

## **Gwich'in Environmental Monitor Training Course September 27- October 8,**

**2004**

### 1.) Summary

The training course was split into two 5 day sessions. The first program was delivered in Fort McPherson from September 27 to October 1, 2004. The course was held at the Hamlet Council Chambers, coffee and snacks were provided by the Tetlit Gwich'in RRC. From the 11 students (all from Fort McPherson) that started the program, 2 dropped out on day three. One was a refreshing student from last year who was offered a job and the other student was not ready to join the program yet (see attached candidate list).

The course went extremely well, the students were focused and very eager to learn. Instructors and students were frequently involved in fruitful discussions, on several occasions these continued past class time. Almost all students demonstrated great team spirit and participated well in all activities (see also attached candidate list).

The second course was delivered in Inuvik from October 4 to October 8, 2004. Overall, 13 students from Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik participated and the course was held in the Aurora College Studio. Coffee and snacks were provided by a local catering service. Similar to the first course, most students were eager to pass the course and participated well but the group exercises

suffered from the fact that the group was not homogeneous but was brought together from 3 different communities. However, the marks were excellent and everybody passed well (see attached candidate list).

The GTC had suggested that we include a new module in this year's course: "The Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement" in order to address the frequently observed lack of understanding of the role of a Gwich'in Environmental Monitor. Dwayne Semple visited the class in Fort McPherson to give a brief presentation and to hand out material for their course binders (attached to this report). Due to sickness, that part was covered by the West Delta Golder instructors during the Inuvik course. This part was extremely well received and sparked many interesting discussions among the students.

## 2.) Recommendations

Now in its second year, the course was well received and students showed an enormous amount of interest and enthusiasm. As always, there should be room for improvement. One of the biggest challenges is to include all topics into a five day course. In the following is a list of areas in which students showed lack of knowledge and or understanding and some general comments:

- The GSA (mountain ranges, rivers, communities);
- The GCLCA and Gwich'in institutions (e.g. the GSCI);

- Hazardous materials ( more students should attend WHMIS courses – see attached candidate list);
- First Aid (see above point);
- Most of the students wanted to learn more about maps, compass and use of GPS.

During the course, students were repeatedly made aware of their responsibility to obtain further certificates (First aid, WHMIS etc), but the opportunities to do so often seem to conflict with work or family related duties. Most candidates clearly need more reminders or alternatively, the GTC could look into some sort of program that offers a variety of the certificates at once.

Even though, some students expressed the wish to learn more about map reading, GPS and compass use, most of them did quite well during the course and their skills are satisfactory. Considering all the material that needs to be delivered during the 5 days, we feel that the time for orientation exercises cannot be increased at the cost of other parts of the program. We strongly recommend to include this module in any further courses.

With regards to general knowledge about the GSA and the GCLCA, the above mentioned added module clearly helped to give some incentive to the students. Furthermore, we extended a module on “Traditional Knowledge” with many examples on what has been done in the GSA (plants, place names, clothing). However, we would recommend adding more Gwich’in specific components

wherever possible to increase the students' awareness of the GSA and land use issues beyond the borders of their home communities. This would benefit the future monitors in terms of flexibility of potential placements. One idea would be to shorten the Traditional Knowledge section and add another new module "Past and Current Development in the GSA".

### 3.) The Course Binders

The material in this year's binders was very comprehensive and the students appreciated them as a basis for their work and study. They also suggested taking them to job sites as a refresher during the evenings or when detailed questions should arise. Please note that each student received a binder, whether the course was completed or not and one copy will be sent to each RRC and to the GTC Lands Manager in Inuvik. Only the copy for the Lands Manager will contain a complete set of exam questions and answers.