

PAULATUK SEAL SKINNING PROGRAM



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 TO SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2006.

Report completed by:

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Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

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Paulatuk Seal Skinning Program

Introduction:

In early spring of 2006 the community of Paulatuk requested a seal-skinning program as part of the Take a Kid Trapping Program (TKTP). The TKTP was initiated last year by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Investment, Tourism and Industry and Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. A regional committee was formed to select and award funding to successful community proposals that focuses on hunting, trapping and fishing educational programs mainly for youth.



Renewable Resource Officer Ryan Smith discussed the program with the Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee (PHTC) and completed a proposal (see Appendix A) that was submitted to the above committee for funding. The proposal was favorable and further discussions were held to decide on the tentative dates and to make further arrangements to implement the program.



The program would be administrated and implemented through the PHTC with the assistance of the Paulatuk Renewable Resource Officer Bill Wolki. The PHTC selected the instructors and students for the program. The seal-skinning program was held in Paulatuk from Tuesday, September 19 to Sunday, September 24, 2006.



Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

Implementation of the program:

Tuesday, September 19, 2006.

I arrived in Paulatuk at 3:30 PM on Tuesday afternoon and met the instructors, Mr. Tony Green and Mr. John Kudluk, the Renewable Resource Office (RRO) Bill Wolki and with the acting HTC resource person, Mr. Ruben Ruben, to discuss the program and what we required to begin the program the following day. I further discussed with RRO Wolki the use of his personal boat and I decided that RRO Wolki would be paid for the extra rental of a boat as per the Paulatuk Seal Skinning Proposal.



Mr. Joe Jr. Ruben, an additional instructor, was also in attendance and even though he understood that he would not be paid for his services at the time, he said that he would gladly assist us with the program where he could, including the use of his personal boat. I suggested to him that we would provide him with the oil and gas for the use of his boat. We went shopping for groceries at 4:00 PM and stored it in the Paulatuk HTC office.



It was decided at that time that the ocean was too rough to travel on that evening and possibly the next day so we discussed skinning and fleshing seals, that were harvested a few days before, at a camp about two kilometres outside of town at the 'point'. I met with the students and instructors from 4:45 to 5:20 PM to explain the program, review the seal-skinning manual, and discuss what is expected of all the participants.



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I contacted Mr. Tim Devine, Inuvik Region Wildlife and Fisheries Manager, to discuss the rental of a few All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) that the students owned to haul the jerry cans to and from the gas station for fuel and to assist with the set up of the camp. It was decided that we should purchase the oil and gas for the program that evening as the gas station is only opened from 4:00 to 6:00 PM each day. The students began filling the jerry cans between 5:30 PM and 7:00 PM and acquired approximately \$1,200 worth of fuel and several containers of oil and naphtha.



Wednesday, September 20, 2006

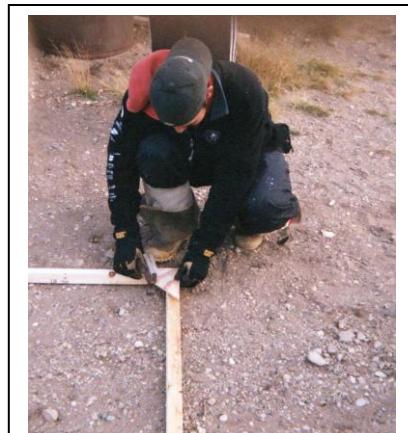
The next morning I had arranged breakfast at the hotel, upon the request of the instructors, and most of the students and one instructor showed up between 7:00 and 8:30 PM. They went over to Mr. Green's home and all the students were there by 9:00 AM, including Mr. Joe Jr. Ruben and Mr. Tony Green and RRO Bill Wolki, but Mr. Kudluk was not in attendance. Mr. Tony Green and I decided that we should build the seal stretching frames that morning and hopefully the winds would die down to allow us to harvest further seals that afternoon.



By 11:30 AM I decided to head over to the Paulatuk HTC office to contact Mr. Kudluk to see if he would be available for the rest of the program. I spoke briefly to him and he told me that he could not be available for the remainder of that day and I told him that I would have to hire Mr. Joe Jr. Ruben as his replacement for the remainder of the program.



The participants set up the camp in the afternoon as both instructors had already harvested several seals a few days before. All the students completed skinning and fleshing their first seal in a few hours. There was a grizzly bear in the area and all participants were fairly cautious of this fact. After the participants all had an evening meal and completed final touches to their sealskins they headed back to the community at approximately 6:30 PM. The instructors and I were every impressed with the enthusiasm and patience of the students for the first day of the program.

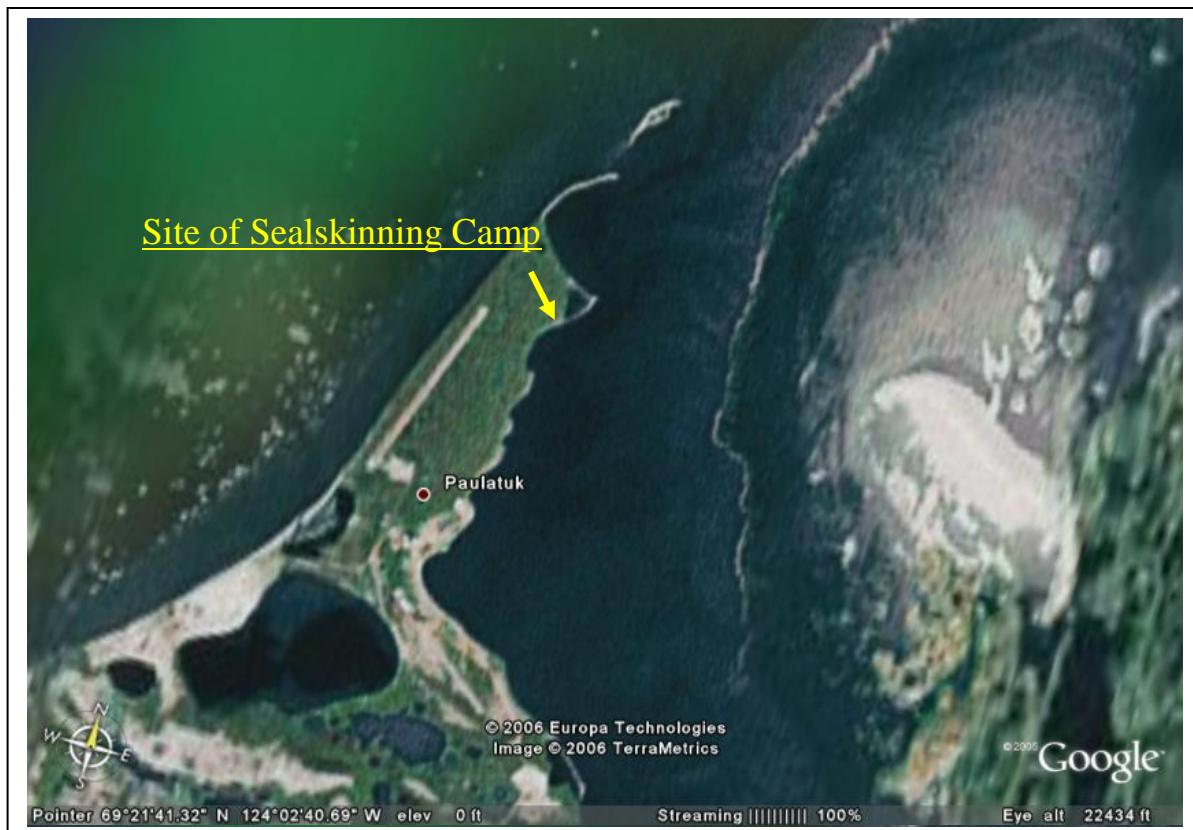


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Thursday, September 21, 2006

On Thursday we went out on the ocean at about 9:30 AM and harvest several seals. All the participants wore life jackets that were provided by Mr. Joe Jr. Ruben through the Paulatuk Rangers Program. The day was calm but there was fog moving in from the west, which would take several hours to reach us. I understand that most students had already harvested seals before and this made the trip more enjoyable as all the students were very excited to be on the ocean. The fog moved into the area at about 3:00 PM and we headed back to the community with eleven seals.

We arrived back at Mr. Green house at about 4:30 PM and we had something to eat. Again the day was very enjoyable mainly because of the enthusiasm of all participants.



Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

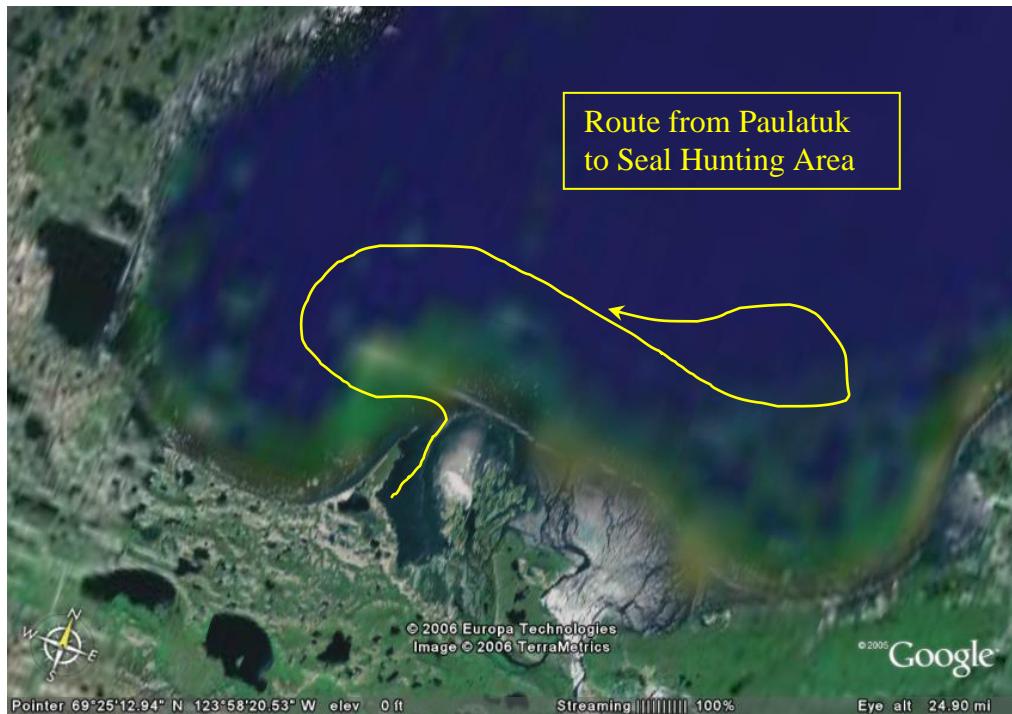
Friday, September 22, 2006

On Friday, the winds came up again and we washed and prepared the sealskins for stretching that morning. My scheduled flight was at 2:00 PM so I headed back to the hotel at 12:00 PM for checkout and for a ride to the airport. The rest of the participants were going to head back out to the camp at the point with the ATVs in the afternoon to complete additional skinning and fleshing of the recent harvest. Mr. Joe Jr. Ruben also had eight additional seals that he harvested earlier in the week that he would bring out to the camp for the students.



Saturday and Sunday, September 23 and 24, 2006

On Saturday or Sunday the participants were going to try to attempt a caribou hunt but the weather was not favorable so they went back out to the camp at the point to finish any additional sealskins. I understand that they ran out of time to complete the last final phase, which is the drying, however presently there are several stretch skins drying at or near several homes in Paulatuk.

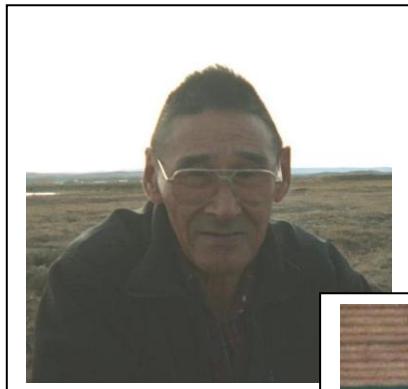


Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

List of Participants:

Instructors:

1. Mr. Tony Green
2. Mr. Joe Jr. Ruben
3. RRO I Bill Wolki



Students that completed the program:

1. Frank Wolki,
2. Terrence Green,
3. Elton Ruben,
4. Paden Gordon-Ruben,
5. Dwayne Illasiak,
6. Arlin Ruben,
7. Corey Ruben,
8. Joe Ruben Jr.
9. Jason Ruben,
10. Brandon Green,
11. Shane Nakimayak



Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

Recommendations for future programs:

After I implement most conservation education programs I like to spend time with the instructors and students discussing how to improve the program. Since this was a pilot project I believe there is room for recommendations from the community and participants.

1. The program could be longer. It was felt that to go through the whole process, and again dependent on weather, that the program might be ten days long. We were fortunate that some preparations were already completed including the harvesting of seals prior to the beginning of the program, however the instructor Mr. Tony Green and I agreed that the program might have lasted a few days longer to ensure all phases of the seal skinning process is completed.
2. The Program should be held out at a camp. Ideally for the first program and the cost of the program it was favorable that the program was held in the community mainly because of the weather. However, it was still felt that the participants could have benefited from being in a camp environment where the students could learn other skills such as outdoor survival skills, preparing and setting up a camp, hunting and harvesting skills, traditional knowledge and cultural skills, etc. Even though most participants were glad to be going home in the evening to a warm bed and TV, they all felt that they could have benefited more if the program was in a camp setting.
3. Budget was favorable but cost was a lot higher. Most costs in Paulatuk are higher than in Inuvik and as I was purchasing the food and additional supplies (gas, oil, etc.) it was noteworthy that the cost added up quickly. If the next program is longer and in a camp setting the cost will also increase.
4. The community HTC would like to work out a more favorable financial arrangement for future conservation education programs as they did not have the funds to implement this program and shortly after the program the instructors and several students that we rented ATVs from was wondering when they would be paid. Even though I told them in advance that the GNWT has a waiting period to pay the HTC they made valid arguments (high cost of living, etc.) that they needed the funds a lot quicker than the 20 – 30 days that it takes for funding to go through the GNWT.



Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

Conclusion:

It is worth noting that it has been several years since the last sealskins came from Paulatuk, but upon the completion of this program I am positive that we will see many sealskins in the future from these young participants.

I would like to thank everyone from Paulatuk for his or her assistance in regards to this program, it was definitely a program I enjoyed immensely.



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Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

APPENDIX A

2006 PAULATUK SEALING PROGRAM

Objective:

To have Inuvialuit Instructors teach proper techniques for harvesting and preparing (skinning, fleshing, and drying) seal pelts for shipment to auction house.

Background:

In recent years, the seal harvest in the Paulatuk area has been for local use and for use as dog food. With the rise in fur prices and steady demand for seal pelts, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in conjunction with the Paulatuk Hunters and Trappers Committee (Paulatuk HTC), wishes to encourage presently active and potential new seal harvesters to benefit fully from their harvest. This will be accomplished by providing participants in a sealing workshop with the skills required to properly harvest and prepare seal pelts for auction.

GNWT, Fur Pricing Program (FPP): The FPP cash advance amount for all seal is \$55.00 each, plus a \$25.00 bonus payment for each seal, which meets the “prime fur” criteria. That is a total of \$80.00 per seal pelt, for properly handled fur. If the pelts sell at auction for more than \$55.00, the harvester receives the surplus.

For example, if a pelt sells for \$75.00 at auction, the harvester would receive \$20.00 from that sale, in addition to the \$55.00 advance and \$25.00 prime fur bonus, for a total of \$100.00 for that one pelt.

Grubstake program: If a harvester sells a minimum of 20 pelts, he/she receives an additional \$5.00 per pelt, up to a maximum of \$1,000.

For example: if a harvester sells 200 prime seal pelts, they would receive \$55.00 each advance, plus \$25.00 each bonus, plus \$5.00 each under the grubstake. That all adds up to \$11,000 (advance) + \$5,000 (bonus) + \$1,000 (grub stake) = \$17,000 for 200 prime seal pelts. Any money earned, at auction, above the \$55.00 each advance is also paid to the harvester.

Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

APPENDIX A (con't)

Overview:

The workshop will be conducted over the course of five days, with instructors required to work six consecutive days. Daily objectives are as follows:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Participants: 1 RRO; 2 Instructors	Participants: 1 RRO; 2 Instructors; 6-12 Students	Participants: 1 RRO; 2 Instructors; 6-12 Students	Participants: 1 RRO; 2 Instructors; 6-12 Students	Participants: 1 RRO; 2 Instructors; 6-12 Students	Participants: 1 RRO; 2 Instructors; 6-12 Students
-Set up for workshop; -RRO and Instructors discuss curriculum and finalize activity plans; -Last minute preparations	-First day of lessons; -Basic Firearms Safety Instruction; -Travel in boats; -Identify and locate sealing grounds; -Begin harvesting seal	-Continued harvest of seal in a.m.; -Skinning, fleshing, and drying techniques	-Continued fleshing and drying pelts	-Finish with fleshing and drying techniques; -FPP and Grubstake programs	-Break down/ cleanup from workshop; -Debrief and reiterate fundamentals of workshop

Cost Breakdown:

- Instructors with boat -2 @ \$500.00/day x 6 days	= \$6,000
- Additional boat rental - \$200.00/day x 3 days	= \$ 600
- Food for 15 people x 5 days (if course is held on away from community)	= \$2,000
- Gas	= \$ 800
- Ammunition	= \$ 200
- Skinning and fleshing equipment	= \$ 400
- Pelt drying hardware	<u>= \$ 200</u>
Total	= \$10,000

The Department will provide resource materials and sealing practices manuals.

Paulatuk Sealskinning Program

APPENDIX A (con't)

Paulatuk HTC Role and Responsibilities:

The Department is asking the Paulatuk HTC to identify;

- ✓ Two potential instructors, who have the knowledge and skills required to teach safe and ethical harvesting and pelt preparation techniques. Preferably, instructors will have boat and motor in good working condition, and their own legal firearms, in good working condition;
- ✓ Six to twelve potential students, over the age of 16 years of age;
- ✓ Equipment required (e.g. boats, firearms, skinning and fleshing tools, drying equipment, etc);
- ✓ Ideal time to harvest prime seal pelts (August, September?);
- ✓ Ideal location to host workshop, (Community of Paulatuk? Camp outside of Paulatuk?);
- ✓ Ideal location to harvest seal;
- ✓ Other potential concerns, etc.

The Department also asks the Paulatuk HTC to coordinate the advertising for instructors and students at least one month prior to workshop. ENR can assist in development of posters and applications.

Proposal completed by:
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