

# Kwanlin Dän Ch'a



Kwanlin People of Whitehorse, How are you?



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## Cover photo

Kids and Youth Rec staff harvest lettuce from their veggie gardens.



# Message from the Chief



Chief Doris Bill

Photo: Alistair Maitland

Welcome to another edition of the Kwanlin Dän Ch'a newsletter. I hope everyone had a safe and fun summer. It has been encouraging to see the inventive ways Yukoners are connecting, gathering virtually, engaging in cultural traditions and spending time with their household bubbles.

KDFN offices remain closed to the public, but staff are available by phone or email. Our departments have been hard at work adapting programs and services to the "new normal." Some physically distanced events were held over the summer, and we want to thank everyone for respecting safe distancing protocols. Please be aware, all events within KDFN follow Government of Yukon safety guidelines, and each event requires a safety plan.

We are still working closely with Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health for up-to-date information about new changes and how they will impact our community. Departments continue to work with our government partners and organizations on ways we can meet the needs of citizens. With the potential of a second wave of the COVID-19 virus, we encourage citizens to remain vigilant and continue to monitor the regular updates and current information available through yukon.ca.

Despite it all, we continue to make progress. There are many exciting projects happening in our community, including: the construction of the Community Hub, the Multi-purpose building, and new housing units.

On behalf of Council I would like to congratulate all KDFN students who graduated this spring. Although the celebrations were carried out differently, your community is undoubtedly proud of your achievements. I would also like to express our appreciation to all the students, parents and teachers for meeting many unexpected challenges over these past few months. It has not been easy for any of us, but you continue to inspire us all.

Many of our traditional values revolve around gathering. These are difficult times we are in, where we cannot celebrate, grieve, collaborate, or make decisions close to one another. You are not alone. We must come together, from a safe distance, and adjust to the new challenges we face.

Stay safe and stay healthy everyone,

Shaw Nithän



Looking south down Lhu Zila Män (Fish Lake).

## 'A Solution Had to Come from Within'

**This summer, Chief Bill spoke to some members of the House of Commons about Kwanlin Dün's experience with systemic racism and the police. She also shared strategies to move forward.**

As a representative of Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Chief Bill was invited to give testimony about systemic racism within the Canadian police service. On July 23, she joined other First Nation leaders from across Canada for a video conference with the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Public and National Security. Bill delivered a presentation detailing KDFN's experience with and strategies around systemic racism.

In her speech, Chief Bill stressed the importance of engaging the community and building relationships. She said that: "a solution had to come from within."

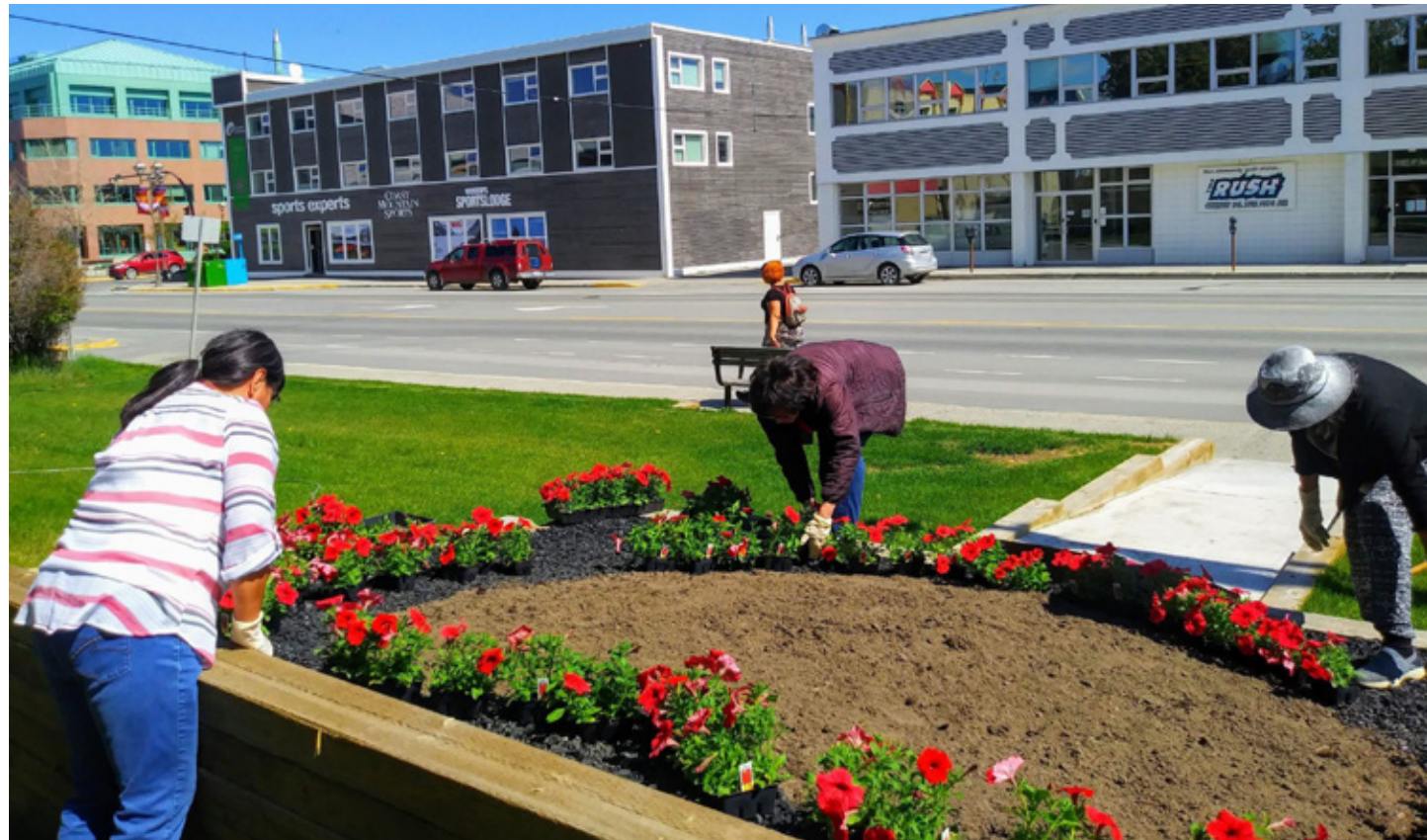
Chief Bill shared KDFN's successes with the Community Safety Plan, the creation of the Community Safety Officer program,

and the establishment of the Interagency Working Group. This group includes KDFN, the RCMP, Corrections, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods, and Whitehorse bylaw.

Chief Bill also highlighted the recent signing of the Letter of Expectation with the Yukon RCMP, enabling KDFN to define how policing happens within the community.

"Ultimately, it's about choosing a path where strong partnerships allow us to develop the kind of policing we know we need in our community," says Chief Bill. "If we are truly going to make a difference, the justice system must create the space for community-borne safety initiatives like ours."





*The Heart Garden is planted annually in collaboration with Whitehorse RCMP, Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'än Kwäch'än Council. It symbolizes the relationship between our community and the RCMP, a relationship that continues to grow and be strengthened.*

## KDFN Signs LOE with RCMP for a future of better policing

The Letter of Expectation signed between KDFN and the RCMP makes sure that the police officers stationed here operate according to the community's values and principles.

On July 21, Kwanlin Dün Chief Doris Bill and officials from the RCMP signed a Letter of Expectation (LOE) under the Community Tripartite Agreement. This historic document paves the way for an improved approach to community policing built on relationships, accountability and communication. The Letter of Expectation (LOE) defines goals and strategies that are specific to the needs of KDFN. The LOE gives KDFN a voice at the table to shape the future of policing in our community.

"By creating the LOE, we are now able to govern how police operate here," says Chief Doris Bill. "This is our community, this is how things work, this is what we want policing to look like. Good policing is built on relationships, open communication, cultural understanding and accountability."

The guiding principles in the LOE are Communication, Relationship Building, KDFN Youth Partnerships, and Community Safety.

Three RCMP officers are now dedicated to our community and stationed in the KDFN Justice building. They operate in accordance with the LOE. For example, there will be four mandatory meetings per year between KDFN leadership, Justice, and the RCMP to identify areas that need improvement.

The officers dedicated to KDFN will now also work closely with the Community Safety Officers to fill gaps and promote safety. These officers will undergo cultural sensitivity training that is unique to KDFN customs, traditions, and cultural laws.



*RCMP Sergeant Greg Holmberg signs the LOE outside the Näkwät'à Kù Potlatch house.*



*Chief Doris Bill holds up the signed letter.*



## Let's Keep Talking

Community members share their ideas and feelings around what “justice” means and how KDFN Justice department can best serve the community.

This summer, the KDFN Restorative Justice program held a “Let's Keep Talking” meeting to get feedback from community members about safety and justice processes. The event was physically distanced and COVID-19 safety protocols were in place. The Justice department thanks everyone for providing such honest input and perspectives. They will be directly using this feedback to guide future programs and services.



To contact the KDFN Justice Department, please call (867) 633-7850.

**What does the term ‘Restorative Justice’ mean to you? What comes to mind when you hear the term?**

- Restoring peace of mind
- Connection and support
- Building relationships
- Programs that reflect our cultural forms of justice
- Accountability and not prioritizing punishment

**If you were the victim of a crime, what would be the most important to you?**

- Safety for yourself and others
- Healing the relationship and community
- Assurance that it won't happen again
- Spiritual, mental, physical and emotional support

**Here are some of the responses from the meeting:**

**What does justice mean to you?**

- Care and concern for both victim and offender
- Protecting the community
- Safety for individuals and community
- Circle court and traditional influences
- All people affected in the crime gets a chance to heal

**How do you think the community should handle those who commit crimes?**

- Aftercare within the community
- Talking circles
- Fix the root of the problem
- Treatment options
- Depends on the crime
- Working within the community to repair damage

**What's the best way the community can support victims of crime?**

- Access to healing and counselling
- Traditional healing on the land
- Make a healing plan that works for them
- Make sure victim feels safe within the community

## Don't let your 'Bubble' get you into Trouble

A Social Bubble is a group of people that you have close contact with. The number of people allowed in your bubble depends on recommendations from the Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Remember these important tips on how to build your social bubble and minimize your risk of transmitting the virus.

1. Keep your social bubble small.  
Your social bubble starts with people:
  - you live with; and
  - who regularly come into your home.
2. Everyone in a household must be part of the same social bubble.
3. Keep a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) from anyone outside your social bubble.

Anyone in your bubble who has COVID-19 symptoms should:

- self-isolate in their home;
- limit interaction with others within their household;
- avoid close contact with anyone, including members of their social bubble; and
- call 811 to determine whether they should be tested for COVID-19.

All members of the social bubble should closely monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19.

We are all continuing to work together to keep ourselves, our families and our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visit [yukon.ca/covid-19](https://yukon.ca/covid-19) for the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Flu Shots will be available for Kwanlin Dün Citizens starting October 20

The Health Centre staff are currently coordinating flu clinics and will send out a flyer with more information in October. Flumist will be available for children ages 2-17 this year. Getting the flu vaccine can protect us and our families from contracting the flu, however, the flu shot does not protect us from Covid-19.





## Using technology to reach young minds

While closed due to COVID-19, Dusk's staff made videos to teach kids crafts, read interactive stories, and offer Southern Tutchone language lessons.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, things around Dusk's Head Start Family Learning Centre looked a little different this spring and early summer. Their doors were temporarily closed for a few months in order to ensure community safety during the early onset of the pandemic. As a result, early childhood educators engaged in creative means of remaining virtually connected to families while educating from a distance.

Six short videos were uploaded to the KDFN YouTube channel over the course of the closure. Five feature Dusk's staff Jesse English and Katie Hall offering interactive stories, lessons, and commentary in a classroom setting familiar to young Dusk's students.

To view these videos, head over to KDFN's youtube page (@KwanlinDun).

One of the videos, "Hug craft Making," teaches the young students how to make a paper craft (with the assistance of an adult), out of paper cutouts in the shape of their hands and a string, to mail a virtual hug to a loved one while remaining physically distant.

Dusk's staff also took the opportunity to record Elder Vera Brown sharing Southern Tutchone language lessons. In this short two-minute video, Elder Vera shares how to count to five, as well as how to say phrases such as "I live in Whitehorse."

As a result of modern technology and some pandemic-induced creativity, the community now has 24/7 access to these great education tools.



## Citizen Spotlight: Teagyn Vallevand

Q & A with the inspiring language-studies student, junior broadcast journalist and beadwork artist.

Teagyn Vallevand, Aatagwéix'i, is a student at the University of Southeast Alaska studying Lingit (Tlingit Language) in the Alaska Native Studies program. Vallevand is committed to learning Lingit and more about her culture. This summer, she was a Junior News Reporter with CHON-FM where she shared Lingit phrases on air and gained experience with radio broadcasting.

Vallevand was recently featured as an artist-in-residence at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. She expresses her artistry through her traditional beadwork with contemporary inspirations. She speaks out about the importance of purchasing authentic Indigenous-made artwork and urges everyone to support local artists.

KDFN Communications Officer Aurora Hardy caught up with Vallevand before she dove back into a fall semester of school to find out what it's like to be a language learner.

**Aurora Hardy:** What has been your most memorable experience during your education?

**Teagyn Vallevand:** Being able to learn how to speak my language has been a life-changing experience. Taking language and traditional art classes alongside my academic classes has been meaningful to me. Learning formline and carving from master carver Wayne Price has helped me stay connected to my community through art.

**AH:** What was the biggest challenge you've faced in your education?

**TV:** The space where being an Indigenous person clashes with colonial education and westernized learning methods.



*Teagyn Vallevand working as a Junior Reporter at CKRW.*

**AH:** How has the community reacted to your work at CHON-FM?

**TV:** People have been very supportive and that tells me I'm on the right path. I'm very thankful to have many great mentors that hold up young language learners.

**AH:** What are your educational goals?

**TV:** I want to be able to think in Lingit.

**AH:** What would you say to someone wanting to learn their language?

**TV:** It's never too late to try something new because we're always learning. You don't stop at a certain age.

With language, you have to just dive into it! They say that you carry haa shuká (our ancestors and future generations) with you — there's pressure with that. People think that you have to be a perfect language speaker immediately, but in reality, you don't. Even if you make mistakes, it still means you're trying — embrace that.



## Beading, hiking, reading, biking

KDFN Youth Recreation programs are finding new ways to connect the community through fun activities while following COVID-safe guidelines. Look for more programming coming up this fall and winter.

For more information, please contact our Recreation Support Worker Courtney Terriah at (867) 334-8718 or [courtney.terriah@kdfn.net](mailto:courtney.terriah@kdfn.net).



This spring, Youth Recreation suspended all in-person programming, but continued to connect with youth while physical distancing. We delivered weekly Activity Kits that included sports equipment, art supplies, baking ingredients and scavenger hunts. Youth submitted photos of themselves baking, playing games and engaging in various activities. We held a poster contest that asked youth to show, “The activities I have been doing to keep busy and healthy while physical distancing.” These included beading, hiking, reading, biking and spending time with family.

Youth Recreation was excited to announce our relaunch in August! With our new Covid-19 Operational Plan, we re-established in-person programming with small groups. Our team and youth participants followed the Safe Six while mountain biking, harvesting berries, visiting the Community Garden and playing educational games with our partners at Yukon University and the Youth Achievement Centre.

In August, we hosted a bike day in partnership with the RCMP to help strengthen relationships with our community and encourage young bikers to get active. Terra Riders Yukon provided coaching on trail riding and pump track skills, while younger participants decorated their bikes. We have enthusiastic bike riders of all ages. Thanks to all who participated!

Youth Recreation is following Covid-19 guidelines to keep our community safe. Youth need to sign up for programs in advance, guardians must sign a screening form, and staff evaluate each participant for symptoms before every program. These are important steps which allow us to continue to offer programming.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and support as we move forward in a new way. Stay tuned to the KDFN website and Facebook page for program updates this winter.



Pricilla Dawson and Howard Smarch-McIntosh pick berries on a youth rec outing.

## Get ready to ride

The long-awaited pump track is ready. A pump track is a loop of rollers and berms designed so bikers can practice control and balance while enjoying the smooth ride. The idea is to move through the track by “pumping” or moving your bodyweight up and down, rather than by pedaling.

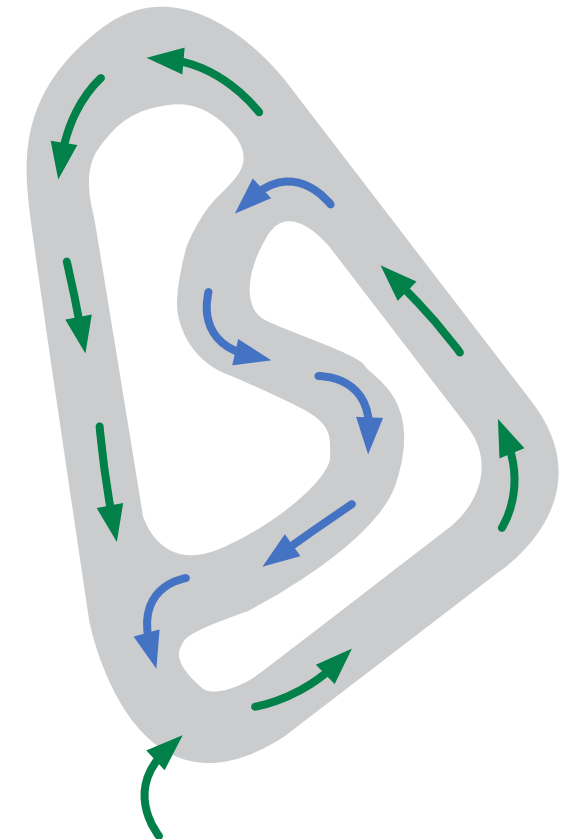
Strap on your helmet, slip on your close-toed shoes, jump on your bike and head over to the track behind the ball diamond. This entry-level pump track was built by Cyclelogical Solutions, a local company owned by Massey Baker. Judging from the ear-to-ear grins of riders, he nailed it!

A pump track is a continuous loop of rollers and corners (dirt turns) that you ride without pedaling. Your speed along the pump track depends on your ability to gain momentum by “pumping” your body rather than pedalling. Once you get the hang of it, you’ll ride much faster and smoother.

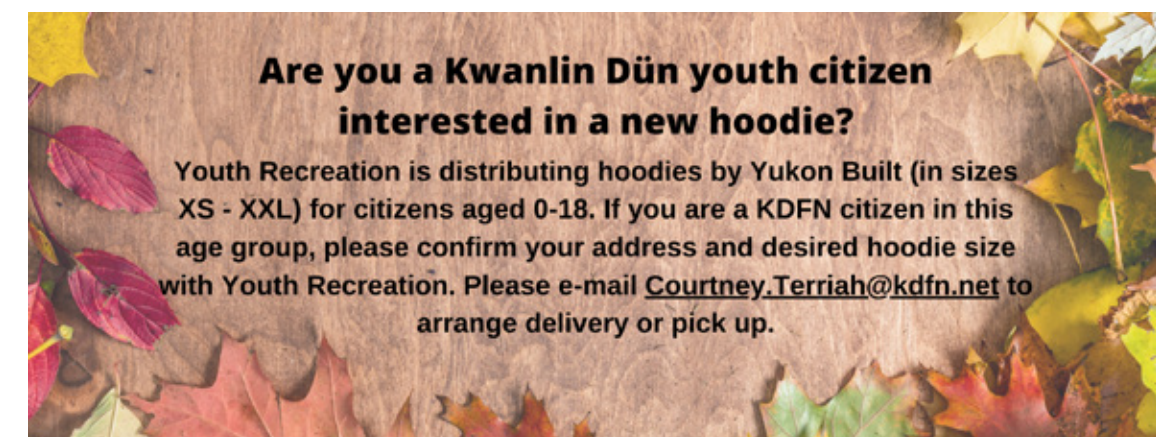
### How to ride the pump track?

- Always be aware of the track and other riders.
- Look ahead to the next roller to check that all is clear.
- Balance on your feet.
- Start off at the pace of a slow jog – don’t set off too fast.
- Lean the bike on the corner. Trust yourself, and the corner.
- Use your arms: pull up on the front of the roller and push down the back of a roller. Your momentum will help ease you up the front of the next roller

**TRACK TO BE RIDDEN ONE WAY ONLY!** Start at the ramp and ride counter-clockwise. Check out the signs at the pump track and learn to ride safely. Once you get into the rhythm, you’ll get an amazing feeling of speed and smoothness. Follow the pointers and rules, keep at it and you’ll gain control, build strength and have fun!



**ENTER HERE**





# Congratulations! 2020 GRADS

## Congratulations 2020 grads!

Kwanlin Dün First Nation would like to celebrate all of the citizens who graduated this year.

### Grade 12 graduates:

Kluane Clarke  
Joseph Coyne  
Joshua Lewis  
Rennes Lindsay  
Crystal MacIntosh  
Tristan McCallum  
Jessica Smith  
Tyson Smith  
Eddie Sterriah  
Kitania Sterriah

### Post-secondary graduates:

Kailen Gingell – Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art History and Visual Studies – University of Victoria – graduated June 2020; and  
  
Peter Spice – Bachelor of Education – University of Calgary – graduated April 2020

To the grads: Congratulations for all of your hard work! Graduating is an excellent achievement. Your family, friends and nation are very proud of you.

## KDFN Trainees and apprentices sharpen their skills

Several citizens are working within the KDFN government in trainee or apprenticeship programs, helping to develop the skills and work experience of our workforce.

### Currently, the list of citizens training in KDFN positions is as follows:

Lester Wilson – Temporary assignment opportunity in Economic Development with the Chu Níkwän Development Corporation  
Alexander Gatensby – Communications Officer trainee with Administration  
Jasmine Bill – Finance Trainee with Finance  
Darcy Carlick – Oil Burner Apprentice with Community Services  
Steven Brown – Oil Burner Apprentice with Community Services  
Winston Smarch – Carpenter Apprentice with Community Services  
Brianna Capot-Blanc – Youth Recreation Support Worker Trainee



**Joseph Coyne**, 2020 graduate. Joseph's vest was made by Shirley Frost, originally for his cousin Tanner Coyne. Joseph enjoyed studying English in school. After graduation, he plans to work.



**Joshua Lewis**, 2020 graduate. Joshua's favourite subject in school was Art. He is also interested in computer science. Josh knows now that he has completed high school the possibilities are endless!



**Rennes Lindsay**, 2020 graduate. Renee's future plans are to study at either Ryerson or UBC. Her Regalia was sewn and beaded by her mom, Therese Lindsay.



**Eddie Sterriah**, 2020 graduate. "My plans after Graduation are to take some time off, and then check into the areas I would like to work in for the future."



**Kitana Sterriah**, 2020 graduate. Her favourite subjects in school were social studies and math. Her plan after school is to go to university for auto mechanics.



## KDFN Post-Secondary Education Program

The Financial Assistance  
Deadline for the Winter  
2020 Semester is

**WEDNESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2020**





## Building for the future of Kwanlin Dün

*Since last fall crews have been busy constructing the new Kwanlin Dün Community Hub. Work remains on schedule and is due to be completed in spring 2021.*

## Goodbye Bernie's Gas

### Bernie's Gas has closed to make way for new building, new KDFN-run operation.

Bernie's Race Trac Gas station closed its doors for good on September 22. The building will be dismantled to make room for the construction of a new, improved KDFN-operated gas station and convenience store that will serve the community.

The old building needed significant upgrades to water, septic and fuel infrastructure — a complete demolition is necessary. KDFN's Chu Níkwān Development Corporation has begun planning and site preparations for the new building.

There may be some disruptions to traffic on McIntyre Drive throughout the fall and winter as work is carried out. Construction of the new building will start in spring 2021.

## New Lands Act comes into force

Kwanlin Dün's new Lands Act came into force on October 15, 2020. It gives KDFN authority to manage, protect and enforce laws on settlement land and allows KDFN to make land available to meet the residential and other lands needs of Beneficiaries and Citizens on settlement lands.

The Heritage, Lands and Resource Department (HLRD) developed the Act with guidance from Kwanlin Dün Council over the past three years.

### When will settlement land be available?

KDFN will begin accepting applications as of October 15, 2020. KDFN's priority is to work with Beneficiaries and Citizens who are current occupants or have a historical submission for land. KDFN will help them apply for land based on their interests and needs.

### What are historical submissions for settlement land?

Historical submissions are existing land submissions by KDFN Beneficiaries and Citizens for residential or traditional use of settlement land. KDFN has over 350 historical submissions recorded. Historical submissions might also be known as land set aside, band council resolutions or site-specific selections.

### How will historical submissions be prioritized?

Historical submissions will be processed in chronological order based on when the submission was first made. If there is more than one interest in the same area, interests could be processed at the same time.

### Will KDFN give special consideration to historical submissions from Elders?

Yes. KDFN may prioritize or give special consideration to historical submissions from Elders or those with urgent needs.

### Are KDFN Beneficiaries and Citizens currently living on settlement land able to apply for their parcel of land?

KDFN Beneficiaries and Citizens currently living on settlement land should contact KDFN to discuss their land needs.

### How is KDFN supporting KDFN Beneficiaries and Citizens in their efforts to access the land?

KDFN is working to create programs to provide financial support to offset land and develop costs for KDFN Beneficiaries and Citizens.

*For more information,  
(867) 633-7800  
ext. 128  
lands@kdfn.net  
kwanlindun.com*

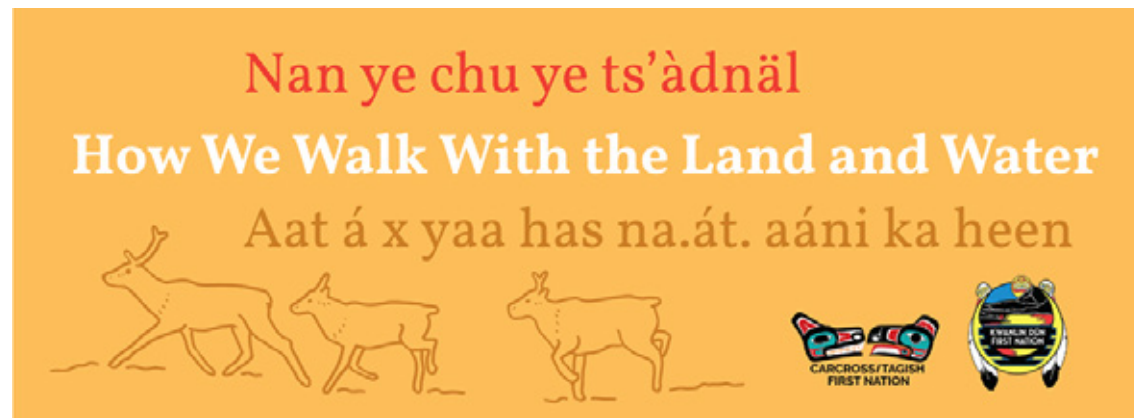
## We want to hear from you!

KDFN is reviewing all recorded historical submissions and we need your updated contact information.

### Please contact us if you:

- are currently living on, or own a cabin or other improvements on settlement land;
- have a historical submission; or
- are unsure if you have a historical submission.





## How We Walk with the Land and Water Invites You

**KDFN continues to participate in the Southern Lakes Indigenous Land Relationship Planning initiative called “How We Walk with the Land and Water.” Join their Facebook group to contribute.**

Our identity as First Nations is tied to the land and waters that have sustained our way of life for thousands of years. Conventional land use planning processes are rarely guided by the traditional knowledge bound to the land. We are trying something different.

In 2018, chiefs from KDFN, Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council gathered in sacred ceremony to sign a project charter that would initiate an Indigenous Land Relationship Planning Process named by our Elders “How We Walk with the Land and Water.” This process combines heritage, ecosystems and wildlife information on a scale that has never been done before in the Southern Lakes.

“Our aim is to prepare for Chapter 11 Land Use Planning by creating a unified First Nation vision for the Southern Lakes that is rooted in Indigenous story, law, knowledge

and affirmed by western science,” reads the project charter.

Currently, the How We Walk Team is starting citizen engagement to discuss land values and ground truth maps such as traditional land use, place name and habitat maps. Our process involves citizens talking to citizens.

We want to know:

- What matters to you on the land and water?
- Where is it?
- What is important for your grandchildren to experience on the land and water?

The objective of the initiative is to develop a Mapped Land Vision that conveys past, present and future indigenous land use to ensure that indigenous values are incorporated and protected in Chapter 11 Land Use Planning with Yukon Government and other stakeholders.

### How to get involved:

Like the “How We Walk with the Land and Water” Facebook page [www.facebook.com/Howwewalkwithlandandwater](https://www.facebook.com/Howwewalkwithlandandwater)

Check out the website: [www.howwewalk.org](http://www.howwewalk.org)

Contribute your stories and photos about your connection to the land and waters on the “How We Walk with the Land and Water” Facebook group (open to KDFN and C/TFN citizens): [www.facebook.com/groups/876035309470195](https://www.facebook.com/groups/876035309470195)

## The land needs a break

**More people than ever were using Settlement Lands in and around Whitehorse this summer because of COVID-19. Hiking, quading, fishing and camping had negative impacts on the land. In response, KDFN and TKC asked the public to not use Settlement Lands.**

As gatherings and indoor activities were cancelled due to COVID-19, many Yukoners and travellers chose to fill their time with outdoor pursuits. With an increase in the number of people recreating on Settlement Lands, negative impacts were being felt. Off-trail quads were damaging sensitive wetlands and alpine areas. Irresponsible fires burned down age-old fishing camps and threatened forests. Litter and dog faeces accumulated.

That’s why KDFN’s Chief Bill and TKC’s Chief Kane announced on July 13 that they would be asking the public to refrain from using Settlement Lands, in order to give the land a resting period.

“Protecting and preserving our lands and heritage sites for future generations is a key priority for the Kwanlin Dün First Nation,” said Chief Bill in the joint press release that went out on July 13. “Our ancestors have inhabited this land for thousands of years and we must continue our role as stewards of the land, air, waters, and animals. The Department of Heritage, Lands and Resources will be increasing its patrols and community engagement surrounding use of these lands, to increase awareness of provisions made in our agreements and our values of conservation of resources and respect for the land.”

*KDFN Chief Doris Bill and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council Chief Kristina Kane ask people to respect settlement lands.*





# Ups and Downs for Michie Creek Salmon

After 20 years of continuous monitoring of salmon and creek restoration, KDFN fisheries technicians keep working at it, despite low numbers.

For more information  
please contact  
Operations Manager  
of Heritage, Lands  
and Resources  
Brandy Mayes at  
(867) 633-7800  
ext. 144 or  
brandy.mayes@  
kdfn.net

KDFN has been monitoring Chinook salmon migrations into Michie Creek for over two decades. The primary focus of the project is to maintain continued access to their primary spawning location at the outlet of Michie Lake. Over the years many barriers, such as beaver dams and logjams, have been breached. The summer of 2019 was particularly bad for beaver dams due to low creek flows and higher stream temperatures.

The situation seemed to reverse itself this past summer as the combination of the large snow pack and cooler, wetter climatic conditions helped sustain above-average flows in Michie Creek. The higher flows resulted in the destruction of several beaver dams that were a chronic problem in the past. In a survey in early August, technicians found there were no barriers to the upstream movement of salmon. The high flows and cooler stream temperatures made for ideal spawning conditions in 2020.



While habitat conditions were near perfect at Michie Creek, only 216 salmon migrated through the Whitehorse Rapids Fish Ladder in 2020. Of these, only 55 were female. Usually about 1,200 salmon are counted through the ladder and this year represents one of the lowest returns since counting began in 1959. Crews surveying upper Michie Creek in early September counted only four salmon redds (a redd is a depression in the gravel where spawning has occurred).

The lack of salmon makes it hard on animals such as bears that depend on fish as part of their diet. The low number of spawners combined with the poor returns last year has resulted in two consecutive years where the upper Michie Creek spawning site has been underutilized. We are hoping for a larger return in 2021 to break this disconcerting trend. KDFN is committed to continuing monitoring efforts next year.

Part of this year's work included additional research to assess Chinook egg-to-fry survival and development timing on Wolf and Michie Creeks. They were compared to other streams that are undergoing restoration projects, such as the Ibex River (KDFN), Deadman Creek (Teslin Tlingit Council), and the Klondike River (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation).

**Left:** Problematic beaver dam on upper Michie Creek that was breached from high flows during the spring and summer of 2020.



**Top:** Site of a logjam that has largely been dispersed from high sustained flows in Michie Creek during the spring and summer of 2020.

**Left:** KDFN technician Bruce Wilson measuring stream velocity in upper Michie Creek.

**Right:** Egg incubation monitoring bags ready for installation into upper Michie Creek, August 2020.



# Another Summer Planting Salmon Eggs

Salmon restoration projects on the Ibex River, Wolf Creek and Michie Creek continue for a second summer. Fertilized eggs have been placed in incubators on the Ibex River and raked into the gravel in Michie Creek.

For more information please contact Operations Manager of Heritage, Lands and Resources Brandy Mayes at (867) 633-7800 ext. 144 or [brandy.mayes@kdfn.net](mailto:brandy.mayes@kdfn.net)

## Ibex River update

The Ibex River Salmon Restoration Project held a second season of field work this summer thanks to funding from the Yukon River Panel. On August 25, KDFN, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Environmental Dynamic Inc. (EDI) teamed up to conduct an aerial survey of the Takhini and Ibex rivers to assess Chinook salmon numbers and determine if another year of in-stream incubation could take place.

They counted 61 Chinook in the Takhini River. Many fish were observed on spawning dunes between Mendenhall Landing and the Takhini River Campground. No salmon or redds — spawning areas indicated by clean gravel — were observed during the aerial survey of the Ibex River. It was decided that a small “egg take” could be done to continue monitoring of egg development in the Ibex River.

On August 28, 2020, crews attempted to capture ripe salmon from the Takhini River by angling. They observed several spawning Chinook salmon and were able to collect approximately 1,000 eggs from a female and some milt from three males.

Crews fertilized the eggs and placed them in clean gravel in the Ibex River. High water levels made conditions extremely challenging, but they managed to plant eggs in three locations.

This project began in 2019 with a partnership between KDFN, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, local fisheries biologist Nick de Graff, and others at EDI Environmental Dynamics Inc., Yukon Fish and Game and Patagonia, to conduct a small in-stream egg incubation trial on the Ibex River.

Using methods developed by other Yukon First Nations (Teslin Tlingit Council and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation), field crews captured three spawning fish from the Takhini River in late August 2019. Less than a thousand eggs and a small amount of milt were collected, transported to the Ibex River, fertilized onsite and planted into the Ibex River.

When planted into the stream, the eggs were placed in different incubators to contain the eggs and allow for survival and timing of development (hatching and emergence) to be determined. This information is useful in determining future methods for restoring Chinook stocks in the Takhini River and determining the quality of the Ibex River as spawning habitat.



## Michie Creek Update

Also this August, crews collected approximately 2,000 eggs and milt from adult salmon at the Whitehorse Rapids Fish Hatchery for planting in Wolf Creek and Michie Creek. Crews raked the river bottom to clean the gravel much like a spawning salmon would. Eggs were then planted into the gravel. Once the eggs were planted in the river, additional rocks were placed on top of the egg planting media to protect the eggs.

Monitoring of egg survival and development will be completed throughout the winter at all three locations. The results from these studies will provide valuable insight into the most suitable locations for future salmon restoration projects in the Whitehorse area.

**Top:** Aerial photo of the Ibex River where egg planting sites are located.

**Bottom:** KDFN Land Steward Officer, Bruce Wilson and Fisheries Biologist Nick de Graff measuring stream velocity in Wolf Creek. Photo: Dennis Zimmermann

Large male Chinook salmon captured in the Takhini River during brood stock collection.

**Left, Right,** Bruce Wilson, Land Steward Officer, KDFN; **Center,** Scott Cavasin, Fisheries Technician EDI; **Right,** KDFN Citizen, Cheyenne Bradley, Fisheries Technician EDI





# Speaking with One Voice

For years we've seen Yukon River Chinook salmon stocks decline. Now two initiatives are bringing Yukon First Nations together to plan for the future of this key species, based on shared priorities and values.

For more information please contact Operations Manager of Heritage, Lands and Resources Brandy Mayes at (867) 633-7800 ext. 144 or [brandy.mayes@kdfn.net](mailto:brandy.mayes@kdfn.net)

The salmon season has finished for the year and unfortunately, we've seen another poor Chinook salmon run in the Southern Lakes region. This year, the Whitehorse Fish Ladder only counted 216 Chinook. That's 80% fewer than the historical average of 1,167.

These low returns are not new. They're part of a long-term trend that has meant important spawning grounds, such as the Michie and McClintock rivers, do not have salmon spawning at historical averages .

As Kwanlin Dün First Nation citizens know, this means that fish camps are sitting empty, knowledge is not being transferred, and the land and animals are not getting the nutrients they need. The current management approaches are not working. Something has to change.

Fortunately, there are two salmon initiatives bringing First Nation governments together to lead the rebuilding of Yukon River Chinook salmon.



Weaving Salmon Connections Workshop, February 2020.



KDFN Operations Manager of Heritage, Lands and Resources, Brandy Mayes at a Southern Lakes Community Based Salmon Plan meeting.

## 1. The Southern Lakes Community Based Salmon Plan

For more than a year, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council have been working together to develop a community-based salmon plan.

In February 2020, the group facilitated a "Weaving Salmon Connections" workshop with citizens. Since then, they've been working steadily to develop a plan that reflects First Nation values and priorities. It will also acknowledge the Southern Lakes peoples' connection to salmon through stories, art and photos.

A draft plan will be completed by spring 2021. Then it will come back to the community for review.

## 2. The Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management (AAROM) Program

The second initiative complements the Southern Lakes Community-Based Salmon Plan by bringing Yukon First Nations together to look at the entire watershed. The Council of Yukon First Nations is heading this initiative by working with the federal government through the AAROM Program.

Through this program Fisheries and Oceans Canada provides long-term core funding for a new Yukon Salmon Consortium. This could help with coordinated research, communications, legislative and policy reviews, traditional knowledge support, cultural support, education, and habitat enhancement and protection. It could also support joint priorities with similar entities in Alaska, such as the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission or the First Nations Caucus at the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

By speaking with one voice as KDFN citizens, Southern Lakes First Nations and Yukon First Nation governments, we can stand up and lead the rebuilding of Yukon River Chinook salmon based on our priorities and values.



Gathering community input.



# Southern Lakes Caribou Management Plan

For more information  
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The incredible connection between our people and caribou has meant that respecting and taking care of caribou are part of our traditional law.

Everything is taken and used with the understanding that we only take what we need, and we must use great care and be aware of how we take and how much of it, so that future generations will not be put in peril. It may be our right to harvest caribou, but it is our responsibility as First Nations people to respect and care for our animal relatives. Respect is at the core of the relationship between people and caribou.

and finally the construction of the Alaska Highway through caribou winter range which brought thousands of soldiers followed by an influx of new residents to the area.

The decline changed our caribou-people relationship and our deep connection to them, but we are working on repairing this relationship and for the past 27 years, caribou have been the focus of a community-based recovery effort, the Southern Lakes Caribou Recovery Program.

Today, KDFN and our partners continue to work towards a management plan for Southern Lakes caribou, including the Ibex, Carcross, and Laberge herds. Caribou surveys in fall of 2019 showed that the herds are continuing to recover. However, these recovering herds are still vulnerable. All First Nation governments in the Southern Lakes are continuing to ask their citizens for support, and not hunt Southern Lakes Caribou until a plan is in place. This moratorium was implemented by our Elders with support from the Yukon Government in the 1990s and have been key to caribou population recovery so far.

We are also working with partners to look at the relationship between wolf packs and caribou and moose. We are counting the number and size of the wolf packs in the area and looking at their diet to assess their relationship with the recovering caribou.

Please visit the Southern Lakes Caribou Story Map at <https://yukon.ca/southern-lakes-caribou> for more information on the 2019 surveys.

Our Elders speak of a time when the mountains moved with caribou, as stewards of the land, let's do our part and respect our Elders wishes in seeing the mountains move again.

Our ancestors witnessed the dramatic decline of Southern Lakes caribou and their habitat. The decline is due to multiple factors: the Klondike gold rush, the White Pass railway, early riverboat travel, resident meat hunting, non-resident sport hunting,



A radio-collared  
Southern Lakes  
caribou.



Members of a  
Southern Lakes  
wolf pack.

## Tracking wolves

**Kwanlin Dün First Nation is working with other First Nation partners and the Government of Yukon to monitor wolves in the Southern Lakes area.**

KDFN is a partner in the Southern Lakes Wolf Monitoring Program. It tracks things like population numbers, movement, eating habits, reproductive rates and pup survival.

The information collected will be used to inform conservation and management planning for both the wolves and their prey. By learning about the habits of wolves, we're also learning about other species, such as caribou and moose. In fact, the program started because locals were concerned about the impact of wolf predation on recovering caribou.

In winter 2020, the group collared eight wolves from five different wolf packs and collected wolf scat for diet analysis.

Next, they plan to:

- analyze and report on the ground-tracking survey results;
- identify den sites to look at reproductive rates and pup survival;
- visit kill sites to look at prey species;
- and deploy eight more wolf collars.

The project partners are Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, Teslin Tlingit Council, Carcross/Tagish Renewable Resources Council, and participating trappers.

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# Collaborative stewardship of the land

Kwanlin Dün Land Stewards now partner with Yukon government inspectors to better protect the land from harmful or improper uses.

For more information please contact  
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Kwanlin Dün Land Stewards sometimes witness improper use of either Settlement Lands or lands within KDFN's Traditional Territory. This past summer, in an effort to improve the monitoring of activity on the land, the Heritage, Lands and Resources department's Operations team partnered with the Yukon government's Compliance Monitoring and Inspections (CMI) branch.

The CMI branch is responsible for ensuring the laws and regulations of Yukon are followed in the natural resource sector. CMI Natural Resource Officers inspect things like mining activity, forest harvesting and water quality near work sites.

"The Collaborative Stewardship Initiative is meant to explore different methods of working with First Nation governments on natural resource compliance monitoring and inspection activities across Yukon," says Briar Young, Director of CMI. "This initiative will result in strong, dynamic, compliance monitoring relationships with Yukon First Nations that will enhance the shared stewardship of natural resources on both Settlement and non-settlement lands."

This past spring, the Operations team came together with CMI to identify sites where KDFN would like to conduct joint inspections. Additionally, CMI prepared a presentation to help Operations staff understand the function of CMI and the legislation under which it operates.

After each joint inspection, all participants complete a feedback form to capture their thoughts on what went well, what was learned, questions that came up and ideas about how the two governments can work better together in the future.

"Conducting joint site inspections alongside Natural Resource Officers has been a great learning experience for KDFN's Land Stewards," says HLR Operations Manager Brandy Mayes. "By conducting inspections on the land together, both sides have been able to teach and learn from one another, and better understand the others' responsibilities."

This fall, the Operations team will participate in a workshop alongside CMI and three other First Nations also participating in collaborative stewardship activities (Selkirk and Kluane First Nations and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in). A second field season is planned for next year.

## It's hunting season

### Please be careful on settlement lands

Hunting season has started. If you plan to hike, bike or camp on or near First Nation Settlement Land, please:

- wear high-visibility clothing
- avoid the area before 10 a.m. and after 5 p.m. when hunters are most active
- keep dogs on leash and clean up pet waste
- stay on the trails to minimize your footprint
- bring bear spray and know how to use it
- do not leave any garbage
- let someone know where you are going and when you'll be back
- do not leave fires unattended and put out fires completely when you leave

We also ask the public to refrain from camping on R-4A (the Fish Lake and Bonneville Lakes area) from August 1 to October 31. A map of settlement lands is available at [www.kwanlindun.com](http://www.kwanlindun.com)



## Youth Rec Fall Hunt

Left to Right - Adam Lightfoot (RCMP), Tyler O'Brien (CSO), Russell Burns (KDFN Elder/Guide), Seth Sutherland.



Tyler O'Brien about to pack out moose backstrap.



Left - Youth enjoying their time on the land.

Right - Seth Sutherland scrapes the singed hair from the moose nose to prepare it for boiling.





*Youth Rec Fall Moose Hunt participants share celebratory smiles.*

**RETURN ADDRESS:**

**Kwanlin Dün First Nation**

[www.kwanlindun.com](http://www.kwanlindun.com)

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**DESTINATION ADDRESS**