



LAND RELATIONSHIP GATHERING REPORT

Mayo Community Centre &
Five Mile Lake Campground



YLUPC
YUKON LAND USE
PLANNING COUNCIL

JULY 22-24, 2024



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INTRODUCTION

THEME: Building and Empowering Relationships

OBJECTIVES: Provide guidance and instruction to assist the Council and Circle with improving planning relationships and increasing collaboration between planning partners.

FACILITATOR: Ron Cruikshank



Top: Hammond Dick telling stories at Five Mile Lake Campground. Bottom: Gathering participants enjoying a hearty dinner together at Five Mile Lake Campground.

The Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC) was created through the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) under the provisions of Chapter 11, land use planning. YLUPC makes recommendations to the Government of Yukon (YG) and Yukon First Nations.

The Traditional Knowledge Circle (the Circle) is an advisory committee to YLUPC. Current members include: Carl Sidney (Chair - Inland Tlingit); Angie Joseph-Rear (Hän); Gary Darbyshire (Southern Tutchone); Roland Peter (Northern Tutchone); Shirlee Frost (Gwich'in); and Hammond Dick (Kaska).

By supporting the Circle, YLUPC is embracing Indigenous knowledge, values and planning approaches and supporting a shift to land relationship planning as value-centered and collaborative, and founded on relationships and responsibility for land, water, animals, air and each other.

On July 22-24th, 2024 the Council and the Circle hosted a gathering in Mayo, in the Traditional Territory of the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. Over 50 people attended, including Yukon First Nations, Elders, YG and UFA Board and Committee representatives. The event was held at the Mayo Community Centre and included outdoor events at Five Mile Lake Campground.

UFA REFERENCES

OBJECTIVE 11.1.1.6

To ensure that social, cultural, economic and environmental policies are applied to the management, protection and use of land, water and resources in an **integrated and coordinated manner** so as to ensure Sustainable Development;

LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS 11.2.1.2

Be linked to all other land and water planning and management processes established by Government and Yukon First Nations.

The work of the Council and Circle is guided by the UFA. Two clauses relevant to the topic of relationship building include 11.1.1.6 and 11.2.1.2 (see left).

Towards implementing these clauses, the Council made a recommendation to YG and Yukon First Nations in August of 2022:

We recommended that the Parties coordinate on various planning initiatives and to more efficiently link to other initiatives. There are a lot of such opportunities such as species management planning, Community-based Fish and Wildlife Works (Chapter 16), Special Area Management Area planning (Chapter 10).

BACKGROUND

As part of its mandate under Chapter 11 of the Yukon First Nation land claim agreements, YLUPC hosts territory-wide gatherings on topics that relate to the planning and management of Yukon lands. On August 29th and 30th, 2023, the Council and Circle hosted a Land Relationship Gathering at Brooks Brook in the Traditional Territory of the Teslin Tlingit Council. The theme of that event was “Embracing Traditional Knowledge” and participants were asked how to better incorporate Traditional Knowledge when making land management decisions.

The 2023 Gathering recommended that the Council and Circle host another event in 2024 centered around a “relationships” theme (both with the land and with each other).



Breakout session at 2023 Brooks Brook Gathering.

APPROACH & AGENDA

INTENT: Continue momentum generated at the 2023 Brooks Brook gathering.

DAY 1: Our relationship with the land.

DAY 2: Improving relationships with each other.

EVENINGS: Dinner and story telling at Five Mile Lake Campground.

Monday, July 22	
Time	Agenda Item
6:00pm	Dinner at 5-Mile Campground – provided by YLUPC
Tuesday, July 23	
Time	Agenda Item
8:00	Breakfast
9:00	Opening Ceremony and Prayer
9:15	Welcoming Address
9:30	Review Agenda
9:35	Introductions Roundtable
10:20	Reflections from Brooks Brook 2023 Gathering
10:30	Break
10:45	Strengthening Relationships - Keynote from Council and Traditional Knowledge Circle
11:00	Break-Out Session #1: Land Relationships - What are your relationships with the land? - What changes have you observed?
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Session #1 Reporting back
1:30	Break-out Session #2: Future Land Relationships - How do we adapt to our changing relationship with the land? - How do we prepare for the future? Session #2 Reporting back
3:15	Break
3:30	Day 1 Wrap-up
4:00	Relationship Building (Networking)
4:30	Adjourn Day 1



On Day 2 participants were invited to attend a water ceremony on the banks of the Stewart River, organized by Elders from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nations to honor the community, land and water in light of the recent disaster at Victoria Gold's Eagle Mine.

Wednesday, July 24	
Time	Agenda Item
8:00	Breakfast
9:00	Recap of Day 1 and review Day 2 Agenda
9:15	Panel Discussion – Building Relationships - UFA Board & Committee Representatives
10:15	Break
10:45	Break-Out Session #3: Recommendations for Building Relationships - How can we improve relationships? - What relationships need work? - Who would you like a better relationship with?
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Break-Out Session #4: Next Steps - What are the next steps for YLUPC and for other Boards and Committees?
2:30	Forming Relationships (Networking)
3:00	Closing Comments Roundtable
3:30	Closing Ceremony and Prayer

MESSAGES & OUTCOMES

DAY 1

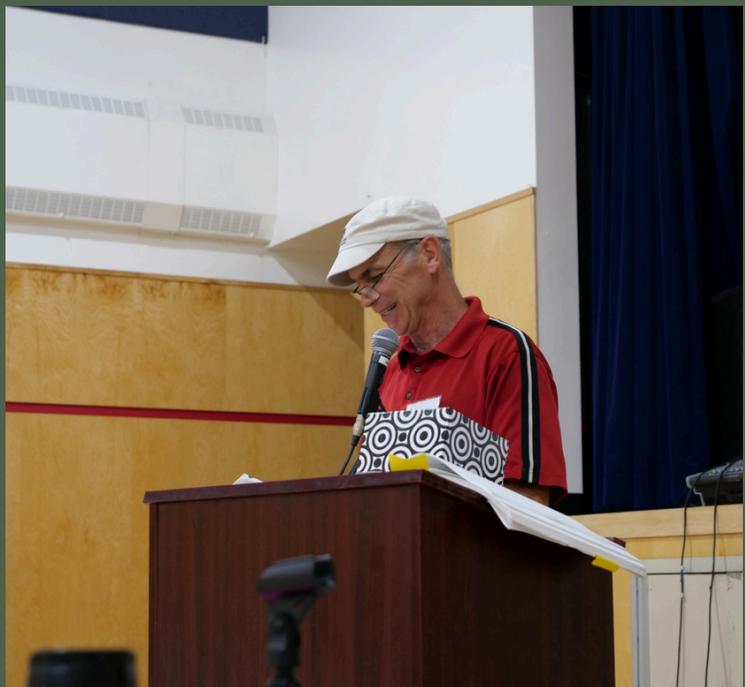
OPENING PRAYER: Jimmy Johnny

OPENING REMARKS

Chief Dawna Hope spoke about the need to acknowledge the resilient ancestral history of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun people, the need to get to know each other well, to work together, and for the land and people to be connected as one. The recent heap leach failure has had a severe impact on the land and people and hopefully, now, damage can be limited. Na-Cho Nyäk Dun has been waiting 30 years for a regional plan and is much needed. She expressed hope that this meeting will help get planning going and for good discussions to take place over the next two days.

Interim YLUPC Chair Al Foster introduced the Council and staff and noted that land planning involves land, water, animals and air. The dream is to have the entire Yukon have a land plan in place. YLUPC's Traditional Knowledge Circle Chair Carl Sidney introduced the theme and purpose of the gathering and the Traditional Knowledge Circle. Ron Cruikshank introduced himself and reviewed the agenda, followed by round table introductions.

During introductions, participants were asked to draw pictures on their nametags that best represented their relationship with the land.



Ron Cruikshank, Gathering facilitator.

LAND RELATIONSHIPS BREAKOUT SESSION

*What is your relationship with the land?
What differences in land relationships are you aware of?*



Tim Sellars leading a breakout group discussion.

Land Relationship Philosophy

- Manage the land through a First Nations lens (world view).
- Apply sustainable development principles.
- Relate to the land with your soul.
- Recognize the interconnection of the land water and air.

- Think about how much the land gives you.
- Recognize that land management is a global responsibility.

Knowing and Managing Land

- Monitoring the land water and air is very important as you monitor what you care about.
- Mitigate negative impacts of projects.
- Site visits to projects before, during and after their existence.
- Increase direct discussions with those who know the land best.
- Prior to development, collect benchmark data for future comparisons.
- See the land through First Nations world view by travelling to areas with them.
- Be aware of cumulative effects.
- Co-management with First Nations, YG and Canada to reconcile mandates.
- Management must change as the land changes.
- More regulations are required because of increased land pressure.
- Get land use plans done, consider pausing development until then.

***“Relate to the land
with your soul.”***

***“Recognize that land
management is a
global responsibility.”***



Angie Joseph-Rear, Traditional Knowledge Circle member.

First Nations Knowledge and Way of Life

- Loss of Elders knowledge is a great concern.
- Change in lifestyle from nomadic (as First Nations followed resources of value) to permanent...not as knowledgeable about all areas now.
- First Nations pride has increased and so too has the desire to get back to the land.
- youth need to get out on the land.
- Traditional Knowledge Circles are good to have.
- Traditional Knowledge needs to be passed on and used in land management.
- First Nations culture requires a natural landscape to exist.
- First Nations need veto on large projects.

The Changing Land

- The natural world is changing rapidly because of climate change: reduced fish numbers, resource harvest pressure, land uses (e.g. mining), invasive species. These are all interconnected and have a cumulative effect on the land.

- There are more people and more development on the land than ever before.
- Controlling the pace and scale of change is challenging but needed.



Roland Peter, Traditional Knowledge Circle member (right), and his son, Derek Peter (left).



Frank Patterson, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Elder.

“Manage the land through a First Nations worldview.”

“Get land plans done. The whole territory should be planned.”

MESSAGES & OUTCOMES

DAY 2

PANEL DISCUSSION: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The panel included Russ Smoler (Yukon Water Board - YWB), Anne Leckie (Yukon Heritage Resources Board - YHRB), Rose Sellars (Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board - YESAB), Steve Hossack (Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board - YFWMB), Kirsten Reid (Dawson Regional Planning Commission - DRPC) and Al Foster (YLUPC).

Each panelist introduced their agency and their current initiatives. Over the course of the session, panelists spoke about their closest relationships, relationship challenges, and who they would like improved relationships with.



Panelists building relationships.

The Water Board spoke about their identity as an independent board that is supported by YG and a recent MOU* that has helped clarify roles. These were difficult negotiations.

The Heritage Resources Board identified the Parties (YG, Yukon First Nations) as their core relationships, with engagement in legislation being part of this relationship. Relations with Canada are also good now and closer ties with the Training Policy Committee are desired.

YESAB has a funding relationship with Canada and is currently working with First Nations to increase awareness of the Indigenous world view within its processes. While development assessment and regional planning should be "sister" processes, closer ties are desired.

The YFWMB has a very close relationship with the Salmon Sub-committee and also works closely with YG's Department of Environment, RRCs* and First Nations. Better relations are happening with Fish and Wildlife Branch and sought after for KSA*, YLUPC, YESAB, CYFN*, YWB, YHRB, PCMB*, WMAC (NS)*, CPAWS*, WCS Canada*, transboundary groups and all Yukon First Nations.

For regional planning, the DRPC-YLUPC is the core relationship, with the relationship with the Parties at the staff level strong but at the higher political level engagement could be improved. Relationships between the Parties is also crucial for successful planning but largely out of the hands of YLUPC or the regional commissions.



Jimmy Johnny, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Elder (left) and Gary Darbyshire, Champagne and Aishihik First Nation Elder (right).

Q&A



Neil Salvin, former YLUPC Chair.

There was robust dialogue during the panel session. Panel questions focused on: the new wetland classification system; traditional knowledge in wetland classification; lack of regional planning in the Mayo area and the impact of this on the community (social problems) and the environment; challenges implementing land claims at the political level; the role of unsettled First Nations in land decisions; and the potential for planning in Kaska Traditional Territory.

*MOU - Memorandum of Understanding
*RRC - Renewable Resource Council
*KSA - Klondike Snowmobile Association
*CYFN - Council of Yukon First Nations
*PCMB - Porcupine Caribou Management Board

*WMAC (NS) - Wildlife Management Advisory Council North Slope
*CPAWS - Canadian Parks And Wilderness Society
*WCS Canada - Wilderness Conservation Society Canada

WATER CEREMONY

"The land, animals, water and people are all connected and so should be how they are managed."



Gathering participants and community members attending traditional water ceremony, Stewart River, Mayo.

Participants were invited to attend a water ceremony at the edge of the Stewart River organized by Elders from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nations, in solidarity with ceremonies held in other Yukon communities at the same time. The ceremony honoured and recognized the struggle of the Mayo community/land/water in light of the recent disaster at Victoria Gold's Eagle Mine.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BREAKOUT SESSION

How can you improve your working relationships?

Who would you like better relationships with?



Breakout group discussion.

How to Improve Relationships

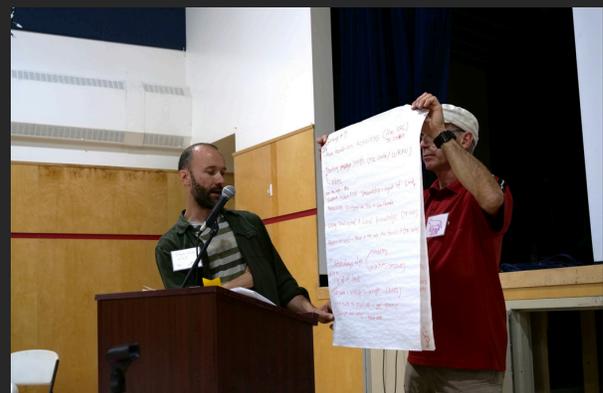
- Use MOUs/Terms of References to recognize co-dependence of each others' processes and to set out expectations and commitment to fulfill these roles.
- In person meetings (like this one) allow for informal and formal communication that is better than using digital means.
- Joint organizational "fun" activities beyond day-to-day office work.
- Vary the location of meetings so new people can attend and new relationships develop.

- Direct meetings with knowledge holders are crucial for building relationships with those who know the land best.
- There is need for a plain language document for the public that explains how land management decision processes are made in a post-land claim Yukon (with a separate section for unsettled areas).
- Build communication capacity within the UFA boards, i.e. fund positions that are solely focused upon communication and relationship building.
- Cross cultural training is crucial, as understanding is the start of relationship building. This needs to be formalized.

Agencies and Groups Identified for Improving Relationships

- The role of unsettled First Nations in decision making processes needs clarification.
- Ongoing relationships with inter-party agencies (i.e. land claim oversight agencies) is needed.

"Parties to the Agreement need to reinvigorate the Spirit and Intent of the UFA and First Nations Final Agreements."



Stephan Walke, First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Environmental Assessment Officer (left) and Ron Cruikshank, Gathering facilitator (right).

- Canada, as a party, is sometimes forgotten but should not be as the agreements are ultimately federal legislation.
- Sometimes YG can feel like “a wall” where decisions are made behind the wall. High level positions are hard to get time with.
- Yukon First Nations: understand the impact of residential schools.
- Provide the public opportunities to attend meetings and use plain language.
- UFA Boards: both at the board and staff level, with information and data sharing. A resolution proposed that the Parties to the Agreements fund gatherings of the Boards and Committees as these expenses should not be the responsibility of any one UFA agency.

During the break-out group discussion, several other ideas were discussed:

- Involve the youth in land-based decision making.
- Develop a document/flow chart that summarizes how the land is managed under the land claim agreements.

- Government agencies need to separate regulatory functions from promotional function.
- Stop promoting the Yukon until development can be done sustainably.
- Have discussions with the Parties (YG, Yukon First Nations) about the changing implementation context.



YESAB's Dennis Nicloux (left) and Tess McLeod (right), First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun citizen.



Tim Sellars, YLUPC Director, addressing participants.

“Get to know each other well and you will work well together.”

IN CLOSING

CLOSING PRAYER: Elizabeth Moses

Thoughts and prayers were offered to the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation and the Mayo community regarding the Eagle Mine disaster. Participants expressed concern about mining impacts elsewhere in the territory and that new mining regulations should incorporate Traditional Knowledge and a First Nations worldview. Participants thanked the Council for organizing the gathering and the town of Mayo and Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation for hosting the event.

Ideas for Next Gathering

- There is a periodic need for UFA boards to get together: the cost could be shared amongst the boards or the parties could be approached for funding, as no single board has this responsibility.
- The next gathering could focus on “breaking down the wall” with governments. Opportunities for addressing the parties jointly include the Yukon Forum, and with support from CYFN, can serve to reinvigorate the Spirit and Intent of the UFA and Yukon First Nations Final Agreements.
- Compensate youth to participate.
- Invite Yukon ministers and party representatives.
- Theme ideas: 2 eyes, 1 vision for all; managing cumulative effects, as the Yukon is developing rapidly.



