Cold Lake	Goodfish Lake	Peace River
Conklin	Grande Prairie	Red Earth Creek
Driftpile	Grouard	Saddle Lake
Duffield	High Level	Slave Lake
Edmonton	High Prairie	St. Paul
Enilda	Hythe	Valleyview
Enoch		Wabasca

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A summer peril awaits us

It is that time again. Yes, we are talking about spring, finally here after a long, seemingly cruel winter. Soon after spring comes bug season, so let's relish this.

After spring also comes the threat of wildfire, the peril of all boreal forest dwellers. We should be actively working at well-thought-out plans to deal with that, but it isn't happening. Why not?

Each year around this time, a tradition now after decades of doing it, we at *The Journal* sound the alarm: "Fire season is coming and we are not prepared."

Almost every one of the 32 NWT communities is surrounded by coniferous forest and most of it has been there beyond its time - protected, allowed to age, now "over-mature" and ready to burn. Those communities are vulnerable, at risk. It is a serious problem that is routinely ignored. Who is to blame for the inaction? We suggest it is the department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Two things need to be done.

1. All communities must have a plan to manage and reduce fire risk. That plan should be created by a local committee of up to three experienced and capable individuals who identify threat areas and make recommendations for remedial action - how the forest that

surrounds each community should be managed or even removed.

2. All communities must have viable, competent emergency preparedness (EMO) capability.

The goal must be to stimulate communities to be in the lead and take action themselves. They need to be counselled and empowered.

The current "Fire Smart" programs initiated by the department of Energy and Natural Resource do not come close to meeting the need. They are a paltry effort. Communities merely dabble in what should be a diligent, dedicated, sustained (year-round) initiative to mitigate the potential impact of a wildfire. Many do nothing at all.

In addition, most communities have no effective EMO capability or plan. Few, if any, have proper emergency preparedness. Most lack an EMO coordinator. If they do have one, the role is a side-line task with low priority. Fewer still have active, competent EMO committees. None have decent up-to-date evacuation plans that offer at least two evacuation routes with safe marshall locations that can accommodate large numbers of people. What of water and shelter to sustain people for a number of days and, oh, did we mention bug season?

All this must be addressed now, not in a scramble when a fire is imminent and the situation is dire. It is common sense, not rocket science. No expensive, unused, time-wasting consultant reports please. A bit of planning, best carried out by the communities themselves, is all that is needed. What is required is an advisor to suggest and facilitate who travels between communities. That should be the mandate of the department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

The Kelowna fires in 2009, Slave Lake in 2011, this year in California in January near Los Angeles, then February in Australia when 30,000 people had to be evacuated, and in the last two weeks in fire-stricken Valparaiso, Chile, deadly fires killed 13 people and destroyed 2,000 homes - how many lessons do we need?

Climate change and the accompanying severe weather patterns promise periods of extensive drought. Things will get worse. This is not something we can ignore.

We call on Robert C. McLeod, the MACA minister for the Northwest Territories, to act on this. Invoke communities to take charge and become prepared. It is just a matter of time before the North encounters tragedy and lives and property are lost.



Kelsey Baldwin plays guitar and sings Easter hymns at the Fort Smith recreation centre last Tuesday as part of the Anglican Church's Easter celebration lunches held on three separate days last week.



From left, Daryl Grundy, Ruth Harrold and Tanya Vyse snack on tuna and egg salad sandwiches during the Easter gathering Tuesday.

WEATHER

Inuvik



Weekly Norms:
High -5°C Low -16°C

Yellowknife



Weekly Norms:
High 2°C Low -9°C

Hay River



Weekly Norms:
High 5°C Low -7°C

Fort Smith



Weekly Norms:
High 8°C Low -5°C

Healthy parents, healthy children

'Because children don't come with a manual'

The amount of information available to new and expecting parents can be overwhelming, and sometimes it can be difficult for parents to sort through it all to find reliable information. Fortunately, Alberta Health Services has a resource called "Healthy Parents, Healthy Children" that makes it simple for new parents to find the answers they need.

Including both print and online options, together these resources provide everything expecting parents and parents of children up to 6 years of age need to know to help their children grow, learn and be healthy in their early years. These

easy to navigate resources were developed in collaboration with Alberta health care providers and parents to create a made-in-Alberta reference guide tailored to Alberta parents.

Healthy Parents, Health Children includes two print books as well as electronic tools. The first print book, *Pregnancy and Birth*, includes information useful from the beginning of pregnancy right up until six weeks after the baby comes. The book is available to all expecting families in the Alberta Health Services North Zone by getting a redemption card from your prenatal

care provider and bringing it to your local public health centre. If you are pregnant, please ask your prenatal care provider for your redemption card.

Book two, *The Early Years*, is given by a Public Health Nurse to all families with new babies, and includes information on the first five years of a child's life, from the early stages of taking care of your newborn to the first days of school. Families with new babies are given this book by a public health nurse during the follow-up appointment that occurs in the first couple of weeks after you have your baby.

Online versions of both

books are downloadable and can be found online by visiting www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca. Visit this website from your tablet, smart phone or computer to access online information, webisodes and e-cards - all created for you to help you meet the challenge of raising a healthy child.

For more information, visit www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca, call Health Link Alberta at 1-866-408-LINK (5465) or contact your local public health centre.

Danielle Larivee
Public Health Nurse with
Alberta Health Services



White Girl

Yamoria, A Legend: Part 2 of 3

By DAWN KOSTELNIK

Guarding the mouth of Sahtu De, the Bear River, is Bear Rock. In the time before time, the great Yamoria was a medicine man that was also the instiller of law. Giant beavers were living in the Sahtu, Great Bear Lake and hunting and killing the Dene (people). Yamoria needed to set the balance so he hunted the giant beavers.

He chased them up the Bear River and churned up the St. Charles Rapids. Three beavers were killed at the mouth of the Bear River with his colossal bow; two of his arrows remain a testament to his great feat, the arrows rise toward the sky now. The hides of the beaver were stretched upon the boulders of Bear Rock where they dry still, in the summer sun. Yamoria took the bodies of the beavers 10 miles up river (Mackenzie River) to cook them. Fat from the cooking beavers ran into the earth and smoulders and smokes from the banks

yet today. When you look into the smoke and are lucky enough to see flames from this ancient fire, you will live to be very old. To this day all of this remains as in the old times.

Bear Rock guards the approach to Bear River; we are on our way. It will be hours until we arrive at Franklin. I have my Dad's five star sleeping bag; this heavy down filled sleeping bag is fronted with wool and covered in something akin to light canvas. I've laid it out in the bow of the canoe and as I climb into it unfolds me in a feather nest. Rushing water across the bow starts its hypnotic rhythm, the warmth of the sun beating down on the canoe creeps into your body as strong as any drug. The kicker is whining in the distance muffled by the five star sleeping bag, and I sleep for hours under the sun in the bow of the canoe. To this day there is no greater sense of peace and tranquility for me then being on the water

listening to the sound of a kicker and the rush of water.

We pull over on the riverbank, just below St. Charles rapids to make tea. My brothers look for wood for the fire; Paul and my father are checking motors and fuel before we head into the white water. Francis is teaching me to make bannock in the flour bag. Bannock is very much like a large baking powder biscuit that is fried over an open fire.

I have to dig out the cast iron frying pan and grab the tea pail as well. The fire is going, the tea pail is filled from the river and hung from a green willow (green willow takes longer to catch on fire) above it; the frying pan is set beside the fire to heat up. This fire needs to die down some before the pan can go on with the bannock dough.

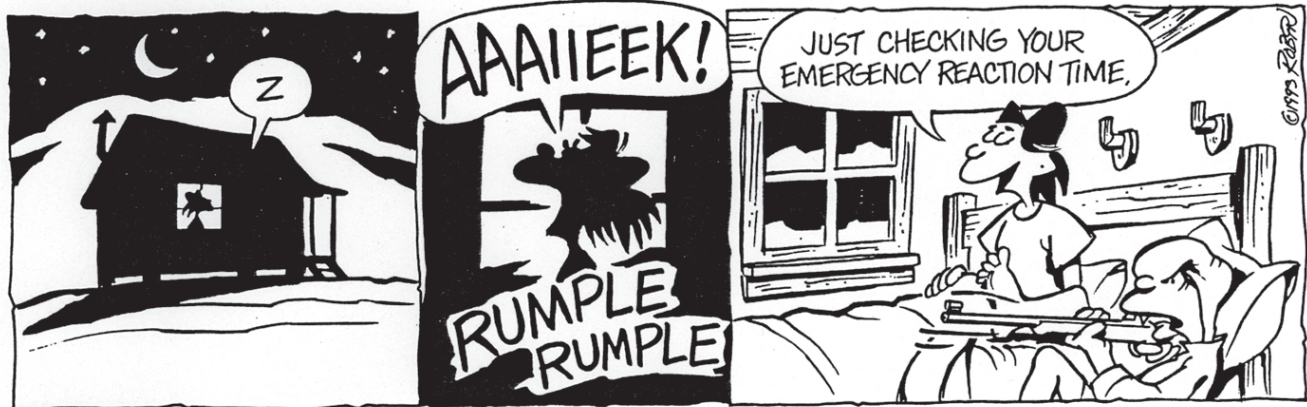
A large chunk of lard is set to melt in the pan. All ingredients for the bannock are mixed right in the flour sack. Lard, salt, baking powder and of course, the flour...

water is added a bit at a time. Francis shows me how to wait till the fire is just right, pat out the dough and set it to cook. Cooking a full sized bannock takes patience and time; they often burn before they are cooked through. Means you are in too much of a hurry. Panic, panic but don't burn the bannock!

A breeze blows up and keeps the hordes of mosquitoes away. You will never starve in the Arctic if you have bread or bannock, you take two pieces of either and slap them together in the air and voila, mosquito sandwich. It's true.

These rapids are a level one and two, which is pretty tame. We are traveling against the current, and waves hit the canoe and spray up. My face is burning in the sun, the spray is cool and splashes in my eyes, and I look over at my brothers who have their tongues out trying to catch the water as it sprays over their bow. They are boys, after all.

MUKLUK



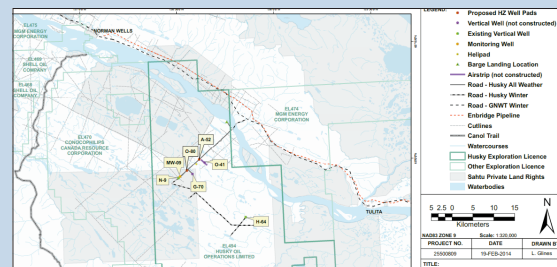
CORRECTION

In our story "Merger promises to reshape Northern aviation," published Apr. 15, 2014, it was incorrectly stated that Canadian North employs approximately 500 workers. In fact, the company has more than 900 employees. *The Journal* apologizes for this error.

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

Northern Journal 2014

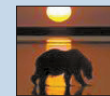
Husky applies to frack four wells in Sahtu



Husky Energy submitted its application to frack up to four horizontal wells in the Canol shale play of the Sahtu region on Monday, which if approved would make it the second company to use multistage hydraulic fracturing in the Northwest Territories.



Ann Rose Kerkovius: frack on frack off



Deanna Gill: It's never going to end! When will it be enough!!

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ARCHIVES

15 Years Ago...

A narrow surplus

Last year's surplus is going to keep this year's government in the black, according to Monday's 1999-2000 government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) budget. But don't expect much in the way of new money. The fiscal year of 1998-99 – the money used to help forecast this year's budget – is expected to end with an anticipated deficit of \$22 million.

Issue: April 20, 1999

20 Years Ago...

Town hoping for \$440,000 boost

With a little bit of luck, Fort Smith might finally get the \$440,000 owed to the town by the federal government for grants in lieu of property taxes for land set aside by Ottawa for Aboriginal use. GNWT Finance Minister John Pollard told the assembled town council last week he was "making good progress with the federal government on resolving the issue."

Issue: April 20, 1994

30 Years Ago...

Cellblock death

An inquest has been ordered into the death of a Hay River man who passed away while sleeping in the RCMP cell last weekend. Ernest Sibbeston, a 59 year-old trapper and resident of Hay River, was pronounced dead by coroner Dr. Earl Covert at approximately 8:20 p.m. Saturday.

Issue: April 19, 1984

NWT residents defend medicare as accord expires

By MARIA CHURCH

With the expiration of the 2004 Health Accord creating a wave of protest across the country this month, NWT residents added their voice to the fray of concerns about medicare last Wednesday at a presentation organized in Yellowknife by Alternatives North and the Canadian Health Coalition (CHC).

The presentation was one of 42 events being held across Canada in protest of the Mar. 31 expiry of the 10 year-old deal that saw \$41 billion in federal transfers to the provinces, the absence of which organizers say is triggering a collapse of universal health care.

The Health Accord was created in 2004 as additional federal spending on health care tied to provincial promises to reduce wait times and improve services. Defenders say it set national standards for medicare, prescription drug plans and home care, among others.

According to the federal government, health care is a strictly provincial responsibility. They rolled out a new formula in 2011 that ties health care dollars to the national GDP. The federal government will now transfer lump sums to provinces with



From left, Wendell Potter, Mike McBain and Ben McDonald speak at a presentation in Yellowknife decrying the expiration of the 2004 Health Accord.

no strings attached at a yearly increase tied to the country’s GDP, but with a guaranteed minimum of 3 per cent.

Michael McBane, executive director of the CHC, was in Yellowknife for the presentation and told *The Journal* the government’s new formula will mean unequal access to health care between provinces and territories.

“The role of the federal government is to maintain universal access to comparable

health care regardless of where you live and regardless of what you pay. The concern is with them leaving the field, we are going to end up with 14 fragmented systems, all in decline, where rich provinces have better health care systems than poorer provinces and regions,” he said. “We seeing some of that fragmentation now, but it’s going to get a lot worse.”

According to Alternatives North, without the accord, the NWT, Nunavut and Yukon

will lose a total of \$115 million in funding over 10 years, starting in 2017.

The expiration has also meant the axing or downsizing of areas of health care such as the seniors health care plan, Aboriginal health and refugee health program.

“Right now the system is limited just to hospitals, so it means that once you leave the hospital, you’ve left the health care system,” McBane said.

NWT residents voice medicare concerns

Representation from close to 25 organizations from the NWT came out for a private educational meeting with the CHC Wednesday, while a public presentation was held later that evening at the Northern United Place Auditorium in Yellowknife.

McBane has been traveling across the country as the guest speaker for the protest events and said Canadians are of one mind when it comes to universal health care.

“The polls show that between 85 and 90 per cent of Canadians think that there is a strong role for the federal government in health care, yet all we hear from the current federal government is that health care is someone else’s job, health care is provincial and territorial responsibility,” McBane said.

Despite the waves made by the CHC-organized protests, he said he is “disappointed” by lack of concern raised from provincial governments who have thus far remained mum on their new responsibilities.

McBane met with Glen Abernethy, NWT minister of Health and Social Services on

Thursday following the public presentation to discuss the expired Health Accord. Abernethy has also avoided speaking out against the new GDP-tied transfer system.

According to Ben McDonald with Alternatives North, many NWT residents are concerned about health care access in general and the lack of the accord is just another “nail in the coffin.”

“If the system is not going to be funded, then somebody is going to have to pay the price for that,” he said. “It just indicates to us once again that the federal government isn’t committed to protecting medicare. That worries us in the long run.”

The CHC and Alternatives North would like to see the reinstatement of a Health Accord that draws on lessons learned from the 2004 accord. According to McBane, the biggest error was attaching the accord to political will.

“A new accord needs to not be dependent on political will of any government of the day, but to make sure it will be followed and lived up to regardless of any political changes,” he said.

Report calls for cultural care for Inuit cancer patients

By MARIA CHURCH

With cancer identified as the second-highest cause of death in Inuit populations in Canada, a new report is highlighting the need to introduce “culturally safe” cancer care in Inuit communities.

According to the report by the the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, the incidence of cancer among Inuit people is higher than in the rest of Canada, especially the cancers associated with Western lifestyles.

Taking stock of data collected in 2012, the recently released Inuit Cancer Control in Canada Baseline Report acknowledges the concern of high cancer rates in Inuit populations and highlights challenges to receiving care, from diagnosis through to survivorship or palliative care.

The report is the first of its kind to take a hard look at how cancer is dealt with in Inuit communities, Elisa Levi, director of the First

Nations, Inuit and Métis Strategy for the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, told *The Journal*.

“It really is a general pulse of what’s happening in cancer control for Inuit,” she said.

According to Levi, the distance cancer patients must travel to receive adequate treatment is one of the biggest challenges to controlling the disease. Many patients are looking at a travel time of up to 29 hours.

“It’s equivalent to traveling to South Africa and back and back again, or around the world,” she said.

Another barrier identified is the lack of culturally sensitive care for Inuit patients, particularly for those who are traveling far from home for treatment.

“For many Inuit, health care is tied to the concept of wellness, wherein balance and harmony are maintained among all elements of personal, family and community life. Elements such as

community health, acknowledgement of beliefs about cancer, having the support of family during treatment, translation services, access to country foods and integration of traditional medicine into the care plan are important to achieving a holistic health outcome,” the report states.

“It’s not just acknowledging that there might be unique needs, but really defining what those are and really understanding them,” Levi said. “It could be as simple as creating an environment through pictures or artwork. That’s one end of the spectrum: having a place for that where people feel more comfortable.”

Levi noted that the report does not suggest a course of action to implement solutions for Inuit cancer care, but is intended to be a jumping off point for future initiatives.

“There’s a number of initiatives that we’ve funded that will support and enhance the journey for cancer

patients in rural and remote communities,” she said, an example of which is telehealth - a confidential telephone service for health advice or general health information from registered health practitioners.

National Inuit leader Terry Audla said in a press release that he is “encouraged” by the report, calling it a comprehensive demonstration of the Inuit realities in regards to health status, barriers and efforts.

“We will continue to work collaboratively with the Inuit Nunangat regions to address controlling the levels of cancer in our population,” he said.

In March, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer along with First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations, launched an initiative that will see the organizations working together to advance culturally relevant and people-specific cancer control initiatives in rural, remote and isolated communities across the country.

INUIT CANCER FACTS

- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Inuit populations
- The rate of daily smoking among Inuit is 58 per cent, more than three times that of other Canadians
- Inuit lung cancer rates are the highest in the world
- Rates of breast, colon and cervix cancer are rising among Inuit while nasopharynx, salivary glands and esophagus cancers are decreasing
- According to health workers, Inuit tend to seek treatment with later-stage cancers and thus have higher mortality rates from preventable or treatable cancers

Northern airlines merger will mean cuts, analyst predicts

By JACK DANYLCHUK

The planned merger of Canadian North and First Air will likely cut jobs and flights to remote communities, according to an aviation industry analyst.

“There has to be reduction in service and jobs – that’s what a merger is about,” Rick Erickson, president of Erickson and Associates, told *The Journal* last week.

A merger has been rumoured since Air Canada and WestJet entered the Northern market several years ago, and Makivik Corp., owner of First Air, and NorTerra, owner of Canadian North, announced they are planning to create a single carrier.

“A merger would improve the sustainability of these critical Inuit birthright enterprises and would also create better air services and new economic development opportunities across the North,” the announcement from the two companies said.

Erickson, an aviation analyst from Calgary, has travelled extensively in the North and said Canadian



Photo: Alasdair McLennan

The proposed merger of Canadian North and First Air is likely to bring cuts to jobs and service to remote communities, predicts an aviation analyst from Calgary.

North and First Air provide “a psychological connection for people living in remote communities with the rest of Canada. They are an important life-line; the only way in or out.” Canadian North has over 900 employees, and 1,000 more work at First Air.

Erickson said their wages are an important part of the economy, along with the fuel and services bought by the airlines, and the impact of the merger will be widely felt. “Outside of the mining industry, the aviation industry and the two main

carriers are the largest employers in the North,” he said. **Higher fares and reduced remote service** Before Air Canada and WestJet joined the feast on the fat Yellowknife to Edmonton leg, Northern carriers used profits from that

Flying in the North is a special experience. The cabin crew knows the first names of regular passengers; they’re friends. It would be a shame if that was lost.

*Rick Erickson
Erickson & Associates*

route to subsidize service to remote communities, Erickson said. The merger faces regulatory review, but the impact of southern carriers on the Northern market won’t be considered, Erickson said. “WestJet and Air Canada Jazz will never fly to Hall Beach or Inuvik,” he said. “Maintaining service to remote communities is why First Air and Canadian North are talking about a merger. “I’ve raised the issue with regulators, the impact of what amounts to

unfair competition, but they just shrug. It’s the way the game is played in Canada,” he said. The merger could also bring an end to special fares for Inuit and Inuvialuit who own the airlines, and the hot meals that southern carriers now offer only to passengers in premium seats. “Flying in the North is a special experience,” Erickson said. “The cabin crew knows the first names of regular passengers; they’re friends. It would be a shame if that was lost.”



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Jason Jacobson, 11, said he decided to check out archery practice after hearing about it on the Inuvik Youth Centre Facebook page.

Sports & Recreation Archery



Archery instructor Ryan Brooks prepares the targets at open archery practice. Brooks first tried archery at the Oakville YMCA when he was a child.



Jon Amos, 23, takes aim at balloon targets outside the Inuvik Youth Centre last Wednesday.

Inuvik youth target tradition through archery

By NATHALIE HEIBERG-HARRISON

Inuvik youth took aim last week during open archery practice, a new weekly event being held at the Inuvik Youth Centre.

The event, hosted by traditional archery enthusiast Ryan Brooks, attracted around a

dozen community members on Thursday evening.

It will now be held every Thursday evening with centre coordinator Kirt Ruben and drop-in supervisor Walter Rogers.

"I thought it would be nice to implement it into our youth centre activity calendar,"

Ruben said, adding that as weather improves, more outdoor activities will be running.

Brooks, who used to volunteer with the centre, offered to host lessons before the youth centre kicked off this new weekly activity.

He said the Inuvik youth did really well.

"We have a couple natural shooters," he said.

Aiden Kunnizzi, 18, tried archery for the first time at the open practice and said he will definitely return on Thursdays.

"It's fun," he said.

The youth centre first hosted archery lessons last spring after purchasing bows and

arrows as part of the NWT Recreation and Parks Association's Get Active program.

Executive director Ali McConnell said they dusted off the equipment now that weather is improving and the centre can host more activities outside.

"The kids really love it," she said.

Archery will run at the Inuvik Youth Centre every Thursday from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Other weekly activities for the month of April include the Beaufort Boys and Delta Girls programs, Rainbow Club, target shooting, outdoor hockey and all ages drop-in.



From left, Karina Krivulina, Juan Bidegain, instructor Ryan Brooks, Jon Amos, Jason Jacobson, Edward Wolki Jacobson and Aiden Kunnizzi all took part in archery practice at the Inuvik Youth Centre last Wednesday.

Photos: Nathalie Heiberg-Harrison

Award winning Imbe camp returns this summer

By MARIA CHURCH

Each summer when post-secondary student Janelle Nitsiza returned home to Whati from Calgary’s Mount Royal University, she felt she had been missing a part of herself.

“I really did notice that I was losing touch with my culture,” she shared with *The Journal*. “Everyday things that I would see at home, like my grandma making dry meat or me helping her tan hide, I didn’t get a chance to do that because I didn’t have the resources down south.”

Luckily for Nitsiza, each summer she had the option of taking the award winning Imbe camp, a summer-long program run by the Tlicho government that looks to re-engage high school and post-secondary students with their culture.

Standing out amongst other culture camps, Imbe, which means summer in Tlicho, is based on the philosophy of Chief Jimmy Bruneau, who in the late 1800s warned that the Tlicho people must become “strong like two people.”

Predicting that the European world would eventually encroach upon the North, Bruneau suggested the Tlicho learn from the Western way and pursue higher education, all the while keeping firmly in touch with their traditional lifestyles and language.



Gleadia Nitsiza from Whati hangs fish to dry while on the land during the Imbe group leader training last summer.

The Imbe program aims to accomplish Bruneau’s goal by targeting high school and post-secondary students and hitting them with a “blast of culture,” Imbe’s program manager Paul Cressman said.

After three years in the Imbe program, Nitsiza is now the assistant program manager and helps organize the camp with Cressman each year.

“I’ve been part of the program since I was in Grade 11 and every summer I’ve learned from it, I’ve excelled from it, I’ve made friends with people my age and I’ve made friends with elders in the program,” she said.

“I know how some of these first year students feel. The first time you go you’re shy sometimes, and I get them really comfortable and we



From left, Jasmine Blackduck and Janelle Nitsiza cut wood while on the land during last year’s Imbe camp.



From left, Judith Modest and Kayla Moosenose, both from Whati, participated in last year’s camp.

become friends and we become colleagues. We work together and we learn together,” Nitsiza said.

While the focus for this year’s camp is on-the-land travel, Cressman said language will be an important component of all activities during the camp.

“Because the language is so linked to the land with the place names and the animals

and the activities, it’s the ultimate classroom for Tlicho language because the two are so intimately linked,” he said.

Over the next month, Cressman and Nitsiza will employ two group leaders in each Tlicho community. Once chosen, the leaders will be trained for four weeks in May before heading back to their communities to prepare for the camp in July and August.

During the three-week camp, students will be learning from Tlicho elders on the land by fishing, making dry fish, drumming, sewing and storytelling, among other activities.

“The whole point of the program, as I see it, is learning from your elders and learning about the history and learning about the way they do things so we can carry it on,” Nitsiza said.

On top of the traditional knowledge, the students will also take certification courses for canoe safety, firearms safety, GPS navigation and wilderness first aid.

“Traditional skills are seen as the motivating factors that show young people that they have this amazing land right at their doorstep and to motivate them to get back up and practice their culture on the land, and then also give them the safety skills that they need to travel safely,” Cressman said.

The hope is that in the future the Tlicho community will have a qualified workforce that is well versed in both modern education and traditional practices, he said: “Strong like two people.”

To find out more about the Imbe camp, go online to <http://tlicho.ca/government/departments/culture-lands-protection/cultural-practices/tlicho-imbe-program>

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Health & Wellness FASD

Alberta liquor commission mandates FASD signs

By MARIA CHURCH

As of last week, all watering holes and liquor stores in Alberta will be required to display a sign that states: “Warning: drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects and brain damage to your baby.”

The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) has taken a proactive measure to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in the province by mandating that all businesses selling booze must display the warning sign.

FASD is a lifelong disability caused by exposure to alcohol while in the womb that is characterized by a range of health problems, including physical birth defects, learning and social disabilities and developmental delays.

“FASD affects entire communities, and the AGLC is proud to contribute in raising awareness and greater understanding of this issue. A simple reminder in liquor stores or bars will keep the message that pregnancies and alcohol don’t mix top of mind for patrons,” Bill Robinson, AGLC president and CEO, said in a press release.

Manmeet S. Bhullar, minister of Human Services, said the Alberta government has a “renewed focus” on addressing the root causes of social issues in the province, like FASD.

“FASD is 100 per cent preventable, and like drinking and driving, we all have a role to play to make drinking while pregnant a social taboo,” he said. “The effects of FASD on children are devastating, but through common sense initiatives like

this, we will bring instances of FASD down.”

Bhullar called for more awareness of FASD and encouragement for people to “step up and say ‘no’ when they see someone drink alcohol while pregnant.”

According to the government of Alberta’s FASD information website, of the 90 per cent of Albertans surveyed who said they were aware of FASD, 40 per cent said they knew or cared for someone with the disorder. In another survey, 9 per cent of Albertan women reported drinking during their last pregnancy.

For more information about FASD resources for your community, contact the FASD Service Network or Alberta Supports at 1 (877) 644-9992 or go online to <http://fasd.alberta.ca/get-to-know-fasd.aspx>

Caribou Legs on last leg of ‘Protect the Peel’ journey

Gwich’in Tribal Council still planning out legal challenge

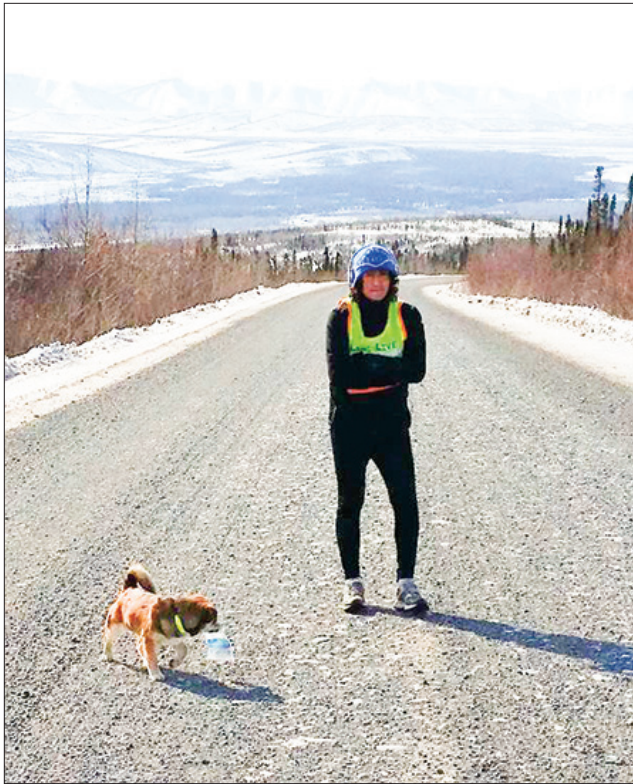
By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Gwich’in marathon runner Brad Firth is nearing the end of his 1,200-km run to protect the Peel River watershed this week, planning to personally deliver the stack of letters from concerned Northerners to the Yukon premier before the end of the month.

Firth, better known as “Caribou Legs,” began the journey on Apr. 2, stopping in every community along the way to gather support for his efforts to raise awareness and opposition to the Yukon government’s proposed land use plan for the 68,000 square-km Peel watershed.

The runner, who made a warm-up trek from Fort Smith to Yellowknife last year, completed the Dempster Highway last week and spent some time in Mayo and Dawson City, Yukon before taking off again Friday on the remainder of his run to Whitehorse.

While an arrival date will depend on weather conditions and Firth’s physical well-being, he is expected to arrive in the Yukon capital to read each letter on the steps of the legislature around Apr.



Brad “Caribou Legs” Firth and his running companion, Trixie, take a pause to enjoy the scenery during the last stretch of the Dempster Highway.

28 before handing them off to Premier Darrell Pasloski. Gwich’in Tribal Council (GTC) president Robert A. Alexie, who drove Firth’s

support vehicle for the initial 120-km stretch, said despite a “disappointing” send-off in Inuvik where only one youth showed up to run with him,

Firth received great community support in Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson, where he was fed, housed and received over \$3,000 in donations to cover the costs of his trip, like fuel and groceries.

A hat passed around at a talent show during last weekend’s Peel River Jamboree in Fort McPherson raised over \$1,000 in one sitting. That money was driven south to meet Firth on the road.

“People lined the streets and applauded him in,” Alexie said of Fort McPherson. “That lifted him up pretty good, and by the time he got to the Gwich’in council office, they had a whole spread laid out for him - soup, bannock, donuts, all sorts of stuff.”

Similar festivities were held in Mayo and Dawson to honour Firth.

The runner continues to update his “Caribou Legs” Facebook page regularly, always with messages of thanks to the Creator and the slogan, “Long live the Peel watershed!”

“Thank you to everyone for strengthening me for this incredible journey so far!” he wrote last week.

Alexie said plans for Firth’s final event in Whitehorse are still in the works. He said many people from Inuvik and beyond want to make the journey down to support him, but are unsure if that’s possible due to melting ice crossings, which might strand them on the other side of the river.

GTC legal fight still in planning stages

While the GTC announced in early February that it would be launching its own legal action against the Yukon government’s land use plan for the watershed, Alexie said leaders are still forming a strategic plan.

The GTC claims the Yukon’s plan for the region violates rights established through a variety of agreements recognized by the Crown, including the Gwich’in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement and the creation of the Peel River Preserve, Fort McPherson trapping area and the Yukon Transboundary Agreement.

Those rights allowed the GTC a spot at the land use planning commission’s five years of consultations on the Peel watershed, whose final

report recommended 80 per cent protection of the previously untouched watershed.

The Yukon government rejected that report, releasing its own plan for the region in January that opens 71 per cent of the watershed up to development.

While the majority of the Peel watershed sits on the Yukon side of the border, its waters drain east into the Northwest Territories before heading out to sea.

Fundraisers held across Yukon

The Yukon government is facing a separate lawsuit led by a coalition of Yukon First Nations and conservation groups under the legal counsel of esteemed Aboriginal rights lawyer Thomas Berger.

Efforts to raise funds for the legal defence have been occurring across the territory for weeks, including concerts and feasts in Dawson City and Whitehorse, and even a zipline event at the Takhini Hot Springs hosted by Equinox Adventures, where money from each \$5 ride went towards the Yukon Peel legal case.

The lawsuit will go to trial July 7-11 in Whitehorse.

Dehcho looks to past for future renewable energy

By MARIA CHURCH

Communities in the Dehcho are drawing on the past when it comes to moving forward with renewable and sustainable energy options and away from fossil fuels.

Around 60 people from eight communities in the Dehcho were in Fort Providence in February for a Renewable Energy Forum held in partnership with First Nations, the Arctic Energy Alliance, the department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Pembina Institute.

The meeting drummed up discussion from community leaders about how to implement sustainable energy technologies and drew on several current projects being developed in the area, input from experts and knowledge from community elders.

Melaine Simba, environment coordinator with K’áagee Tu First Nation in Kakisa, said much of what was discussed can be connected back to traditional practices on the land.

“A lot of elders and people in the North burned



Around 60 participants from eight communities in the Dehcho take part in a renewable energy forum in Fort Providence last February to discuss best practices and learn from experts and elders.

wood to heat their homes, so biomass has always been an easy way to keep the environment healthy,” Simba said.

Shauna Morgan, senior analyst with the Pembina Institute who co-organized the Dehcho forum, said biomass

energy is growing in popularity in the North for larger organizations like community governments.

“Certainly there’s a lot of excitement about moving towards renewable energy,” she said. “As we heard at the forum, these

ideas and these principles are not new: either the idea of working to stay in balance with the environment and keep the environment around you clean as well as the overall climate, but also the idea of using the resources around you.”

In the case of Kakisa, returning to a dependency on wood fuel will give the community an incentive to reconnect with the land through the harvesting process, Simba said.

Cost is another factor. Despite the high upfront cost of installing a wood-energy system, the community will save money in the long run, she said.

In Kakisa, the cost of fuel oil used to heat most homes is \$42 per gigajoule while the cost of wood is around \$17 per gigajoule.

“Some of the community members balance that out by burning wood during the day and then turning the furnace a little bit up during the night,” Simba said.

K’áagee Tu First Nation is currently waiting on the delivery of the community’s first wood energy boiler heating system, which was slated to arrive last month, but was delayed until later in April.

The First Nation originally planned to install a cordwood boiler system since they had recently cleared a large section of land for fire breaks, but that

system would have required the fire to be fed every four to six hours during the coldest months of the year.

“We looked into that and decided to go with a different boiler system that is in between. You can burn wood and also wood pellets,” Simba said. Wood pellets can be automatically fed into the boiler from large silos.

Youth losing knowledge

According to Simba, elders at the forum expressed concern about youth moving away from traditional practices such as gathering wood fuel on the land.

“Some of the elders mentioned that some youth are losing their culture, not having an understanding of why there is a reason for burning wood to keep your house warm,” she said.

“They’re saying it’s good to go out and exercise and learn about different types of trees, which trees to burn and which ones give you too much ash or too much smoke. This is the sort of knowledge the elders say the youth are losing.”

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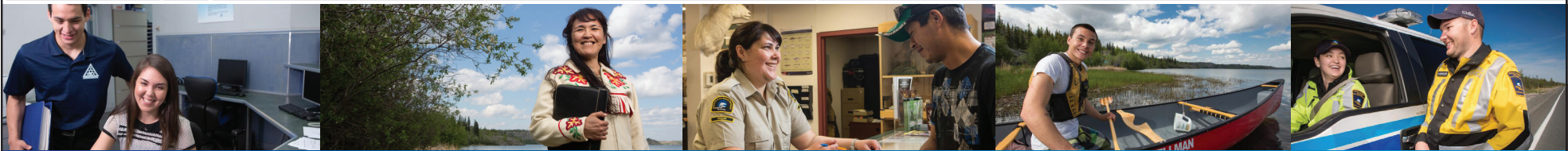
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NWT wildlife celebrated with ‘outdoor treasure hunt’

By MARIA CHURCH

The NWT department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) is encouraging residents to celebrate wildlife this month by sending them tromping into the woods on a treasure hunt with a Global Positioning System (GPS).

For the first time ever, ENR has created a geocaching contest in five communities across the territory to get residents out of the house and enjoying the great outdoors in conjunction with National Wildlife Week.

“We want people to get out and appreciate wildlife and people to just get outdoors. The best way to see wildlife is to take it outside and explore,” Stephanie Yuill, a public education specialist with ENR, told *The Journal*.

National Wildlife Week is held every year on the week of Apr. 10 in honour of the late Jack Miner, an instrumental founder of Canada’s conservation movement. Also known as “Wild Goose Jack,” Miner is credited with saving Canadian geese from extinction in the early 1900s.

ENR decided to run the geocaching contest in



Marlee Currie finds a geocache outside of Yellowknife, one of five set up in the area.

celebration of wildlife week, but chose to extend it over the entire month of April to accommodate for weather and give people more time to participate, Yuill said.

Geocaching more accessible
Geocaching has been growing in popularity as an official outdoor sport for the past 15 years. Set

up with coordinates, participants must follow their GPS devices through whatever terrain they encounter in order to locate hidden caches.

Most people now own some sort of GPS device, whether it be an official GPS navigation device or a smartphone with a GPS application on it, Yuill said.

For ENR’s contest, participants are asked to take a photo of themselves with the hidden caches and send it via email to the organizers. The first 30 people to send in their smiling faces qualify for a prize of wildlife-related literature geared to either adults or youth.

The geocaches will contain “treasures” and according to ENR’s rules spelled out on their website: “If you take the treasure from the geocache, you must leave something of equal or greater value.”

“It’s like a real-world, outdoor treasure hunt,” Yuill said.

Sites set up in six communities

Five geocache sites have been set up within several kilometres of six communities in the NWT, including Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Norman Wells and Inuvik.

“The one thing that they do have in common is each

cache site, each hidden location, represents an animal,” Yuill said. “All of the communities are going to learn about the cranberry blue butterfly, little brown bats, muskox, northern leopard frogs or shortjaw cisco.”

Yuill said they have already received several photographs from participants, but there are still prizes for the taking.

“I think at this time of year people are itching to get outside, so hopefully it’s a good excuse to get out and explore,” she said.

While the contest is held in celebration of National Wildlife Week, Yuill said residents of the NWT are lucky to be living in such close proximity to nature that they can celebrate wildlife all year long.

“Our wildlife should be celebrated 365 days a year. We have some beautiful animals in the North and in Canada and it’s really important that we get to know them because the best way we can appreciate them is to know what we’ve got in our own backyard,” she said.

For more information on the contest and the geocaching coordinates, go online to <http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca/celebrate-wildlife-week-2014>

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NWT sports receive major federal funding boost

Funding directly supports Aboriginal games competition

By MARIA CHURCH

Ottawa has taken an eager interest in the activity levels of NWT residents with an announcement by the federal government last week pledging almost \$1 million in funding for sports in the territory.

The federal and territorial governments signed a three-year bilateral agreement in Yellowknife Monday that matched funding for sport development and participation in the NWT, making official the money that has been flowing into territorial sport organizations over the last three years.

Bal Gosal, minister of state for Sport, was in Yellowknife for the announcement and to sign the bilateral agreement with Robert McLeod, GNWT's minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

"Working with provincial and territorial governments to advance important priorities for sport and physical activity in Canada is something our government is proud to do," Gosal said in a press release following the announcement Monday. "We want to make sport participation and athlete development a part of Canadians' everyday lives."



From left, federal Sport Minister Bal Gosal and GNWT minister of Municipal and Community Affairs Robert McLeod, sign a bilateral sport funding agreement in Yellowknife last week.

All told, the territory will receive \$1,869,014 to cover the three-year period that began in 2012 and will end in 2015. The funds are directed at introduction-to-sport programming, sport development in Aboriginal communities and the Canadian Sport for Life movement.

According to McLeod, the funding is mainly targeted at youth in the territory.

"One of the things we discuss when the ministers of sport from across the country

get together is the inactivity of all our young people because of all the electronic games, video games and that. We are trying to get them to be a bit more active," he told *The Journal*.

McLeod said there is already evidence to support the success of funding youth sports programming in the territory's smaller communities.

"I think it's working because we are delivering a lot of these programs at the grassroots level and if you look at our participation in the Arctic Winter

Games, not this past games in Fairbanks but the games before, 27 of the 33 communities were represented by athletes, which I think is huge. That's a good indication that the programs are working at the local level and kids are getting a bit more active and able to qualify for Team NWT."

Funding for Aboriginal games

According to Greg Hopf, executive director of the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the

We're unique to the rest of Canada. The way we do things is different up in the North than what we do in the provinces. Even our games are unique. Our job is to protect them and our job is to promote them, and that's what this support allows us to do.

*Greg Hopf
Aboriginal Sports Circle of the NWT*

NWT, the funding directly promotes Aboriginal games for NWT youth by covering the cost of transportation to the territory's largest traditional games competition.

Held in Yellowknife every March since 2013, the Traditional Games Championships hosts around 150 to 200 students competing in traditional Inuit and Dene games.

Much of the expenses associated with putting on the championships are consumed by travel costs for youth in remote communities, Hopf said.

Over the last two years, the federal and territorial governments have contributed

\$100,000 to cover commute costs to the annual championships.

"We're unique to the rest of Canada. The way we do things is different up in the North than what we do in the provinces. Even our games are unique. Our job is to protect them and our job is to promote them, and that's what this support allows us to do," Hopf said.

The funding is not long-term and will likely be exhausted in the next five years. When that happens, Hopf said they will need to look at other funding options or apply for more federal funding.

Sports & Recreation Eating League

Competitive eating league on the menu in YK

By MARIA CHURCH

Stuffing your face just became an official training exercise for foodies in Yellowknife after a local restaurant announced it's launching the territory's first-ever competitive eating league.

Coyote's Steakhouse and Lounge has decided to host a league for gutsy gourmets with a talent for consuming copious amounts of burgers and fries as fast as humanly possible.

Ed But, owner of Coyote's, said his restaurant has held one-off eating competition events before, the last of which was in 2012 when local Jamie Pye was the only competitor to finish a 2-lb "Beast" Burger.

"At Coyote's we're known for portions, so we decided to expand on the portion sizes," But said. "We have a lot of big construction workers up here. A lot of people who work in the mine come in here, too, and they really enjoy packing it in. Especially if it's good food."

With the successful eating competition under their belt and past competitors

raring for another go, creating a full-blown league was the next logical step for the restaurant owner.

For a \$20 entry fee, competitors will get an official league t-shirt and access to all five eat-offs to be held at the restaurant every two months. Each competition day, the fastest eater will receive a cash prize of \$100 and a year-long coupon for a burger a week from Coyote's.

Using a point system, competitors' eating times will be recorded so that by the league's end, one stuffed winner will collect the grand prize that includes two round-trip tickets to Edmonton, donated by Canadian North, and official bragging rights as league champion.

But said he has already had interest from Yellowknifers looking to get in on the territory's first official competitive eating league.

While their bravery is admirable, he said it's important that competitors learn how to train properly, since there can be misconceptions about how to prepare one's belly for the consumption of

a 2-lb burger - the equivalent of eight quarter-pound burgers from your average burger chain - along with one pound of fries.

"The past winners have told me, 'Don't starve yourself.' People think by starving yourself you will be more hungry, but what happens is your stomach shrinks. What past winners have done is drink lots and lots of fluids. Before lunch, have lots of soup and stuff because it digests really quickly and stretches your stomach," he said.

Size can also be a misconception when assessing the competition, But said.

"The people that have won in the past weren't really huge. We're not talking about 300-lb people. There are guys that are 180 or whatever wolfing it all down," he said with a chuckle.

While gourmet gorging is not for the faint of stomach, But said spectators are encouraged to check out the competition and take in the restaurant's many eating options.

The first day of league competition is set for Apr. 28. To register or for more information, call But at 867-444-8158.

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