

# Fort McPherson

## Tetlit Gwich'in Council



**Bear Creek Trapper Training Program**  
**Thursday, March 1 to Wednesday, March 7, 2007**

*Submitted by: Ms. Liz Wright  
Tetlit Gwich'in Community Coordinator  
Ft. McPherson, NT*

## **Introduction:**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) implemented a trapper-training program beginning on Thursday, March 1 to Wednesday, March 7, 2007. The Tetlit Gwich'in Council (TGC) and the Gwichya Renewable Resource Council (GRRC) worked in conjunction with the Gwich'in Education and Training Department (GTC) and were invited to be full participants.

## **Location:**

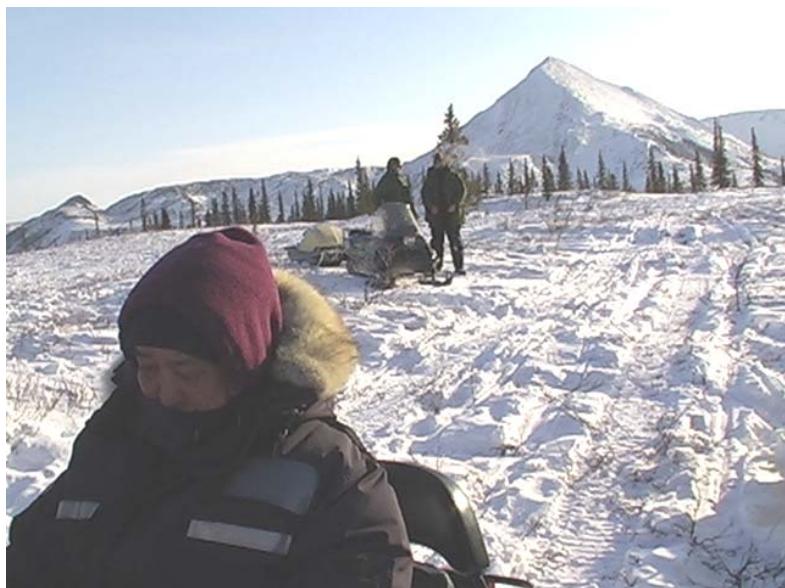
The camp was located at Bear Creek, situated in the Richardson Mountains. The program itself was also held at Bear Creek and the surrounding area. The area has a high moose and wolf population, and at the time of the program had an abundance of Porcupine Caribou in the area. Bear Creek has many fur-bearing animals, which is suitable for the students to harvest.

## **Funding:**

The following organizations contributed towards the program:

• Tetlit Gwich'in Council	Administration in-kind
• Gwichya RRC (GHAP)	\$ 3,500
• Gwich'in Education and Training Department	\$ 5,529
• Mackenzie Gas Project	\$ 500
• Joint Contribution: Dept. of ENR, ITI & MACA	<u>\$12,500</u>
	<b>Total      \$22,029</b>

- Dept. of ENR also provided in-kind services of staff and camping equipment.



## **Implementation:**

The decision to approve the program was finalized in mid-January. The program itself was originally planned for Mid-February, due to extreme cold weather conditions; the program was re-scheduled to early March.

TGC Community Coordinator Liz Wright with and RRO II Andy Heerschap (ENR) coordinated and implemented the program. They worked in conjunction to select the students and cooks. RRO Heerschap made several trips to Inuvik to pick up camping equipment and supplies.

The Gwich'ya Renewable Resource Council along with Sonny Blake from Tsiigehtchic selected four students to be participants.

Fort McPherson Elder Robert Alexie Sr. has extensive experience working with youth from Fort McPherson and has completed many trapper-training programs over the years. Mr. Alexie is always an asset to this type of program and because of his participation ensured its success.



Instructor Johnnie Charlie has been trapping for most of his life, he is known to have extensive knowledge and on-the-land skills. Johnnie was the previous RRO2 officer for Fort McPherson. His participation was crucial and proved to be a success to the program.

Effie Snowshoe was the cook and Helen Wilson was her assistant, they worked with the student's quite well and got along with everyone. They put in endless amount of hours and effort ensuring the students always had a hot meal and something to drink.

### **Daily Routine:**

Each day the students would be encouraged to help around the camp; gathering wood, cutting wood, and piling wood ready for use. Ice needed chopping, snow needed gathering; this would later be used for drinking water, making tea, preparing meals, cleaning. All the participants were instructed to keep their area clean and tidy.



Instructors Robert Alexie and Johnnie Charlie were successful in shooting a wolf. Caribou was harvested, and snares were set for smaller game. All the participants were instructed to fully participate in all activities. Students and instructors conversed daily about what can be harvested. Stories were told about past leaders, hunters and special harvesting area's.



## **PARTICIPANTS:**

### **Instructors:**

- Robert Alexie Sr.
- Johnnie P Charlie



### **Cook and assistant:**

- Effie J. Snowshoe
- Helen Wilson

### **ENR Staff Members:**

- RRO 2 Andy Heerschap
- RRO 1 Sonny Blake

### **Tsiigehtchic Students:**

1. Daniel Blake - 18 years old
2. Phillip Aviugana – 19 years old
3. Jason McLeod – 19 years old
4. Earl McLeod – 18 years old

### **Fort McPherson Students:**

1. Michael Francis 21 years old
2. Douglas Wilson 22 years old
3. Aaron Kay 25 years old

### **Additional Staff:**

- Peter Louvers, Anthropologist student from the Netherlands.





### **Conclusion:**

Each of the participants enjoyed themselves. The location is abundant for fur harvesting and hunting. Many positive comments came from the students and staff over the duration of the program. Students commented on having similar programs in the future as many of them do not have family members that can take them out to teach them about hunting and trapping within the Gwich'in Region.

