

Rabbitkettle Lake Ecology Camp 2011

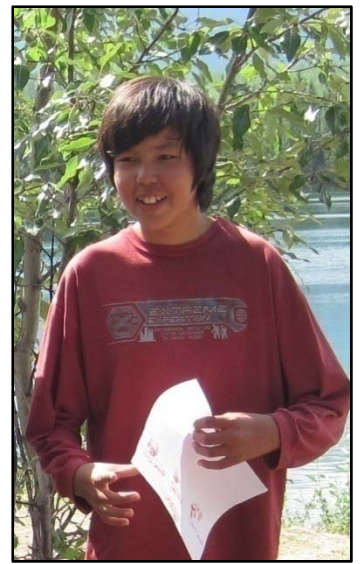


Students



Donovan Punch
Age:17
Trout Lake

Randall Hardisty
Age:12
Fort Simpson



Darius Sabourin
Age:14
Fort Simpson



Rocky Elleze
Age:17
Fort Providence



William Alger
Age:12
Fort Simpson



John Antoine
Age:13
Fort Providence



Jade Bonnetrouge
Age:17
Fort Providence



Edmund Gargan
Age:14
Fort Providence

Students

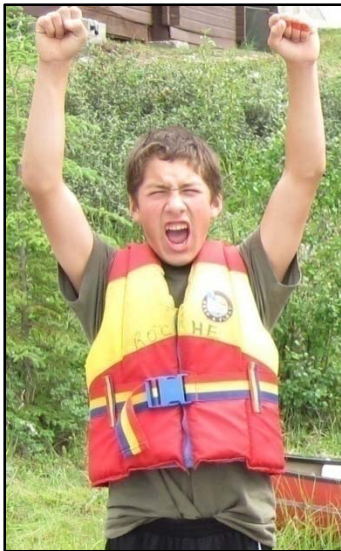


Megan Bertrand
Age:19
Nahanni Butte

Deidre Yakinnea
Age:15
Nahanni Butte

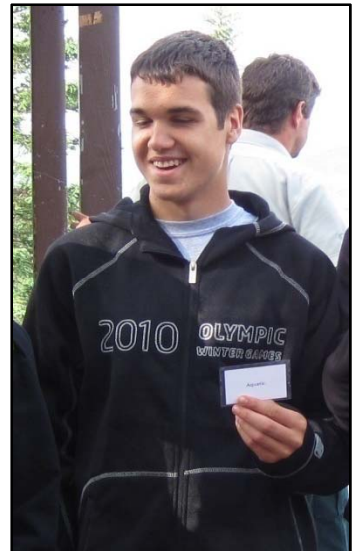


Mindy Tsetso
Age:16
Nahanni Butte



Kevin Roche
Age:13
Fort Simpson

Robert Harold
Age:13
Fort Simpson



James Konisenta
Age:13
Nahanni Butte



Tyler Lafferty
Age:12
Fort Simpson

Staff



Jerry Antoine
Instructor
NNPR



Celine Betsaka
Cook
Nahanni Butte



Doug Tate
Instructor
NNPR



Ashley OKrainec
Instructor
NNPR



Bernice Konisenta
Cook
Nahanni Butte



Sandra Edda
Elder
Fort Simpson

Staff



Andrew Bertrand
Elder
Nahanni Butte



Teresa Byatt
Teacher
Fort Simpson



Logan McKay
Summer Student
NNPR



Bruce Townsend
Instructor
AAROM



Tonya Makletzoff
Instructor
NNPR

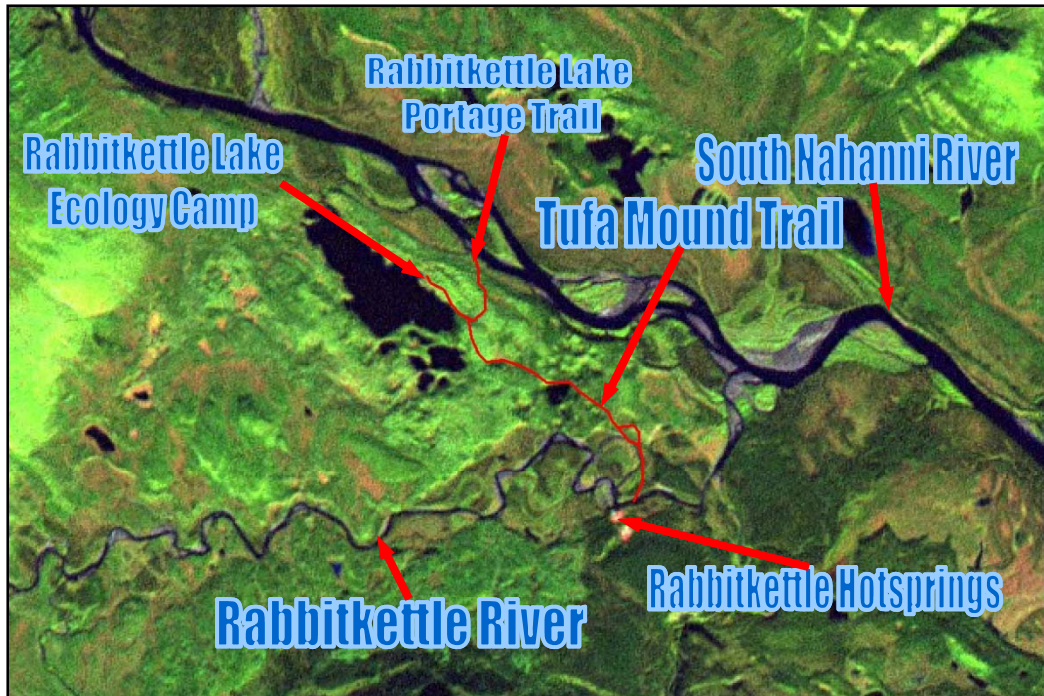


Jordan Snider
Summer Student
NNPR

George Tsetso
Instructor
Nahanni Butte



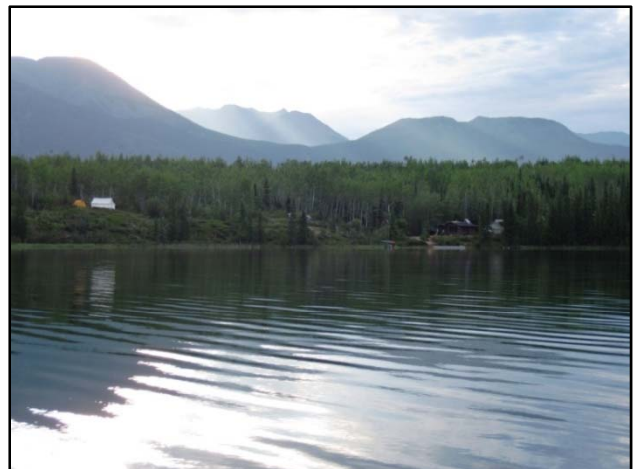
Rabbitkettle Lake and surrounding area



After the students unloaded their gear and met everyone, they were given an orientation of the camp, provided with the camp rules, and assigned their accommodations. Students were given a water bottle and were shown how to filter their own water.



Staff giving orientation to the students.



Rabbitkettle Lake Ecology Camp.

Bear Safety

Doug Tate, a Conservation Biologist with Nahanni National Park Reserve (NNPR) taught the students about bear safety. He taught the students how to properly store food while out on the land, they talked about leave no trace principles, and many other helpful safety tips were reviewed. Many different types of bear deterrents were explained and a bear banger was demonstrated. All staff and students watched a bear video in Fort Simpson before flying out to the camp.



Doug demonstrating to the students how a bear banger works.



Doug explaining to the students what a bear banger is.

Park introduction and terrestrial ecology

Doug taught the students about the history of Parks in Canada and the Nahanni National Park Reserve including its recent expansion to incorporate more of the South Nahanni Watershed. Ashley had the students guess the definition of the terminology they had on their flashcards. Teresa and Ashley taught the students food web dynamics. Students were given field notebooks to write down daily activities that they were going to present at the end of camp.



Doug providing the students with a bit of background on Nahanni National Park Reserve + all Parks in Canada.

Teresa and Ashley teaching the students food web dynamics.



Bruce and students holding up their flashcards before trying to guess the terminology.

Water, Boat and Canoe Safety

Doug and Bruce taught the students water, boat and canoe safety. The students learned the importance of wearing a lifejacket while in a boat and to have supplies onboard like a paddle, fire extinguisher, throwbag and a bailer. All activities were taught and practiced on dry land. The students took turns rescuing each another with canoes. It was quite a popular event for the students who wholeheartedly participated in the exercise.



Doug reviewing canoe techniques with the students.



Students rescued each other after learning how to safely do so.



Students getting the water out of the canoe



Students getting back into the canoe

Water, Boat, Canoe Safety

All staff and students had to wear life jackets during trips on the lake and students had to be supervised while doing water ecology activities on the lake. Each student was fitted with a lifejacket according to their weight and size. The weather was great for the duration of the camp, all water related activities were the highlights for a lot of students.



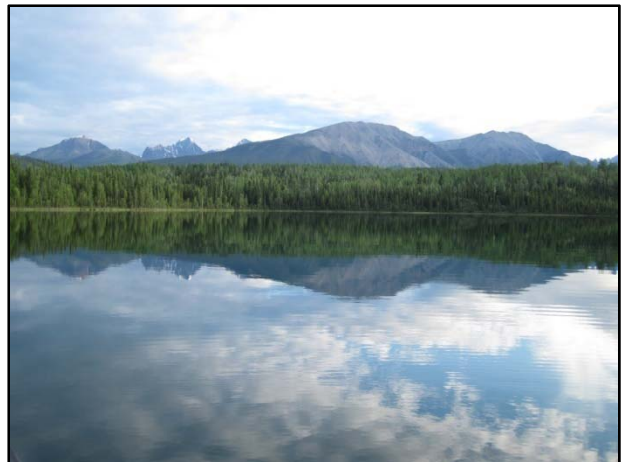
Students going for a boat ride with Doug.



Staff going for a canoe ride.



Staff and students canoeing and swimming.



Rabbitkettle Lake.

Water Ecology

During the course of the camp, Bruce taught modules on water ecology to the students. Freshwater zooplankton, the water cycle, dissecting fish, contaminants and food web dynamics were some of topics taught to the students. Students went out on field trips and used scientific equipment to do experiments. The zooplankton were viewed under a microscope by the students. Bruce reviewed the small vessel operators handbook, some students and staff obtained a Pleasure Craft Operator Card.



Students conducting a battery test on water to demonstrate how we monitor climate changes.



Students made Mickey Mouse H₂O water molecules out of water floats.



Students looking at what they caught with their nets.



Students using a Seine Net in the lake to catch aquatic life.

Water Ecology



Bruce helping a student empty his net into a basin.



Bruce explaining to the students the different states of water.



Students taking minnows out of the Seine Net.



Students using their Plankton Nets to catch Plankton near the shore.



Bruce teaching the students the different parts of a dissected fish.



Some of the minnows caught with the Seine Net.

GPS, Map and Orienteering

Doug and Teresa taught the students how to read maps, use a compass and how to make a map of the surrounding area. Students learned to use GPS units, and found their way to pre-set waypoints in the area. Celine talked about the Rabbitkettle area which is her traditional area, she talked about travel routes that her family utilized in the fall to hunt moose. When spring would come her family would go downriver in moose-skin boats to trade for the upcoming winter. Students hiked to Tufa mounds and Rabbitkettle River.



Doug showing the students a topographic map of the Rabbitkettle area.



Celine telling stories about life on the land when she was young.



Teresa getting the students to draw a map of the surrounding area.

Traditional Knowledge

Traditional knowledge was taught by Sandra Edda, Jerry Antoine, George Tsetso, Celine Betsaka and Andrew Bertrand. Andrew showed the students how to properly set a tent and how to set rabbit snares. George, Jerry, Andrew and Celine told traditional stories about the area and shared some of the history with the students during the evenings. The instructors taught the students how to feed the fire and water. The students found it quite interesting and participated every step of the way.



Students walking to check their springpole rabbit snares.



Andrew took some students out to get tent poles for their tents.



Sandra showed the students some Dene tools; this is how a moose scraper is used to clean a moose hide.



George Tsetso telling the students Dene legends of the area.

Traditional Games

Traditional games was taught by Jerry Antoine, George Tsetso and Andrew Bertrand. Jerry showed the students how to play ring toss, stick pull, finger pull, moose skin ball and beaver bone games. All three instructors taught the students how to play handgames. The students found it quite interesting and played handgames every night. Some tourists were able to join them on the last day for some friendly competition.



Jerry showing the students how to play the beaver bone game.



Students enjoying a game of ring toss.



Students playing a game of stick pull.



Students playing handgames with some tourists.

Tufa Mounds Hike

Staff and students hiked to Tufa Mounds, a unique geological feature near the camp. Everyone had lunch at Rabbitkettle River before returning back to camp. The weather was nice and everyone enjoyed the hike. Sandra showed the students important medicinal plants and George showed them how to identify animal tracks seen along the way.



Staff posing with Tufa Mounds in the background.



Students and staff taking a break during the hike out to Tufa Mounds.



Students stopped to enjoy the view of Rabbitkettle River valley.



Students paying respect to the water at Rabbitkettle River.

Medicinal Plant Identification

Elder Sandra Edda taught how to identify medicinal plants of the boreal forest during the hike to Tufa Mounds. The students had cards to identify and look for certain plants on the hike. They also were required to number 3 plants and their traditional medicinal uses which they took field notes of in their log books. The students found it quite interesting and eagerly participated in looking for medicinal plants.



Sandra showing the students some important medicinal plants during the Tufa Mounds hike.



Students listening to Sandra explain the importance of medicinal plants to the Dene.

Stewardship

Tonya taught the students about reducing their footprint on the environment. Tonya discussed the differences between traditional and domestic food sources and how they impact the environment. Tonya asked the students how they could reduce their impact on the environment. The students each made a pledge by adding one action item they will do when they return home, all pledges were written down on leaves and used to make a tree.



Tonya helping students put their pledge on the tree.



Students explaining their pledges to the group.

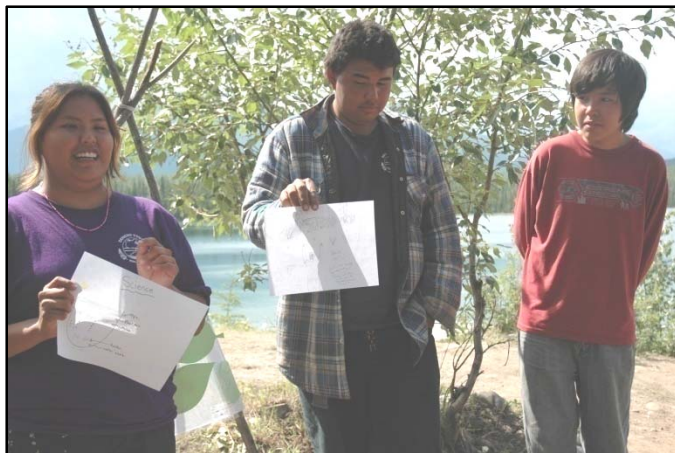


Camp Final Assignments

During the camp all of the students kept a journal that they filled out daily. At the end of the camp the students made a presentation of what they learned and what was their favorite activity at the camp to the group.



Students highlight what they learned and liked at the camp.



Recreational Activities

During their spare time students spent time swimming, listening and socializing. They were supervised during swimming and other water activities. Evening activities included elder story telling, card games, and snacks. There were tourists that regularly came during the camp to visit. The students thoroughly enjoyed their free time and got to know each other quite well.



Students and staff taking a break from the hot weather.



Students and staff used the old dock as a makeshift raft.



Students and staff going for a ride with the raft.



George telling the students stories about the land.

Rabbitkettle Ecology camp

This year there was no community feast to end the camp. Due to inclement weather and the rides for students from outside Fort Simpson, two flights out were required for camp participants; Thursday 14th evening and Friday 15th morning. The elders, supervisors and facilitators played an key role in the ecology camp's success as did the group of students from throughout the Dehcho. All students wholeheartedly participated in and became involved with all of the different experiences provided to them during the camp. The students thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the 2011 camp and made friendships that will last a lifetime.



Staff out for a canoe ride.



Some resident loons at Rabbitkettle.



Emerald Lake.



Sunset over Rabbitkettle Lake.



During the last regional wildlife workshop held in October 2010, there was consensus that the youth ecology camp should continue to be held at different locations throughout the Dehcho Region. The 2003 and 2004 camps had been held at the Trout Lake Fire Base. By holding the camp in different locations this would allow different communities the opportunity of hosting and conducting the youth ecology camp as well as providing the chance for participants to experience different areas of the Dehcho. A joint DFN/ENR committee reviews the proposals and awards the camp. The 2005 camp was held near Jean Marie River and hosted by Land is Life. The 2006 camp was held near Hay River Reserve and was hosted by the Katlodeeche First Nation. The 2007 and 2009 camps were held at Cli Lake west of Fort Simpson and were hosted by North Nahanni Naturalist Lodge Ltd. The 2008 camp was held at Paradise creek near Trout Lake and was hosted by the Samba K'e Development Corporation. The 2010 camp was held at Ekali Lake and hosted by the Jean Marie River First Nation. This year's camp was held at Rabbitkettle Lake and hosted by Nahanni Butte Dene Band/ Parks Canada. We would like to thank AAROM for providing additional funding and expertise for the camp this year, without their help we would have been unable to hold a camp this year.

Previous camps taught a variety of traditional and scientific skills. This year's camp had a great mixture of both. This was the first year students were able to get a CTS high school credit. Students learned a lot of new tools which should help them in future endeavours. Once again we appreciate all the work the instructors and elders did this year to ensure a most memorable experience for all those who attended.