



Northwest Territories Environment and Natural Resources

Aklavik Take a Kid Harvesting Program Activity Report



TAKH participants at John Carmichael's bush camp for the Gwich'in Forestry Day.

Moose Kerr School Aklavik

Monday, February 7th to Monday, February 14th, 2011

Completed by:
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Introduction:

In February, ten lucky students from the Moose Kerr School got to participate in a one week '*Take a Kid Harvesting Program*' (TAKHP) where they were introduced to traditional and cultural winter harvesting activities such as hunting, trapping, and winter travel and survival skills. The Moose Kerr School, with assistance from Aklavik ENR, applied for and received funding to implement a *TAKH Program*.

The TAKHP is a Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) initiative that provides funding for On-the-land programs. ITI works in conjunction with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) as well as schools, community and aboriginal organizations that deliver the TAKHP.

The *Take a Kid Trapping and Harvesting Programs* are an example of steps the GNWT is taking in 'Building Our Future', one of the five strategic initiatives of the 16th Legislative Assembly. Instilling a sense of pride among the youth in their culture and their heritage is an important component of the program.

Instructors:

The Take a Kid Harvesting participants were lead by Herschel Island Park Rangers Samuel and Edward McLeod who greatly assisted ENR Renewable Resource Officer Ian McLeod to implement the program. Also assisting in the program were John Carmichael and Richard Ross, who are Gwich'in elders from Aklavik that implemented the Gwich'in Forestry Day at John's bush camp up the Peel River.

Participants:

Students who took part in the program include: Tyson Whitbread, Arnold Archie, Shaun Firth, Riley Furlong, Billy Tyrrel, Edwin Wright, James Kasook, Lance Paul, Kyle Meyook, Stringer Kasook, James Kogiak and Ocean McLeod. All the students were MKS Junior High students.



Daily Activities:

Day 1 Monday, February 7

Program Introduction and Trail Breaking:

After a thorough safety lecture The TAKH group travelled out on the land with snowmobiles. The youth leaders took the students up the Husky Channel to Black Mountain Creek, where they saw some Dall sheep on the mountain, although no sheep were harvested. They then looked at some slumping on the side of the creek caused by permafrost melting and travelled back to the community.



Day 2 Tuesday, February 8

Muskox Hunting:

The TAKH group departed Aklavik and travelled up into the Richardson Mountains to First Creek to check some traps. There were no fur-bearing animals caught in the traps so we continued on to Divide Lake, then towards Canoe Lake. Above Canoe Lake they spotted three muskoxen and James Kasook and Edwin Wright each shot a muskox. The rest of the day was spent skinning and butchering the muskox. Samples were collected for ENR Wildlife Management. On the way back to Aklavik we climbed out of the mountains near Gravel Pit 467 and travelled down Willow Creek to the Peel River and back to Aklavik.



Day 3 Wednesday, February 9

West Channel Trapping:

The TAKH group travelled north of Aklavik to West Channel where they checked the youth leader's trapline. One mink was caught in the traps. They also found a moose which was recently killed by wolves.



Day 4 Thursday, February 10

TAKH activities cancelled due to low visibility and high winds.

Day 5 Friday, February 11

Cache Creek Moose Hunt:

The TAKH group travelled into the Richardson Mountains to Cache Creek, north of Slim Mountain. We searched for moose, sheep and/or rabbits along the creek. We stopped at 'Tin House' cabin to glass around and to allow the youth to warm up. The wind chill that day was -43° C and there were no animals moving. We returned to the West channel and made a fire at the cabin before returning to Aklavik.



Day 6 Monday, February 14

Gwich'in Elders and Forestry Day:

The Ehdiitat Renewable Resource Council sponsored Gwich'in elders John Carmichael and Richard Ross to take the TAKH group out for a day. John and Richard taught the group different uses for forestry products such as what type of trees to cut for firewood and they demonstrated how to build a dead fall trap for martin and wolverine.

Summary:

The weather during most of the program was cold, around -30 most days. Some days had wind chills exceeding -40 below. Despite this the students showed great enthusiasm for the subjects discussed. No one complained about the cold temperatures and students did not want to go home on most days. The elders who participated in the program felt that the students were very well behaved and respectful.

Attendance was great with most of the students attending most of the time. Firearm safety was stressed throughout the program. All students were very well behaved and took part in all the activities. Snowmobile safety was also stressed throughout the program.

Trapping and hunting safety issues and concerns were discussed prior to the program and trapper related legislation and international agreements on trapping were further discussed while on the trapline visits.

We have implemented similar harvesting program for several years now and each year we try to improve the program. I am very pleased we provide the community youths an opportunity to learn about harvesting their traditional food, their culture, heritage and traditional knowledge and I look forward to this program each year.

For more information please contact:

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Mahsi Cho, Thank you, Quyanainni

