



# Ädałàl/Spring Newsletter

Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Newsletter, Spring Quarter, 2022

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# *Message from Chief Leas*

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Dannch'a! I hope you are enjoying the beautiful weather we have been experiencing this spring and are getting to spend time out on our traditional territory.

This year, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council is celebrating 20 years of self-government! As a self-governing First Nation, we, like other Yukon First Nations are a role model and many other Nations across the country are looking to us to learn about self-governance. While we are a young government, TKC has accomplished much over the last 20 years, and we look forward to sharing and celebrating with you throughout the year.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, we have seen an easing and relaxing of restrictions. Everyone is still encouraged to continue to practice the "Safe Six" and be mindful of maintaining your physical distance, washing your hands frequently,

and staying home if you feel sick. We also encourage everyone to get their COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.

Christina Peters was re-elected Deputy-Chief in January 2022. She resigned her position on June 7, 2022. We thank Christina for her dedication, hard work, and service to TKC during her tenure as Deputy-Chief. TKC will have a Deputy Chief by-election in the early fall. Please watch our website and Facebook for dates.

As Chief, I have been attending and participating in many meetings related to the opioid crisis, Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and other leadership meetings with the Yukon Government, Council of Yukon First Nations, Assembly of First Nations, and the Chief's Committee on Education. As well, with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions there have been an increasing number of in-person conferences and events, of which TKC has participated and been invited to provide welcoming remarks to delegates.

On April 30 and May 1, TKC held its Annual General Assembly. It was both an in-person and virtual event. Thank you to all the Citizens who participated and attended.

The safety, health, and wellbeing of TKC Citizens remains our top priority. Please reach out if you have any questions and TKC staff will work to assist you. Keep watch on our website and on our Facebook page for updates and information. We also have our monthly bulletin that is mailed out to Citizens.

Enjoy the spring and summer!

Chief Amanda Leas





# Council Notes

April marks the beginning of a new fiscal year for Council which means the review and approval of TKC's annual operating budget to ensure that services remain substantive for Ta'an Kwäch'än Citizens. As the 20th Anniversary of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council of being a Self-Governing First Nation was postponed, the Council looks forward to taking part in a community celebration later this year. The General Assembly of 2022 was convened successfully on April 30th and May 1st; providing direction to Council and TKC Administration to provide all Citizens with a COVID relief disbursement of \$1,000 to each Citizen, as well as to investigate logistics around the establishment of a communal structure on TKC's traditional territory for holding large gatherings.

Council continues to have regularly scheduled meetings as we move through spring and into summer with the main focus on Citizen housing. There have been 12 mobile homes purchased by TKC and Council is diligently working in engaging Citizens to find an appropriate spot to place these homes. Council is also working on moving forward with two subdivision developments on parcels C-9B (Whistle Bend) and C-16B (Porter Creek). The site at Whistle Bend (C-9B) will involve developing a portion of the 20-hectare parcel to create 24 townhomes. A second site, located on Birch Road in Porter Creek (C-16B) will see subdivision development for 24 lots to accommodate future single-family homes. Home occupancy is expected to take place by 2024.

Council is working towards increasing their transparency by investigating more options that will facilitate Citizens' abilities to observe Council meetings as well as technological mechanisms to increase the accessibility Citizens will have to important public TKC documents.



*Ruth Massie was appointed Chair of the Elders Council on December 7, 2021.*

## **Elders Council**

The Elders' Council began their new fiscal year with acquiring new jackets to represent Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. The Elders' Council held their second meeting in May of 2022 and look forward to many upcoming engagements and opportunities such as Celebration in Juneau and Moosehide Gathering in Dawson. With the assistance of TKC Administration, the Elders' Council has begun the process of providing education and assistance to Elders with wills and estates, with help from the Yukon Public Legal Education Association (YPLEA).

We look forward to engaging with Elders' Council with the assistance of YPLEA to host a Wills & Estates workshop this fall. The Judicial Council successfully met with the Elders' Council to answer questions and review their most up to date version of their Terms of Reference.

**Victoria Holmes**  
**Clerk of the Council**  
**(867) 668-3613 ext. 210**

# Housing on the Horizon

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In May, TKC announced plans for the development of two new housing initiatives on Self-Governing Settlement Lands in Whitehorse to address the housing crisis facing Citizens. These developments will transform two parcels of TKC Settlement Lands within the City of Whitehorse into two small subdivisions. The site at Whistle Bend (C-9B) will involve developing a portion of the 20-hectare parcel to create 24 townhomes. A second site, located on Birch Road in Porter Creek (C-16B) will see subdivision development for 24 lots to accommodate future single-family homes. Home occupancy is expected to take place by 2024.

During the 2020 General Assembly, TKC Citizens passed a resolution declaring a state of emergency for housing, acknowledging the lack of reasonably priced housing for Ta'an Citizens as the government's top priority. This is the first major housing initiative TKC has been involved in aside from River Bend which was a joint affordable housing initiative between the Yukon Government and TKC's business arm, Da Daghay Development Corporation.

Chief Amanda Leas, who was elected in October 2021, made housing her top priority as a candidate and it is her hope that by completing this new initiative, the majority of those in need of housing

will be able to secure access to safe, affordable housing on TKC's traditional territory.

"This is a huge step for us. For years we have known the need is there and I am very encouraged we are moving forward. Our families come in many different shapes and sizes, so we are hoping to ensure everyone in need will benefit from these new initiatives, Chief Leas explained when the initiative was announced. "Like the rest of Canada, we have a growing number of Elders and Citizens reaching retirement age. We also have young growing families and single Citizens in need. All those dynamics will be considered as we design and develop these neighbourhoods. It is an extremely exciting time."

Along with site preparations, plans and permits, TKC is also finalizing policies that will guide the allocation process for these new housing units. This will include creating a housing database and registry system. This project will provide job opportunities to both TKC and other First Nation contractors through formal tendering processes and will provide training for TKC Citizens. Funding for these housing initiatives will be made through dollars allocated through TKC's Self-Government Agreement, as well as federal, territorial, and municipal housing programs.

## New Manager, New System



TKC's new Manager of Housing and Infrastructure started his new post in early June and has been busy getting caught up on housing matters. Matthew Dickson brings experience as a Red Seal carpenter and says he's creating a system he hopes will re-invigorate the department. Matthew is introducing a system to encourage Citizens' requests to go directly to him as manager. All requests will then be logged, processed and dealt with in a timely manner. The department hopes this new system will save time and ensure better results for those in need of the housing services TKC provides. You can reach Matthew at (867) 668-3613 ext. 501 or email [\*\*housingmanager@taan.ca\*\*](mailto:housingmanager@taan.ca).

## SIMPLY THE BEST

*TKC Moms were treated to a special Mother's Day basket on May 6. Julie Smith, Family Support Worker and Charlene Burns, Health & Wellness Coordinator and other Wellness staff put the baskets together to help celebrate this one day of the year where mom's are officially recognized for all their hard work and contributions!*



## Well deserved recognition

*TKC Citizen Bill Bruton recognized as "Volunteer of the Year" by City of Whitehorse*

TKC Citizen Bill Bruton was recognized in April 2022 by the City of Whitehorse with a Volunteer of the Year Award! Bill was nominated by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition (YAPC) for his dedicated volunteer work during the past two years.

"Bill has been involved with YAPC as a graduate of Voices Influencing Change – a group of people with lived and living experience of poverty, homelessness, or social exclusion who

have participated in storytelling and advocacy training," his nomination reads.

"He sits on the YAPC Board of Directors, Community Advisory Board of Reaching Home, has been a part of the Reaching Home Funding Subcommittee, and attends monthly YAPC meetings without fail. He is an active member of Voices, and always brings good energy and good ideas to those gatherings. He has provided valuable insight and leadership on a variety of projects, and can be counted on to volunteer whenever he offers and for any kind of opportunity! Bill's good humour and willingness to step up make him a logical choice as YAPC's Volunteer of the Year."

"Whitehorse is known for its selfless and caring volunteer community," said Mayor Laura Cabott. "We truly appreciate all of the tremendous effort, dedication, and generosity shown by these volunteers. Thank you for helping to make Whitehorse a great community." Congratulations Bill!





# Class of 2022!

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*Ta'an Citizens Brenda Sam and Tania Pope, are both graduates from the Yukon First Nation Fine Arts Program. Brenda made the Dean's List and Tania received honours from the Yukon First Nation Arts Program — a program run through a partnership between TKC, Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Yukon University.*



TKC would also like to congratulate William Jones, who graduated this spring from University! William received a Bachelor of Arts at the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies at the University of British Columbia. Congratulations William!

# Post Secondary Updates

*Brandon Smith, who graduated in 2018 spoke on behalf of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council at the recent Yukon First Nation Grad Ceremony on June 4, 2022. Congratulations Brandon for a job well done!*



TKC Citizen Noah Findlater, who has been attending Simon Fraser University, took a break from his studies in May to take on a position with the Surrey Police Service in British Columbia. Noah started a 10-month training program at the police academy in May, 2022, which will be followed with one-year probationary training with the Surrey Police Service.

“I will be finishing my degree at a later date, Noah says, adding, “Policing has been my career goal, and dream job for many years now and I am extremely excited to have been accepted at such a young age.”

Congratulations Noah and we wish you all the best with your training and future in law enforcement!



# An Extraordinary Trip On the Land

## *Spring Camp 2022 at Coghlan Lake, Yukon*

by Alexander Lebarge

This spring I had the opportunity to join a wonderful Spring Camp organized by Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. The trip started with us travelling to Braeburn Lake and then we went on a snowmobile ride to Coghlan Lake. After that, we had hot chocolate made by our wonderful cook Charlene (Burns). One of the first things we did was go to the lake to drill holes for ice fishing. Ben (Monkman) let me ride on a snowmobile. It was my first-time riding on one. Unfortunately, as I would soon discover, we drove the snowmobile into a bay and got stuck in the knee-high overflow, but Ben was quick to un-attach the skimmer and free the snow machine. Then Dave (Irvine) towed the skimmer out of the bay. That was a memory I will never forget!

While some kids slept in the cabin, I slept in the Arctic Oven, a big tent with its own furnace. The second day we woke up and had a great breakfast made by our spectacular cook, Charlene. We then went over to the lake with our snowshoes and walked along the lake until we got to a clear spot. When we got to that spot we started work on making a fire, from scratch, in the middle of winter. It was difficult but we prevailed. Afterwards, we went sledding on a fun little hill. It was great and we had a competition to see who could make it to the lake the most times. After learning some

Southern Tutchone, we roasted hot dogs for lunch. After lunch we went to the lake to check our lines and that day we caught two lake trout. A wildlife expert (Dawn Hansen) was also on site, and told us lots about the fish, and it was a very interesting experience.

After spending the night once more in the Arctic Oven and having a great breakfast (Thanks Charlene!), we learned a lot about how to use a compass and how to use it with a map. After that we went to the lake to check on the lines (with André Eckert-Maret) and that time we had caught a burbot.

Afterward, the adults brought us to a very rare discovery they had found – a mineral lick! At the mineral lick the wildlife expert (Dawn) taught us lots about them, and how animals interact with them. When we got back to the cabin we had lots of fun playing hand games. After a great supper of stew and bannock, we headed over to the sauna before going to bed.

After much rest we started to pack up for the journey back. I was sad to go back because I had so much fun at the camp, and after lunch we headed out along the lake towards Braeburn. Overall, I had an extraordinary experience and had lots of unforgettable moments. If I could relive my experience I definitely would.

*-Alex Lebarge is a member of the Jenny Lebarge Family.*





## A SPECIAL DAY

*On May 13, 2022, Chief Amanda Leas joined Kwanlin Dün Chief Doris Bill to officially invest Dr. Lesley Brown with the robes of the office of President of Yukon University at a special ceremony at Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. Following their remarks, Chief Bill and Chief Leas officially adorned Dr. Brown with a traditional and beautifully made stole created by Vashti Etzel, a Shutuh/ Kaska Dene artist from Ross River, Yukon.*



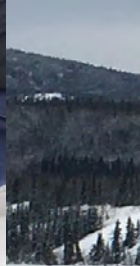
## Citizen Update

### Land Selection Application Updates

In May, TKC's Lands & Resources Department put a call out to all Citizens who previously applied for land selection to contact the department to ensure your file is up to date. You can contact TKC Land Steward, Testloa Smith to update your file at (867) 668-3613 ext. 605 or email [tsmith@taan.ca](mailto:tsmith@taan.ca).



# Spring Camp





# camp 2022!



# Building Bridges in Education

*Native American and  
Indigenous Studies  
Conference—Whitehorse,  
May 25-27, 2022*

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Chief Amanda Leas had an opportunity to welcome an international crowd at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Conference held at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre on May 25, 2022. Chief Leas acknowledged Dechinta (a NWT land-based university) for their groundbreaking and innovative approach to post-secondary education over the past 12 years.

“You have forged a path for others to follow and are a great example of bridging Indigenous and western worldviews and sciences in an academic setting,” Chief Leas said.

As the Co-Chair on the Chiefs Committee on Education, Chief Leas proudly updated those gathered about progress made by the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate here in the Yukon.

“(They) have been working incredibly hard for Yukon First Nation students and families to advance an Indigenous education system in the Yukon. We are at a turning point in history in the Yukon for First Nations control over education. After over 50 years of First Nation leaders and educators demanding changes, including reclaiming authority over education, we have made massive gains with the recent creation of a First Nation School Board. So far, there are eight schools signed on to this new board which is a tremendous accomplishment. I



am proud to be a part of this momentum and to join this long legacy of people who have been working tirelessly to bring about this change and to fulfill this vision.”

Chief Leas explained as well, from a post-secondary context, the transition of Yukon College to a University has opened many new doors and opportunities for Yukon First Nations to guide and to lead post-secondary initiatives, such as the establishment of the Institute of Indigenous Self Determination.

“Our young people will become the leaders of our nations, and for them to be strong leaders, it is essential they are rooted in their culture, language, and heritage. This is reconciliation. Our journey towards reconciliation has a long way to go, but it’s events like this that will help us build the bridges we need.”





## Mapping the Way celebrates Yukon 'Language Warrior'

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In March Mapping the Way paid tribute to TKC Elder Nakhela "Hazel" Bunbury for her tremendous contribution to her native Southern Tutchone language and culture. Mapping the Way celebrates and raises awareness about Yukon First Nation land claims and self-government.

*This month we are honouring Yukon First Nation women role models.*

*Today we hold our hands up in thanks to Äshäw Nakhela "Hazel" Bunbury.*

*Nakhela is the Matriarch of her family that still is actively teaching and preserving her mother's Southern Tutchone language and cultural ways. After losing her husband at a young age, she raised her six kids single-handed, while working and taking care of her grandparents. Her children were raised with traditions of hunting,*

*fishing, living on the land and were taught to speak the language, which they keep up today. Now she is teaching her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.*

*As a keeper of the Ta'an Dialect, Nakhela has taught over 20 years in Whitehorse schools, created language and storybooks, and is still helping young and old learners through programs like the Master/Apprentice held within the Ta'an Kwäch'än and Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC) to keep the language alive! Her passion for teaching and passing on knowledge is so evident in everything she does. From sewing, beading, being on the land or just having a conversation with Nakhela, you will always leave with a full heart. She is always there to talk to and help in any way she can.*

*Congratulations Nakhela. You are a true inspiration!*

# Welcome to the Team!

*Please join us in welcoming these new staff members to TKC!*



## **Allison Gray, GIS Coordinator**

Allison, originally from Guelph Ontario, has called the Yukon home since early 2021. She attended Fanshawe College in London, Ontario, and graduated with an Honors Bachelor's in Environmental Design and Planning. Allison completed her co-op terms with Ontario Parks in Northern Ontario, and Parks Canada in Manitoba before moving north and west. Most recently Allison put her skills to work with NorthwesTel as their GIS Implementation Manager where she started a project to map all newly installed fibre optic cable and customer addresses.

In her free time, Allison enjoys everything outdoors, especially backcountry camping and hiking with her Shiba Inu dog, Yuki. She also enjoys downhill skiing, gardening, knitting, and other crafts. She is currently working to convert a used cargo van into a camper for more summer adventures.

You can reach Allison at (867) 668-3613 ext. 606 or email [GISAnalyst@taan.ca](mailto:GISAnalyst@taan.ca).



## **Victoria Holmes, Clerk of Council**



Victoria was raised in Dawson City on the Traditional Territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. She has participated in the community from a very young age, partaking in traditional activities, listening to stories, making friends, joining clubs, volunteering, and spending time with Elders on the land. Growing up in a predominantly Indigenous community, Victoria had always felt grounded in a passion and



appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing doing and being, and the way that Indigenous Governance systems cultivate both community and individual empowerment. Upon completion of her degree in Indigenous Governance from Yukon University, Victoria was contracted by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Yukon Region, where she was mentored by the Yukon Regional Chief, Kluane Adamek.

A place on the land that Victoria connects with is Nänkāk Ch'ëholay, located on Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Territory, just past the Dempster Corner. She has spent a lot of time participating in traditional activities at Nänkāk Ch'ëholay throughout her youth and those memories remain with her today.

Her grandparents on her mother's side immigrated to Canada from Greece and her grandparents on her father's side are settlers to Turtle Island. You can reach Victoria at (867) 668-3613 ext. 210 or email [clerkofcouncil@taan.ca](mailto:clerkofcouncil@taan.ca).



### **Brandon Crawford** **Fish & Wildlife Technician**

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Brandon, our new Fish & Wildlife Programs Coordinator, was born and raised here in Whitehorse. Growing up meant summers spent exploring the hiking trails across Yukon and halibut fishing with family in Southeast Alaska. Winters are spent stargazing and relaxing on weekends by a warm fire at the family cabin. Once he received his Bachelor of Environmental Science from the University of Alberta, he promptly came back home.

Brandon brings a diversified work background involving field work and environmental monitoring, delivering public environmental education, as well as policy and programming. We know that his experience will help in the delivery of TKC's many field projects and intergovernmental and industry partnerships across the traditional territory and the Yukon as a whole.

Brandon looks forward to getting out in the field and working with TKC Citizens and stakeholders to ensure our fish, wildlife and land resources are protected and utilized in a way that ensures their longevity as per the Final Agreement and Council direction. You can reach Brandon at (867) 668-3613 ext. 603 or email [fishandwildlife@taan.ca](mailto:fishandwildlife@taan.ca).

# Our Journey to Empowerment

By Natalie Hare



This April, I had the opportunity to take seven TKC Youth to Edmonton, Alberta to attend the National Indigenous Youth Empowerment and Education Conference. Everything about the conference mirrored what indigenized education looks like to me. All the presenters, speakers and teachers were Indigenous, and the conference was a platform to build up and empower the youth participants.

Most of the conference was career-driven and focused on setting goals, working hard and never giving up on your dreams, but the speakers also addressed some harder realities of being an Indigenous youth. They spoke about dealing with and overcoming trauma and the high rates of mental health issues. It was pretty eye-opening to learn that most Indigenous people have undiagnosed mental health issues. The takeaway, though, was that if we are going through things, we are not alone and should never be afraid to speak up.



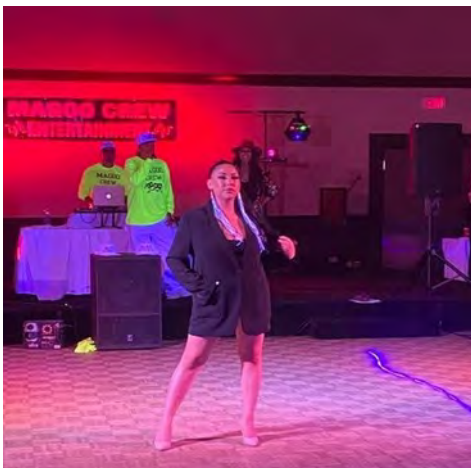
*Images above: (left) Youth participants Nathan Smith, Stewart Tizya and Charissa Tizya and Natalie Hare and (below) Charissa Tizya, Stewart Tizya, Sarrah Telep and Brooklyn Massie.*



*“...we are not alone and should never be afraid to speak up.”*

There were three personal highlights from the conference that I won't soon forget. There was an amazing Indigenous Empowerment group called *Magoo Crew Entertainment* that was really cool and a speaker and musician called *Stephanie Harpe of the Stephanie Harpe Experience*. Stephanie had lots of wise words for the youth: **“stay away from people who pull you down and surround yourself with people who lift you up.”** And last but not least, was the epic

fashion show featuring Indigenous designers. This was by far the best part of the conference for me because it featured our very own **Stewie Tizya** who absolutely killed it and represented The Yukon like a rockstar!



All in all, I think we all just appreciated getting out of The Yukon for a bit around different people in a different setting—with better shopping and food options! I am happy to be home and back to work though...until the next youth conference comes along!

*-Natalie Hare is a member of the Maggie Broeren Family.*

During a break from the conference I got this tattoo. It was in memory of my dear cousin, Kaily Poitras. Now, she will always be with me.





## Spring Sewing Magic

TKC Citizens interested in enhancing their sewing skills in the Spring of 2022 got a chance to attend a series of special workshops organized through TKC's Heritage Development department.

One of the most popular events was a Parka Making Workshop organized by TKC's Heritage and Development Departments. The workshop was taught by expert northern specialist Dorathy Wright from Inuvik. Dorathy is a self-taught quilter and artist and worked closely with TKC's Heritage Program Coordinator Debbie Burns to offer the workshop.

TCK Citizen Doris Anderson attended the parka-making workshop in March and noted the workshop was a great opportunity to enhance her skills and also visit with family and friends.

"The Instructor (Dorathy) and Debbie Burns are definitely to be appreciated, as there is a lot of work to put on a workshop such as this. I truly appreciated the benefit of visiting with TKC family, TKC friends and I would encourage TKC Citizens to take this course, should it be offered again. Thanks TKC for providing this workshop," Doris said.

Debbie Burns who is TKC's Heritage Programs Coordinator explains other workshops held to date include slippers, shawl making, star blanket and a pullover workshop. A gun-case workshop was also held prior to Father's Day.

Debbie, who is an avid sewer and artist, says working with the expertise of Dorathy and other TKC Citizens who bring specific sewing skills to workshops has helped her tremendously with her programming.

"If I know the craft I can teach it. It's great to have the



*Doris Anderson (top) and Jackie Bazett (above) show off their creations midway through their parka-making workshop.*

expertise to call on, both with our own Citizens and outside, to help."

There will be more workshops planned for the Fall of 2022 so stay tuned!

**Debbie Burns,**  
Heritage Programs Coordinator  
867-668-3613 ext. 403  
[heritage@taan.ca](mailto:heritage@taan.ca)



Fox Creek is known to have high importance to the Elders and Citizens of the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council. Here is an example of the good work that TKC and our Lands and Resources summer students - Brooklyn Massie and Belit Peters are doing around salmon restoration and care and stewardship of their traditional territory.

If you would like to find out more or have any questions about the Fox Creek Salmon Restoration Project contact Brooklyn Massie: [fisherystudent@taan.ca](mailto:fisherystudent@taan.ca).

**How We Walk Website: [www.howwewalk.org](http://www.howwewalk.org)**

# Fox Creek



Photo Credit: Brooklyn Massie

Photo: The video  
weir on Fox Creek

## Why is it important?

Fox Creek is known to have high importance to the elders and citizens of the Ta'an Kwach'an Council.

The Ta'an Kwach'an Council had initiated the Fox Creek Chinook Salmon Stock Restoration Project in order to rebuild the extirpated stocks in the historic traditional fishing stream that flows into Lake Laberge.

“For millennia, our people have relied on this specific stream for harvesting chinook salmon. The significance of Fox Creek is seen through the traditional and historical knowledge that continues to be spoken of through storytelling and interviews with our people.”

Our project includes stewardship and restoration activities that are guided by both traditional and scientific knowledge.

In 2006 TKC began the project planning, with restoration activities beginning in 2008 and continuing over two salmon life cycles.

The first salmon life cycle ended in 2015 and the project is currently in the second salmon life cycle.



Nen ye, tu ye da ne dū kánáda  
Aat a x yaa has na at, aani ka heen  
Nán ye, chu jután da náil ye - Nan ye chu ye ts'ádaal  
How We Walk with the Land and Water

**We encourage you to walk  
with us on this initiative.**





# Ta'an Kwäch'än Council

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your changes of address.



**Do you have a story you would like to see featured in the newsletter?**  
**We are looking for stories and photos (new and old) of Citizens to feature!**  
**Contact the Communications Office at 668-3613, ext. 204, or by email at**  
**[communicationsoffice@taan.ca](mailto:communicationsoffice@taan.ca).**