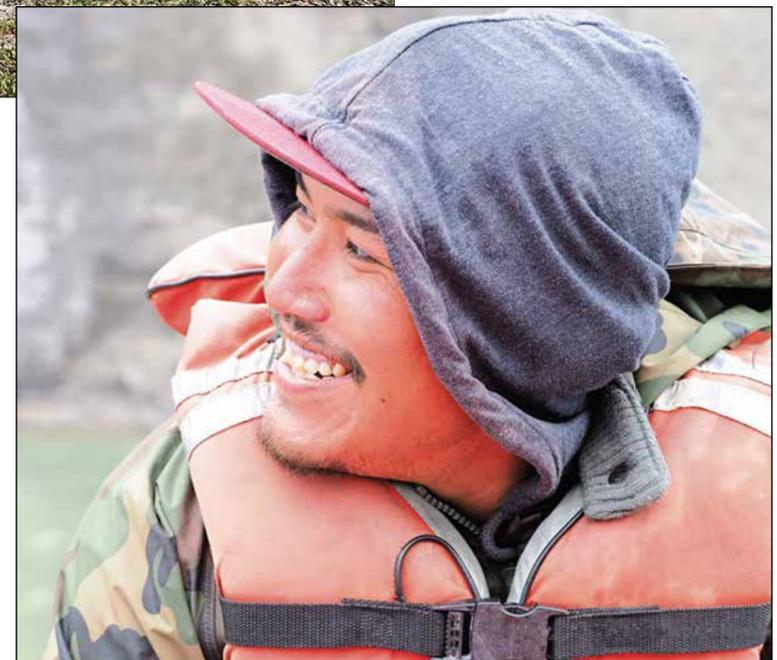
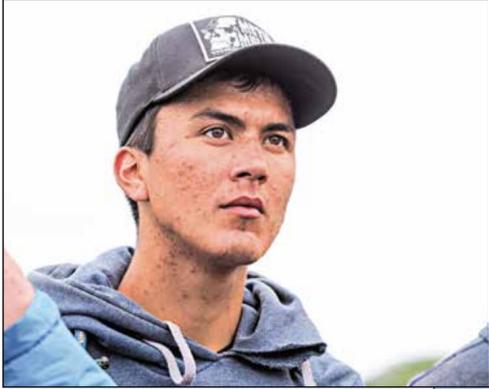


Charming the Snake

Five Gwich'in youth and one elder had the chance to experience part of the Peel River Watershed, July 10 to 28. May Andre, Angela Koe, Rayna Vittrekwa, Daniel Robert, Keiffer Francis and Dinah Blake joined 11 people from Germany as part of Wilderness International's conservation expedition which rafted down the Snake River to raise awareness for the protection of the Peel. The group shot the area with drones and cameras in order to share the pristine environment and the importance of conserving these types of environments. — text by Michele Taylor



photos courtesy of Ronny Scholz/Wilderness International

Counter-clockwise from top left: Keiffer Francis was one of a group from Fort McPherson who joined a German team from Wilderness International on a three-week trip on the Snake River; Dinah Blake carries part of a mountain goat kill back to camp; Rayna Vittrekwa of Fort MacPherson has a laugh; May Andre of Fort McPherson, enjoys a warm drink beside the Snake River; Henriette Wessel, back left, and Lina Skarabis with Wilderness International, paddle the rapids of the Snake River with Keiffer Francis, front left, Dina Blake and Angela Koe; Daniel Robert was one of the members from Fort McPherson; part of the group gathers around a fire for heat and food; several members of the expedition paddle the Snake River.

Smoke
smothers
parts of
territory



**Caribou legs
get lift during
Peel portage**



photo courtesy of Ronny Scholz/Wilderness International

Did cops play ball?



Major drug sweep in Hay River coincided with slo-pitch tourney

Four columnists inside



Topics range from jobs, vehicle wrecks and the Ramparts Rendezvous

Looking for gold



Vancouver company hopes to find gold in 'under-explored belt'

Publication mail Contract #40012157



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QUOTE: "I know that the people that are running it will come back again next year and do an even better job."

- Hay River fiddle player Linda Duford on the cancellation of the Biggest Fiddling and Jigging Championship North of 60, page 19

Corrections

Steel reinforcement bars are going into soil, not sand ("Slow going across Deh Cho Bridge," Aug. 14, 2017).

In that same edition, credit for a photo of Julie Lys should have gone to Leili Heiderma Photography.

News/North regrets the errors and apologizes for any confusion or embarrassment they may have caused.

NEWS Briefs

Gwich'in to hold meeting

Fort McPherson

The Gwich'in Tribal Council 2017's annual general assembly in Fort McPherson Aug. 22 to 24.

The event brings Gwich'in designated organization representatives together to determine the state of the GTC and identify priorities going forward.

One subject likely to come up during the assembly is self-government. Earlier this summer, the Nihtat Gwich'in Council, which represents Gwich'in in Inuvik, indicated its desire to pursue its own self-government agreement separate from the GTC.

— Stewart Burnett

New beer garden policy

Inuvik

The Town of Inuvik will be watching how a beer garden at the Iron Horse Klub's demolition derby Aug. 26 goes.

When club president Melinda Gillis approached council about it earlier in summer, she asked if it would be possible to get clearance to hold beer gardens at all future events instead of having to reapply for one every year. Coun. Clarence Wood said at the Aug. 9 meeting that he would like to consider beer gardens on an annual basis rather than giving a blank approval.

— Stewart Burnett

IRC assessing gas viability in delta

Inuvik

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation is soon to undertake a detailed study to determine natural gas economic feasibility, resource viability and regional market opportunities to develop economic models to ensure energy security and develop business, employment and investment opportunities in the Beaufort Delta.

The project will be conducted in two phases, with the first to assess resource viability and develop a local model for energy supply and distribution, focusing on Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic and Tuktoyaktuk, stated a news release. The second phase will look at a broader regional model including Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok.

— Stewart Burnett

Booze bust at boundary

Acho Dene Koe/Fort Liard

Fort Liard RCMP set up a check stop at the B.C. boundary Aug. 11 and stopped about 20 vehicles.

They seized numerous bottles of liquor and cans of beer as well as a small quantity of marijuana, stated the Mounties in a news release.

RCMP believe the booze was destined for the communities of Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte.

Fort Liard is under an alcohol restriction while Nahanni Butte is under a full prohibition.

— John McFadden



photo courtesy of Elizabeth Vittrekwa

Angel Koe, left, joins Rayna Vittrekwa, May Andre, Daniel Robert, Keeffer Francis and Dinah Blake in a three-week conservation expedition on the Snake River with eleven members of Wilderness International from Germany, in July.

20-day trip 'amazing'

German group with Wilderness International takes six Gwich'in from Fort McPherson on conservation expedition

by Michele Taylor
Northern News Services
Tetlit'Zeh/Fort McPherson

Five Gwich'in youth and an elder got the opportunity of a lifetime when they joined a conservancy expedition of the Peel River Watershed.

The group, from Fort McPherson, joined eleven German participants as part of Wilderness International's expedition.

The organization took photos and drone media which will get used to bring awareness of the need for protection of the Peel to the public.

Rayna Vittrekwa, Angela Koe, Daniel Robert, Keiffer Francis and Dinah Blake joined elder May Andre on a 20-day trip on the Snake River from July 10 to 28th. The Snake River is a tributary of the Peel River Watershed and one of the NWT's most pristine nature areas.

The Peel River supports many Indigenous groups throughout the NWT and Yukon.

These include the Tetlit Gwich'in, the Na-cho Nyak Dun and the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nations.

Vittrekwa, one of the youth on the trip, said the Fort McPherson group flew from Mayo, YT, to Duo Lakes and portaged with their gear to the Snake River.

She said they stayed at the lake for close to a week so the group had a chance to get used to being on the land in a remote area.

"We stayed there at Duo Lakes for a while," she said. "We went from Duo Lakes through a 1.5-kilo-

metre portage toward the Snake River.

"I didn't really feel close to the land until we were actually on the water and being like a team."

The team of Gwich'in and Germans travelled close to 500 kilometres along the Snake River through pristine wilderness.

The area is of concern due to the potential of oil, uranium and other minerals in an area yet untouched by development or affected by mining. Vittrekwa said the trip changed her perspective on conservation.

"I realized on this trip how much I love being on the environment and I hope that would reflect in my life some way," she said.

"There were so many things that made me think about my future."

Andre, a 72-year-old elder who accompanied the youth from the community, said she the country amazed her by how untouched and clean it was.

"I think of it nearly every day," she said. "The water it's the first thing that I noticed and loved."

"The water is just crystal clear and clean. To me it was so good."

Vittrekwa had similar words to describe the area the group explored. She said she was appreciative of the opportunity she got to share with the Wilderness International group.

"It was really beautiful. We hiked so much and one time we

woke up early in the morning and hiked for around three or four hours to hike a mountain that was right in front of Mount McDonald. It had the most beautiful view and it was right on the side of a cliff. Every day you had this amazing view in front of you. I'm very thankful for the whole trip," she said.

"I never really thought of it that much, but (the land) something that really can't be changed."

The group had many adventures along the way with opportunities to explore the areas.

The group even got to enjoy fresh meat from a goat killed by one of the youth.

The party even took on some white-water through a canyon on the Snake.

Andre said at first she wasn't going to join the group paddling through the canyon, but changed her mind after hearing the group say they needed strong paddlers.

She said life in the bush has kept her strong for her age and so she changed her mind.

Andre said it was an exhilarating 20 seconds of paddling with the three rafts making it through without any incidents.

"I was thinking, I made it this far, I'm so fortunate to come on this trip, I'm at the canyon, why am I scared? I'm usually not scared of anything," Andre recalls.

"And I changed my mind right there and I told those guys I changed

my mind, I going through it. And it was the greatest moment there."

The group of 17 paddlers met up with a meeting party from McPherson at the end of their journey.

The meeting party included elder David Thomson, Lawrence Robert and his wife Belinda who had a son on the trip, Elizabeth Vittrekwa and her husband, chief Wanda Pascal and William Charlie and his son Arlyn Charlie.

Mayor Elizabeth Vittrekwa said the motorboats and food for the travellers had some funding from the Tetlit Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council, which she sits on, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Tetlit Gwich'in Band.

The funds helped buy gas for the three boats that went out to meet the party, and food that fed the expedition group and the meeting party.

"With that money I said we won't pay for boats but I'll pay for gas to meet these paddlers up the Peel and once we get up the Peel then we'll take whatever food we have and we'll cook it for them," she said.

The meeting group met up with the expedition at Paddle Creek up the Peel and Rayna Vittrekwa said they waited for over an hour for the party to meet them. She said they finally came and one of the men in their group noticed them.

"Two rafts came and they were so happy, one of the young Gwich'in girls got out and said it's so good to see people," said Vittrekwa.

— See photo feature in this edition for more images from the expedition.

"I'm very thankful for the whole trip."

Rayna Vittrekwa