

YUKON LAND USE PLANNING COUNCIL

AUGUST 29-30, 2023

LAND RELATIONSHIP GATHERING



“PART OF THE LAND PART OF THE WATER”

SUMMARY

PREPARED BY

YUKON LAND USE PLANNING COUNCIL



**“LOOK BACK ONCE IN A WHILE SO YOU DON’T GET LOST
ON YOUR WAY BACK.”**

SUMMARY



Overview

At the end of August, 2023, the Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC) hosted a Land Relationship Gathering at Brooks Brook, on Teslin Lake. Over 80 people attended the two-day event which gathered Yukon First Nations and planning partners from other Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) Boards and Committees, Government of Yukon as well as the Government of Canada. Line Gagnon, of Calypso Communications, facilitated the event.

YLUPC is a body created through the UFA that makes recommendations to the Government of Yukon and affected Yukon First Nations on land use planning such as policies, goals, priorities, time frames, and boundaries.

In 2020, the Council formed a Traditional Knowledge advisory group to begin the work of exploring how to embrace Traditional Knowledge through land relationship planning, a value-centered collaborative process founded on relationships and responsibilities for land, water, animals, and each other.

The goal of the Gathering was to help attendees identify ways to embrace Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Ways in their work, with a particular focus on UFA Chapter 11 planning.

The Approach

The agenda was designed to nurture reflections and open discussions. Elders and participants shared stories, songs and experiences through a combination of presentations, demonstrations and group work. There were opportunities for people to be out on the land and ample time to reflect both individually and collectively on key questions.

Traditional Knowledge Circle: Our Story So Far

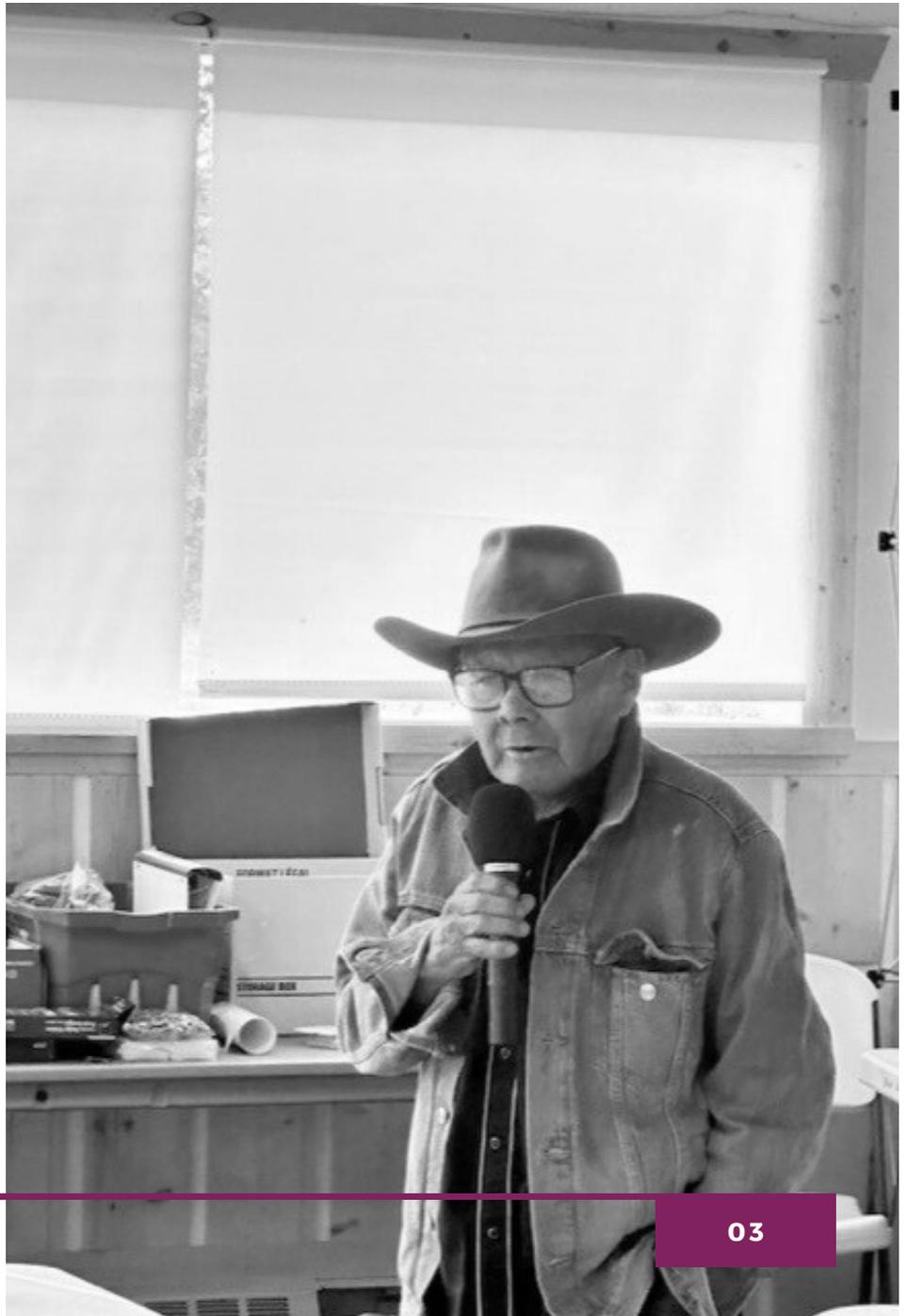
YLUPC Council member Tess McLeod presented an overview of the history of the Traditional Knowledge Circle and the steps that it took to get to this Gathering:

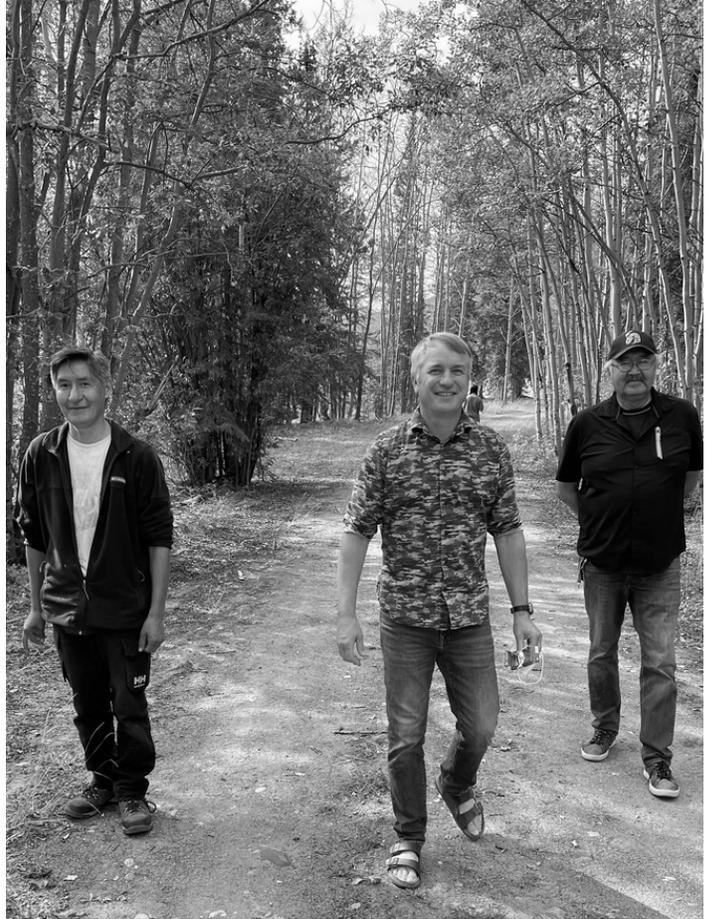
- 2018 Yukon Forum – outlined objectives to advance regional land use planning.
- 2020-21 Advancing Planning Workshops held to advance Forum objectives including formation of the Indigenous Planning and Traditional Knowledge Committee/IPTK (advisory group to YLUPC mandated to organize the first Land Relationship Gathering in 2021).
- 2021 Land Relationship Gathering – intended to gather knowledge on how to better reflect Indigenous values and worldviews in YT land use planning.
- 2022 Advancing Planning Recommendations – YLUPC provided recommendations to the Parties, the first of which was to embrace Indigenous planning and Traditional Knowledge as a means to set commissions up for success.
- 2023 Elder’s Workshop – held to help YLUPC better understand traditional land planning practices.
- 2023 renaming of IPTK to “Traditional Knowledge Circle”. The Circle is intended to include First Nation representation from across the Yukon to advise YLUPC on how to better embrace Indigenous planning approaches.

Panel Discussion: Chapter 11 Processes so Far

Planning region commission chairs Debbie Nagano (Dawson), Dave Loeks (Peel Watershed) and Shirlee Frost (North Yukon - Sam Skinner, YLUPC Senior Planner, presented on her behalf) discussed how their planning processes applied Traditional Knowledge and how Traditional Knowledge impacted decisions made. Chairs were asked to share advice for future commissions.

Cooperation, the importance of relationships, and on-the-land knowledge from several generations back were common themes across commissions and were recommended for future commissions. Panelists agreed that the Dawson planning process, the most recent of the three, has done the best job of reflecting Traditional Knowledge in the plan, such as through the adoption of a stewardship approach.





Land Relationship Model Update

Copper Joe Jack presented the Land Relationship Model and the progress it has made since it was presented at the 2021 Gathering. The Model is a collaborative knowledge-building process that respects Yukon First Nations Long Ago Peoples Way and western knowledge. It is a process used to solve problems through the sharing and exchange of knowledge.

Copper Joe Jack ran a demonstration where the model was applied to the issue of how to protect communities from floods. Water from Teslin Lake was used as the “no voice” and Elders and workshop participants volunteered to represent Traditional Knowledge holders and stakeholders.

The exercise was powerful and showed how the model can be applied to all planning phases: relationship building, plan preparation, implementation and review.

Training Policy Committee Update

The Training Policy Committee made a presentation to the attendees about how it is currently developing training for UFA Boards and Committees that includes an online video-based “workshop” that covers the history of the UFA, roles and responsibilities of board members and Indigenous leadership.

Modules being developed include:

- Yukon first Nation History – describes the pathway to the UFA.
- Boards and Committees – orientation to the different boards and committees, their mandates and intergovernmental relationships.
- “So you want to join a UFA Board or Committee” - insight into membership.
- Board Leadership – ways to use first Nation approaches, incorporating indigenous principles, and handling conflict.

The modules consider and reflect on what Yukon Elders fought so hard for and serve as a reminder of the linkages to the Agreements and the spirit and intent and responsibility.

YLUPC Land Relationship Planning Process Overview

YLUPC’s Director, Tim Sellars, explained the land use planning process and how it has evolved over the years through various planning processes. Participants were asked for ideas on how YLUPC could integrate Traditional Knowledge and Ways into the planning process. Almost 100 suggestions were received, touching on the importance of ceremony; involvement of youth and Elders; continuity; looking to best practices from across the country; giving voices to the voiceless; education; consensus/cooperation; climate change; on-the-land meetings; making plans more accessible and interactive, and more.

Break Out Group Sessions

Participants were given questions to reflect on while out on the land, and then brought together in small groups to share and exchange. People settled back into one large group and shared their advice.

Questions asked included:

- What does Traditional Knowledge mean in your life?
- What does Traditional Knowledge mean in terms of land relationship planning?
- What are the top issues, concerns, and roadblocks for integrating Traditional Knowledge into our work?
- What are the gaps and how do we fill them when it comes to land relationship planning and Traditional Knowledge?
- How can YLUPC and the Traditional Knowledge Circle assist/support organizations and governments to fully integrate Traditional Knowledge in their work?

42 comments and suggestions were made to the Council and the Traditional Knowledge Circle. Answers were varied but themes did emerge from the discussions. Some highlights include:

How to Indiginize entire process?

Define Traditional Knowledge: many parts, laws, where animals are, teachings, it's not linear. Give recognition to the stories heard.

Expand toolbox rather than be prescriptive.

Consistency in legislation, particularly the Lands Act.

Ensure Traditional Knowledge gets same respect as scientific knowledge (everywhere).

Elevate our Elders (same level as Ministers). Support/enhance participation of Elders in regional land use planning.

Teaching younger generations. Develop education and resources.

Make decision making processes more traditional. Root land planning in ceremony and the land.

Support both settled and non-settled First Nations.

Advocate for resources/commitment.

Recommendations

The Land Relationship Gathering 2023 was a great success. Participants expressed their gratitude to YLUPC and the circle for organizing such a rich and powerful meeting. Closing recommendations to YLUPC included

YLUPC and the Traditional Knowledge Circle review the suggestions/comments from participants and establish their priorities based on the list provided by the discussion groups.

YLUPC and the Traditional Knowledge Circle group themes to flag priority areas to work on for the next 3 years based on participant advice. The objective of this exercise would be to develop an Action Plan for the Traditional Knowledge Circle.

Share the report with participants once the Circle has identified their priorities.

Hold another Land Relationship Gathering in the next 6-8 months.

Involve more youth in Gatherings and the planning processes.



**“APPRECIATE EVERYTHING ON THE LAND AND THE LAND
WILL LOOK AFTER YOU.”**