



Self Government News

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May/June 2006

Negotiations update—Karen Snowshoe

2006 is an exciting year for Gwich'in self-government negotiations! As of April 1, 2006, GTC has two new negotiators—Chief Charlie Furlong and Karen Snowshoe. Charlie Furlong is the current Chief of the Aklavik Indian Band/Ehdiitat-Gwich'in Council and has a strong background in aboriginal and treaty rights as well as various negotiations processes.



Chief Charlie Furlong

Karen Snowshoe will also formally sit at the

Gwich'in self-government negotiation table. As Assistant Negotiator, she will provide negotiation support as well as continue to oversee the Gwich'in self-government department. Karen brings a legal background to the negotiation table as well as many years of experience in aboriginal and treaty rights.

In addition to Chief Furlong and Karen Snowshoe, the Gwich'in self-government negotiation team will also include a representative from each of the four Gwich'in communities. Similar to the access and benefits negotiations conducted in 2004-2005, each

community representative will meet with the Gwich'in self-government negotiation team for 1-2 days prior to the main-table negotiation sessions.

Another exciting change to the Gwich'in self-government process is that we (the Gwich'in) now have our own self-government negotiations main-table. That means that the Gwich'in negotiators now negotiate directly with only Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories. (continued pg 2)



Chief Peter Ross and Chief Johnny Kay

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Negotiations Update | 1 & 2 |
| Results of Questionnaire I | 3 |
| Results of Questionnaire II | 4 |
| Traditional Governance | 5 |
| FAQ's | 6 |
| Gwich'in Reviews AIP | 6 |
| Word Search | 7 |

Special points of interest:

- Results of the two Questionnaires
- Why did the Gwich'in move away from the Agreement In Principle?
- Word Search
- Question & Answer
- Meet the Staff
- Photo Gallery

Negotiations Update Continued.....

Since April 1, 2006, Chief Furlong and Karen Snowshoe have met twice with Canada and the GNWT negotiation teams.

The Gwich'in self-government main table plans to meet approximately every six weeks between now and the end of this year. The following negotiations schedule is in place:

June 28-30 (Inuvik)

July 24-26 (Fort McPherson)

September 5-7 (Tsiigehtchic)

October 23-25 (Aklavik)

December 11-13 (Inuvik)

The main table will attempt to reach agreement on the following subjects by March 31, 2007:

- structure of governance;
- jurisdictions, including discussion of the taxation of Gwich'in settlement lands;
- whether or not to include provisions in a final agreement on matters concerning the *Indian Act* and the four Gwich'in *Indian Act* Bands;
- general provisions and the exercise of jurisdictions; and
- other matters as agreed.

In addition to these topics, the negotiation teams will also meet with various

working groups who will assist the main table move towards a self-government agreement. Examples of working groups include a Legal Working Group, a Communications Working Group as well as a Finance and Implementation Working Group.

Margaret Gordon will represent the Gwich'in on the Communications Working Group. With over twenty years of experience in the communications field, Margaret will be a great asset to this Working Group.



Gwich'in Self Government Negotiation Session April 24-26, 2006 in Inuvik

Margaret is also currently working on increasing self-government communications inside and outside the Gwich'in Settlement Region. Some of the activities she has planned are: developing posters, pamphlets, regular newsletters, radio programs; holding information sessions; and updating the self-government portion

of the GTC website.

Regarding the Legal Working Group, Karen is currently putting together a team of lawyers who will ensure that Gwich'in legal interests are well represented in negotiations.

Some people are asking if we are still working with the Inuvialuit. Both Karen and Chief Furlong maintain a positive working relationship with the Inuvialuit Chief Negotiator Bob Simpson. One of the projects that the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit will work on this year is an in-depth review of the Beaufort-Delta Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle signed in 2003. The purpose of this review is to determine what provisions of the agreement will carry forth into a final self-government agreement.

Well that's it for the negotiations update! Our self-government team is doing their best to ensure that all

Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement participants are kept updated on the self-government process - if you have any recommendations on how we can better increase our communications please contact either myself (ksnowshoe@gwichin.nt.ca) or Margaret Gordon (mgordon@gwichin.nt.ca). Mahsi Cho!!!

Results of Questionnaire 1—Margaret Gordon

A total of 450 surveys were done in the Gwich'in communities on questionnaire 1. Fort McPherson did the most surveys, a total of 246 in their community. The rest of the community's also did well with enough surveys to give us an indication of what kind or information people are asking for.

Most participants are asking about the structure of the Gwich'in Government...this seems to be the most confusing.



Home Visit staff from Tsiigehtchic

This is what the first survey told us:

- home visits, mail outs and the radio is the best way to pass information on to the people.

- Grand Chief or Din Jii Chii Nilii is the choice for the leader of the Gwich'in Government.

“We had self government long ago and it would be good to do the same now as our people lived good life. Like we had a lot of our traditional medicine and lived off traditional food. Houses that had lots of fresh air, not airtight houses like now. Be good to burn wood in house again, so we can be busy and keep up strength.” (Anonymous comment from Questionnaire 1)

- Most people thought that if you had a criminal record you shouldn't run for office, but on the other hand if they show they have changed they should be given a chance.
- Although a lot of people said they understood the steps to Self Government they didn't understand the concept.
- If it came to a vote today, most people would vote no, because they say more information is needed.

A second questionnaire was put together by Gwich'in Negotiator Rick Bennett based on the constitution and the Gwich'in Government. This questionnaire was a lot longer and more in depth than the first one. We brought in the home visit staff from each community for a two day training session on this questionnaire. Although most of the staff thought it would be harder to deliver this questionnaire it turned out that wasn't so. The questionnaire also included diagrams of what



Wilbert Andre and Fred Andre

our government might look like.

Results of the second questionnaire follows this, on page 4.

Results of Questionnaire II—Margaret Gordon

In mid February Self Government introduced a second questionnaire to our home visit staff in each of the Gwich'in communities. They all came to Inuvik for two days of extensive training on how to deliver this questionnaire.

All who attended were shocked by the length and how in depth it was. Home visit staff felt that it would be more difficult to pass this information on, but it turned out that wasn't so.

The Home Visit staff in Fort McPherson did a great job in doing their home visits...they collected a total of 200 surveys with Aklavik coming in second with 66.

Results of this questionnaire also will help us in getting the right information out.

Most of the participants think it's really important for us to work together. In all of the communities people wanted more information on why we moved away from the Agreement in Principle (AIP). Everyone agreed that the gradual approach to

self government is the best way to go.

People are starting to understand why a constitution is needed and agree that one constitution should coordinate the Gwich'in Government. On the sub-

“ I have faith that we as one Gwich'in Nation we can work this out. Way back in the old days, we had one chief, in those days that one chief, he had everything under control. People will be happy. He knew how to help people by sharing and respect. When people had to go to court, he was there to help talk for his people. The chief was a honest man.” (Anonymous comment from Questionnaire 1)

ject of having a Tribal Government in the framework of the Gwich'in Government most people agreed that one should be included.

The Annual Assembly was where most of the participants felt that decisions and law making can take place and for this to be held once a year. Most of those that answered the questionnaire felt that the bands were working well, but needed some improvement, and they thought the same about the Tribal Council.

On this issue of who should manage the money, most felt that the four

Gwich'in First Nations Authority should do that, but also thought a consolidated fund with a comptroller is also a good idea.

Questions 13 asked for people to rate each question from 1-10 with 10 representing good. All four communities feel that having traditional values part of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is very important. A lot of the participants thought it was really important to incorporate some Traditional Governance into our constitution, and most also agreed that forming our own Gwich'in Government is the proper way



Florissa Bain & Fred Andre of Tsiigehchtchic

to go. Everyone thought that governing ourselves is important so we have control over what is good for us.

Traditional Governance—Margaret Gordon

In 1998-99 fieldworkers for Self Government interviewed elders about how they lived when they were growing up. They wanted to learn more about what they had to do in order to make a living.

What is Traditional Governance you say...well it means to adapt to and make changes to traditions and practices, traditional laws and guiding principles, values, beliefs, leadership and decision making processes.

Many of the elders talked about respect, sharing, helping out, and their beliefs. About 500 Gwich'in elders were interviewed.

Margaret Gordon, the Regional Coordinator has



Boat landing courtesy of GSCI

been going through the material and will be using it in

various ways to explain self government to participants.

Margaret will be designing a poster with the elder and a phrase from their stories on values, beliefs, honesty, sharing, re-



Photo courtesy of PWHC

spect and more. She will also get the stories made into a booklet so that the stories can be read again by all as well as the people who wrote these stories.

The stories of the elders will help us with our community constitutions.

According to our survey the people believe that Traditional Governance be a part of our Gwich'in Government.

Elders talk about how they had to respect the men or hunters of the family, you weren't allowed to step over their hunting equipment or it would bring them bad luck, you only hunt what



Mary Kendi & Baby - picture from PWHC

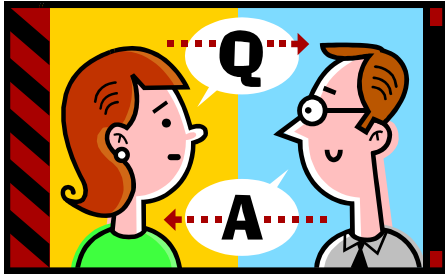
you need and don't overkill, respect your elders, parents and neighbors. If the elders needed help, the younger people in the community would go and get them wood, water or whatever they needed. They also talked about how people did not kill more than they can eat and always shared with the elders, widowers, and disabled.

Some of the elders talked about the traditional medicine that they used from the land or animals.

Elders such as Elizabeth Greenland, Catherine Mitchell, Winston Moses, Ruby and Buster McLeod, and more are some of the stories we'll hear and see in the next few months.

Margaret also hopes to get the stories told on CBC Radio.

Questions and Answers



Q: Why did the GTC Board of Directors decide to move away from the Beaufort-Delta Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle (“AIP”) signed in 2003?



A: In mid January of this year, the GTC Board of Directors decided to move away from the AIP because it wasn't an appropriate basis for the Gwich'in to move to a final self government agreement.

The AIP was based on the core idea of a re-

gional public government for the Beaufort Delta. The Gwich'in believe that their inherent aboriginal right of self government is best expressed through an aboriginal government.

The Gwich'in remain committed to dealing productively with their Inuvialuit neighbors in terms of possible regional service delivery mechanisms—this will most likely happen after a Gwich'in Government is established.

Q: I didn't get a chance to fill out a questionnaire during the Self-Government Home Visit Programs held this past fall and winter in my community. How can I make sure that my voice is heard?

A: Self-Government Home Visit Programs were held between September 2005 to March 2006 in Fort McPherson, Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, and Aklavik.

If you didn't get a chance to fill out a questionnaire, please contact us and we

will arrange for a Field-worker to visit you. The Fieldworker can provide an update on the Gwich'in self-government process and answer any questions you have. If you need a translator, the Field-worker can arrange for a translator.

If you don't need a visit from a Fieldworker but you would still like to fill out a questionnaire, you can contact Margaret Gordon and she can send you a questionnaire by mail, fax or email. All questionnaires are anonymous.

You can call Margaret collect at (867) 777-7900 or email her at: mgordon@gwichin.nt.ca



GTC Board of Directors meeting January 2006 in Aklavik

Self Government Word Search

M S H A R I N G R A N D C H I E F
A V T C O N S T I T U T I O N L O
R G S J U S T I C E S T K G H A R
G W I C H I N G O V E R N M E N T
A I I O A R T N O A L A E N R G M
R C G M B T I K R I F D G T E U C
E H E M O A O E D P G I O G N A P
T I H I R I R D I A O T T T T G H
C N T T I A E U N K V I I M R E E
U U C T G I O C A L E O A B I C R
L V H E I S T A T A R N T E G A S
T I I E N K I T O V N A O L H H O
U K C S A A V I R I M L R I T E N
R F I E L D W O R K E R S E A A I
A G R E E M E N T S N O A F X L N
L F R R L A N C E S T O R S E T C
R E S P E C T V A L U E S I S H M
B A N D S K A R E N S C N V N E R

aboriginal

ancestors

committees

cultural

fort McPherson

Gwichin government

Inuvik

language

respect

taxes

values

agreement

bands

constitution

education

grand chief

health

justice

Margaret

self government

traditional

Aklavik

beliefs

coordinator

fieldworkers

Gwichin

inherent right

Karen

negotiators

sharing

Tsiigehtchic



Chief Charlie Furlong, Chief Gwich'in Negotiator

Charlie Furlong is the Chief of the Aklavik Indian Band and the President of the Ehditait-Gwich'in Council. Chief Furlong sits on the Gwich'in Tribal Council Board of Directors and has over thirty years of experience in the area of aboriginal and treaty rights.

Chief Furlong also brings a wealth of negotiation experience to the self-government file—Charlie was previously a negotiator with the Gwich'in land claims, Gwich'in self-government negotiations as well as access and benefits.



Karen Snowshoe, Assistant Gwich'in Negotiator

Karen is a Gwich'in beneficiary with a bachelor of Law degree. She took French Literature and language training in Paris, France and her undergraduate studies include English literature and political science at the University of British Columbia. Karen has worked in the area of aboriginal rights since 1992.

Karen oversees the Gwich'in self-government department and provides negotiation support as Assistant Gwich'in Negotiator. Karen started working for the Gwich'in Tribal Council Self Government in the summer of 2004.



Margaret Gordon, Self-Government Regional Coordinator

Margaret started working for Self Government for the Gwich'in as the Regional Coordinator in September 2005.

Margaret worked for CBC North Radio for twenty-five years and then took early retirement. During that time, she had the chance to do all kinds of jobs, from switchboard to management. Margaret has met all kinds of people and had the chance to hear all their great stories and how it affected them.

As the Coordinator, Margaret gets a chance to work with the Home Visit staff in the four Gwich'in communities. She will be busy in the next few months working on Communications and how we can best give you information on Self Government. The youth and middle age is still our target group and we will continue to meet with these groups on a regular basis.

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Self Government is the inherent right that aboriginal people are born with and have always had. The Government of Canada refers to this right as the, "Inherent right to Self Government." "Inherent" means that it has always been there and always will be.

The Gwich'in are negotiating with the Government to have Self Government in the NWT. We will have the right to govern ourselves and to choose programs that will benefit us.

Upcoming:

- *Chief Johnny Kay, Karen Snowshoe, and Margaret Gordon from the Self Government team will be in Whitehorse, Yukon May 13th at the WestMark Hotel.*
- *Chief Furlong, Karen Snowshoe, and Margaret Gordon will be in Yellowknife May 27th at the GTC office.*
- *For more info call Bridgette Larocque in Yellowknife and Esther Dobbs in Whitehorse.*

Self Government Photo Gallery



Mary Ann Ross cutting her birthday cake....Denise Kurszewski standing by.



Noel Andre, Peter Ross & Fred Andre at table, Wilbert Firth and Fred Koe at back



Margaret's 1st grandchild Skyler Zoe Hurst



Noel Andre—Self Government Committee Member



Chair of Self Government Committee in Tsiigehtchic, Mavis Clark



Fort McPherson Students



Igloo in Aklavik - photo by L Norbert