

Sir Alexander Mackenzie School (SAMS) Inuvik, NT

FINAL REPORT



SAMS Gwich'in Language Classes Trapper Awareness Program

Dates: November 18, 19 and 20, 2008.

Completed by:
Bella Kay
Gwich'in Language Teacher
SAM School
Inuvik, NT
Tel: (867) 777-7180
E-mail: Bella_Kay@bdec.learnnet.nt.ca

Introduction:

We met with Conservation Education Officer Daryl English and Trapping Instructor Fred Jerome to plan day trips to Fred Jerome's Camp, which is approximately three kilometres by snowmobile from Dept of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Shell Lake compound. Upon the completion of the planning process we submitted a proposal to the Dept of ITI Take a Kid Trapping Program where we were fortunate to receive funding. We then coordinated and implemented the program on the dates suggested and the program was considered very successful.



The following classes participated in the program:

Grade 4A/4B 14 students

Grade 4C/5C/5B/6B 10 students

Grade 5A/6A/6C 13 Students

A total of 37 students participated in the program.



Facilitators:

Freddie Jerome and ENR employees Conservation Education Officer (CEO) Daryl English, Renewable Resource Officer (RRO) Owen Allen, and Forest Management Employee Ernie Francis



Camp Attendant/Cook:

Fred Jerome hired Joe Norbert as the camp attendant and cook.



SAMS Supervisors:

Bella Kay, Gwich'in Language teacher, and Beaver volunteers Monica Gagne and Justin Digby assisted throughout the program by supervising the youths.



Implementation:

CEO Daryl English and Fred Jerome coordinated the program. The students and staff were brought out to the ENR Shell Lake Compound and travel out to Fred Jerome Camp. The participants were kept very busy learning about living in the bush and the many jobs that need to be done on a daily basis. It is amazing how much the youths enjoyed this one-day activity and many did not want to go home by the end of the day.



Cultural and Traditional Knowledge:

Fred Jerome spends a lot of time with the youths talking to them about where he and his parents come from and how they survived on the land for many years before Inuvik was built. He learnt a lot of traditional and cultural knowledge from his parents and other relatives that he feels should be passed onto the younger generations. Through a program such as this his goal is very achievable.

Trip Activities:

Rabbit Snares:

The students learned how to set two types of rabbit snares. Freddie took them into the willows to show the students where to set rabbit snares, what type of willows to use and when to check the snares. The first day Freddie set three snares with the grade fours. The next day students set three more snares where there were many rabbit tracks. While they did this they also checked the previous day's snares; the second snare had a rabbit and everyone was happy. This gave Freddie the opportunity to show the students how to skin and cut the rabbit and Joe Norbert made rabbit soup for lunch.



Setting Traps:

The students learned how to set Martin traps in the woods. They learned about where to set traps, what kind of bait to use and when to check the traps. Using a Martin that Freddie caught on a separate occasion he showed student how to take them out of the trap when they are caught. On the third day students were lucky enough to watch Freddie demonstrate how to skin a Martin and how to put the pelt on a stretcher.



Students also learned how to make a dead fall trap for wolverines. This was done in the woods using only natural materials. Everyone found this lesson interesting on the first day and some students even tried to make their own.



Getting Water from the River:

Students were shown how to make a hole in the ice to get clean water for drinking and cooking.



Traditional Lunches:

A delicious lunch was provided at the kitchen house; Joe Norbert an elder was the cook. The students and helpers all enjoyed a great lunch consisting of caribou soup, bread, juice and apples.

Making a Fire:

Students learned how to make a fire using only a match out on the land. First we had to make sure we clear a spot by making it hallow in the snow then we gathered dry willows and branches. These were placed on top of one another and lit with a match. As the fire grew, everyone was warmed and students roasted hot dogs.



Setting Spruce Branches in the Tent:

I demonstrated how to set a spruce branch floor in a tent. The spruce boughs were precut and in a large pile. I began by placing a branch curve

down in the snow and then weaved other branches underneath it to make a flat surface. Each student had the opportunity to set the branches and it looked so neat, it looked like a rug. It was nice to see students who spend a lot of time on the land helping students who were setting branches for the first time. The smell of the fresh branches that filled the tent was great.

Moose Tracks:

On the second day we saw a moose in the distance on the banks of a river far from Freddie's camp. The next day we went to where we had spotted the moose on skidoo. Daryl explained the moose tracks in the snow. To our surprise the tracks told us that the moose had two young ones traveling with it.

Fox Lecture:

CEO Daryl English and RRO Owen Allen spoke to the students about rabies and the potential danger of foxes in the communities. Not only did he talk to them about the signs and effects of rabies, he also spoke about why students shouldn't feed wild animals in town. The students were very receptive, they asked lots of questions and found the lesson interesting.

Recreational Activities:

One of the best parts of being on the land was watching the students play in the woods and willows on their free time. Students sledded down the hills, made snow angels, created "bush paths", and went snowmobiling.

Gwich'in Words taught:

Being on the land gave students an opportunity to practice relative Gwich'in words, this included:

Troo	wood
Geh	rabbit
Chuu	water
Kwàñ'	fire
Luk	fish
Niivyaa	tent
Neegoo	fox
Nèthrûh	wolverine
K'áii	willows
Tsuk	martin



Conclusion:

The day trips were enjoyed by everyone and students returned to SAMS looking forward to future trips. It is great to teach in a traditional and cultural environment that the students seem to enjoy immensely. A great big *Mahsi cho!* to Freddie Jerome, Joe Norbert, CEO Daryl English, RRO Owen Allen, Ernie Francis, Justin Digby and Monica Gagne.

Other Images:





