



Keeyask Generation Project

Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Monitoring Plan

Askiy Nanakacihetakewin Stewardship Program

Annual Report

ATK-2020-YFFN



ABORIGINAL TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MONITORING REPORT

ASKIY NANAKACIHTAKEWIN PROGRAM

YORK FACTORY FIRST NATION

REPORT #ATK-2020-YFFN

KEYYASK GENERATION PROJECT

2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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1.0 ABORIGINAL TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE MONITORING PROGRAM

Askiy Nanakacihtakewin (AN) means, “to watch out for and take care of the lands, waters, wildlife, plants, and people of the land”. YFFN has chosen the term “stewardship” for its “monitoring” program, as this word is better aligned with Ininiw perspectives on caring for Askiy. The program is designed to incorporate traditional science and Ininiw kiskenihtamowin (ATK), with cultural, educational, and traditional elements in understanding the effects of the Keeyask Project on YFFN's members and their traditional lands.

The 2019/2020 year saw great successes for the program. Program staff organized and hosted ongoing and new annual traditional camps and one-off informational events in the community. All were very well attended. Many new ideas were shared and plans developed to continue to grow the monitoring activities and engagement with the community of York Landing. This year was also marked by the impacts of two major events that required York Factory First Nation to go on lockdown, and suspended program activities. In the summer of 2019, a Canada-wide manhunt for fugitives came into York Landing and the surrounding area. Between mid-March and June 2020, the impacts of a global pandemic of a novel Corona virus prevented community gatherings and closed the A.N. offices. Travel restrictions in northern Manitoba remain in place at the time of writing.

2.0 STEERING COMMITTEE

The Askiy Nanakacihtakewin Steering Committee is a group of Elders, Traditional Knowledge holders, resource users, Resource Management Board members, and Band and Implementation staff who offer guidance to the program and ensure linkages with other First Nation programs and activities.

In July 2019, the Steering Committee met to discuss AN Stewardship activities and plan future programming and events. Another Steering Committee meeting was held in February 2020 to prepare for the upcoming Winter Camp (which was later postponed due to COVID-19) and to set priorities for spring and summer programming. Planning focussed on an approach to teaching language throughout the community, and continuing to grow the land-based community events that include traditional teachings and skill sharing.

We sadly acknowledge the passing of Amelia Saunders in April 2020. A member of the AN Steering Committee, Amelia generously shared her thoughtful insights and ideas to guide the AN program in a good way. She will be dearly missed.



Photo 1: AN Steering Committee

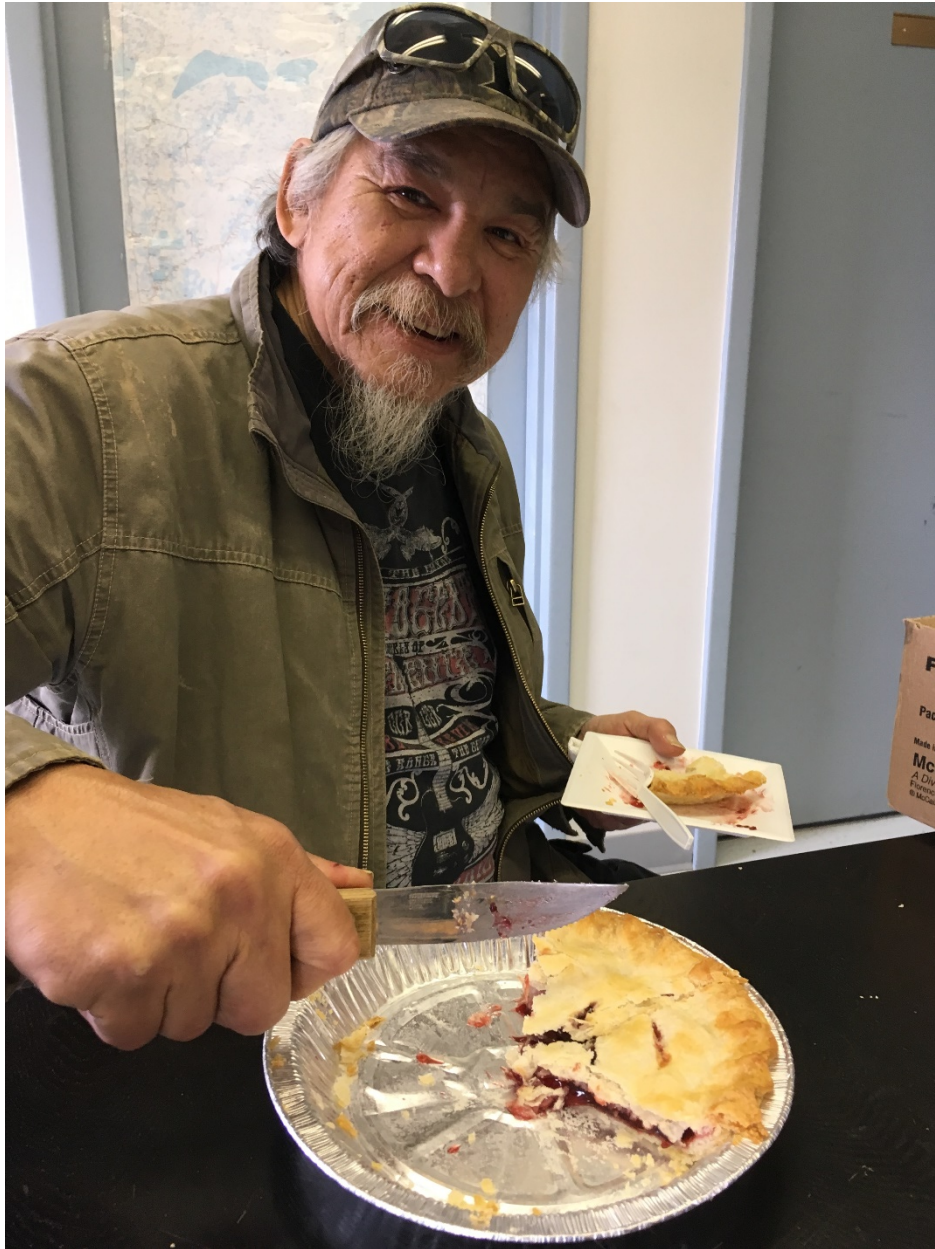


Photo 2: Joe Sinclair at AN Steering Committee Meeting

3.0 KEEYASK COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Program staff represent YFFN on the Keeyask Monitoring Advisory Committee (MAC) and Keeyask Caribou Coordinating Committee (KCCC). The program also supports YFFN's participation in the Keeyask Mercury & Human Health Implementation Group. These groups act as forums to meet with Manitoba Hydro and the other partner First Nations to share perspectives and work for proper inclusion of Ininiw knowledge and values in the Keeyask project.

Stewardship Coordinator Darcy Wastesicoot is also sits on the Wapusk Management Board and Kischi Sipi Namao Committee. Connections to these tables help to tie the program's work to broader management efforts on YFFN's traditional lands.



Photo 3: Keeyask Fall MAC Meeting

4.0 KEY ACTIVITIES

Several of the program's key events of 2019/2020 are as follows:

4.1 FALL MOOSE CAMP

From October 16th to 18th, 2019 the AN program organized and hosted YFFN's first community moose camp in York Landing. Prior to the camp, the Stewardship Coordinator travelled to the traditional territory near York Factory to harvest moose for the camp. Elders, youth, and other community members came together to share traditional methods for processing moose meat and other parts of the harvested animals.



Photo 4: Moose Camp

4.2 MERCURY INFORMATION SESSION & HAIR SAMPLING SESSION

On November 14th and 15th, 2019, members of the Mercury and Human Health Implementation Group presented an information session the community in preparation for a hair sampling session in York Factory First Nation.

On December 1st, Mercury Community Coordinator Nellie Redhead, Health Centre Director Emily Kematch, Golder Health Consultant Andrea Amandola, and team of dedicated volunteers collected over 40 samples of York Landing residents' hair and administered many food surveys. This was a very successful sample size and the members have subsequently received their individual results.

4.3 SUMMER STUDENTS

In the August of 2019, the AN program took on four young members of YFFN as summer interns. Students participated in monitoring activities such as GIS training, shoreline and hazards mapping, computer skills practice, and prepared language resources.

4.4 CARIBOU MONITORING

For several years, YFFN's A.N. program has been mapping caribou observations with YFFN resource users to create a record of what they are seeing on the land over the course of the winter. This annual mapping work session took place in July of 2019 to help understand and record caribou movements in the winter of 2018/2019.

In the 2019/2020 season, YFFN expanded its caribou monitoring work to include regular on-the-land patrols through the winter caribou migration. AN Coordinator, Darcy Wastesicoot, took more than a dozen excursions to observe caribou and tracks between December and February, and took part in aerial monitoring surveys organized by Manitoba Hydro and Wildlife Resource Consulting Services. He stayed in close communication with Manitoba Hydro and the partner communities through the winter, sharing weekly updates on observations throughout YFFN's territory.

4.5 BOAT PATROL

Stewardship Coordinator Darcy Wastesicoot and Stewardship Jim Beardy attended boat patrol week from May 27 to 30, 2019. Information presented was relevant to some ATK Monitoring programs. Jim gave an informal presentation on YFFN's program. Darcy made a presentation to attendees of behalf of the KSNC.



Photo 5: Darcy Wastesicoot and Albert Saunders at Birthday Rapids

4.6 TEAM MEETING

On December 12th and 13th, 2019, the YFKI team, Chief and Council, and advisors met in Winnipeg to update each other on our programs.

4.7 PIPON KAPESIWIN 2020 (WINTER CAMP)

Program staff worked to organize their third annual Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Winter Camp in early March 2020. Unfortunately, Pipon Kapeesiwin was cancelled in order to maintain community safety through following social distancing precautions related to COVID-19. Traditional foods that had been gathered for the event were donated to support food security during the community lockdown.

4.8 COLLABORATION FOR ATIKOK

Since 2017, First Nations in the Northeast of Manitoba have seen large numbers of caribou come near the Keeyask partner communities. The herds have drawn many harvesters from outside the area and raised concern among YFFN and other partner communities: about the number of animals being harvested; hunters failing to follow traditional protocols for accessing traditional lands; carcasses being left with only small amounts of meat taken; and safety hazards associated with gut piles being left on access routes. These concerns have been discussed at Keeyask MAC and KCCC meetings.

Steering Committee members had urged Askiy Nanakacihtakewin staff to find funds to support further collaboration among the communities with respect to monitoring and protecting caribou. They emphasized the importance of communicating with other First Nations in the region beyond those in the Keeyask Partnership and working together to address their common concerns.

In 2018, YFFN secured funds through the Canada Nature Fund for a project titled *Collaboration for Atikok*. This project consisted of three multi-party meetings, which took place in April 2019, October 2019, and February 2020 in Thompson, MB and involved eight Ininiw communities from Northeastern Manitoba.

This work has been supported by the Keeyask partner communities to build their collaboration on caribou monitoring in the area, expand discussions to include other First Nations that observe and access caribou in the region, and establish agreements around creating an ongoing caribou committee. The eight participating First Nations were supported by the AN staff, who acted as coordinators for the Atikok project. YFFN, WLFN, TCN, and FLCN also contributed equal amounts from their respective monitoring program budgets to design and print Respectful Harvest signs to help educate visitors to their territories and members, alike, on respectful harvest practices.



Photo 6: Caribou



Photo 7: Aerial Survey for Caribou

4.9 CREE PARENTING WORDS

YFFN Elder Obediah Wastesicoot translated a list of translations of Cree parenting words and phrases (originally created by Alana Ross) into the local N dialect of Ininimown (Swampy Cree). These translations were transcribed by YFFN students for distribution in the community to help parents learn along with their children.

4.10 AN NEWSLETTER

GIS Coordinator Darcy Saunders prepared a community newsletter to share information on the AN program and the projects and events that it has organized. The newsletter was distributed to households in York Landing to keep members updated on recent events and updates.

4.11 IMPOUNDMENT INFORMATION SESSION

Employees of Manitoba Hydro travelled up to visit York Landing for a day to hold an impoundment information session and open house. Monitoring staff helped host the event, which focused on the process and potential impacts of impounding the Keeyask forebay.