

Gwich'in Tribal Council  
Annual Report ~ 2001  
A Tribute to Education



*From September 7-16, 2001 the GSCI offered its sixth annual on-the-land traditional knowledge and Western science camp for 10 GSA senior high school students at Tl'oondib Healing Camp near Fort McPheron.*



#### ***GSCI Five Year Plan 2002/3-2007/8***

The GSCI hired RT & Associates to complete a Strategic Analysis and Five Year Business Plan to set future directions for the Institute. In February and March 2002, Bill Davidson of RT & Associates visited the GSA communities, conducting interviews with numerous individuals and groups to gather their ideas. An Interim Report was produced by the end of March, and a draft of the Five Year Plan was prepared in late May.

#### ***Gwich'in Language Plan***

William George Firth and Lisa Andre continued their work on the Language Plan this year. Their projects included piloting a two-week language immersion summer camp on the land for students and Elders from Tsiigehtchic, and the addition of sewing terms and animal and bird names to the Gwich'in Dictionary. They also increased their proficiency in the language, attended conferences on Aboriginal languages, and held workshops to create new teaching materials. Mark Riepl, a Masters' student in linguistics at the University of Victoria, lived in Tsiigehtchic during the summer of 2002, assisting William George and Lisa at the immersion camp and in developing a Gwich'in grammar. He collected material on grammar in the Gwichya Gwich'in dialect, for inclusion in future editions of the Gwich'in Dictionary.

#### ***Replication of Gwich'in Traditional Clothing***

Gwich'in seamstresses in the four GSA communities and Yellowknife are at work replicating five sets of a man's traditional caribou skin outfit from the late 19th Century, from an original currently housed in the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This project, which began in December 2000, is a partnership between the GSCI and the Prince of Wales Northern

Heritage Centre in Yellowknife. At the time of writing, we anticipate completion of all five outfits in time for presentation at this year's GTC Assembly. Upon completion, one outfit will be on display at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, and one in each GSA community.

#### ***Gwich'in Place Names Project***

GSCI Heritage Researcher Alestine Andre entered several hundred place names previously recorded with Gwichya Gwich'in Elders, and related oral history and land based information, into a computer database. This database will enable the GSCI to develop educational materials for schools and permit more efficient review of land use permit applications in the Gwichya Gwich'in traditional land use area for possible impact on heritage resources.

#### ***Gwich'in Elders' Biographies***

In her capacity as a Masters' student at Trent University in Ontario, Leslie McCartney worked with Gwich'in interpreters Therese (Remy) Sawyer and Annie B. Gordon to interview 17 Gwich'in Elders during the summer of 2001. The taped interviews were transcribed by BillieVeryl Clark, a student in Tsiigehtchic, after which Leslie McCartney used them as the basis for 13 short biographies for our 2003 Gwich'in Elders' Calendar. At the time of writing, the calendar template has been forwarded to the printer, and we anticipate availability of the calendar for sale by mid-June. Leslie is currently working on longer versions of the biographies for a future GSCI publication.

*We will celebrate publication with an official book launch in Tsiigehtchic, after which the book will be available for sale. This is the first of four community land based history books that we plan to research and publish.*

### ***Fort McPherson National Historic Site Project***

In 1969 Fort McPherson was designated a National Historic Site, with a commemorative plaque explaining the reasons for designation erected on the site in 1977. However, the designation does not mention the Teetlit Gwich'in. To correct this omission, the GSCI, in partnership with Parks Canada and a doctoral student from the University of Alberta, Melanie Fafard, have worked with the Fort McPherson National Historic Site Steering Committee to augment the current designation by including the Teetlit Gwich'in perspective. Melanie Fafard and GSCI staff Bertha Francis, Alestine Andre, and Ingrid Kritsch conducted a series of oral history interviews about the site's significance, after which Melanie drafted a report recommending that a new plaque be written and erected. The Committee also identified other possible locations for NHS commemoration within the Teetlit Gwich'in traditional land use area. These will be pursued in the new fiscal year.

### ***Nagwichoonjik National Historic Site Project***

GSCI staff members Ingrid Kritsch and Alestine Andre worked with Parks Canada and the Gwich'in Geographic Information System (GIS) office to produce a digital map including place names and other heritage resource information pertinent to the Nagwichoonjik NHS designation, so that the Nagwichoonjik Steering Committee could determine a boundary for the site. At an early January meeting, the Committee decided on a 5 km. boundary on both sides of the river, for the full 175 km. length of the site from Thunder River to Point Separation. This proposed boundary has been forwarded to the GTC for approval, and it will then be formally submitted to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Once the boundary is approved,

the Commemorative Integrity Statement (CIS) can be completed, and the Gwich'in and Parks Canada can negotiate a management plan and cost-sharing agreement.

### ***Gwichya Gwich'in History Book***

When we received this book from the printer in late July 2001, we found numerous printing errors caused by the use of a new paper and ink combination in the print run. The printers are reprinting the book, at their cost, and at time of writing we expect to have the books by early June. We will celebrate publication with an official book launch in Tsiigehtchic, after which the book will be available for sale. This is the first of four community land based history books that we plan to research and publish.

### ***Gwich'in Ethnobotany Book***

In June 2001 the GSCI published this book, in partnership with the Aurora Research Institute. Sales have been sufficiently brisk that we are considering another printing.

### ***Gwich'in Science Camp***

From September 7-16, 2001 the GSCI offered its sixth annual on-the-land traditional knowledge and Western science camp for 10 GSA senior high school students at Tl'oondih Healing Camp near Fort McPherson. Instructors included Gwich'in Elders and professionals drawn from the GNWT, Gwich'in organizations, co-management Boards and the private sector in such fields as anthropology, biology, geography, and political science. The seamstresses were also on hand, to teach the skills involved in making traditional Gwich'in caribou skin clothing.

*GSCI staff members Ingrid Kritsch and Alestine Andre worked with Parks Canada and the Gwich'in Geographic Information System (GIS) office to produce a digital map including place names and other heritage resource information pertinent to the Nagwichoonjik NHS designation.*

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### ***Gwich'in Volunteer Storybook***

To celebrate 2001, the International Year of the Volunteer, the GSCI researched and produced the

book *Iitsilait Oozri' Ha'b - The Bell With a Name*, in collaboration with the GNWT Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. This children's book, written by Wendy Stephenson, is based on Eva and Hugh Colin's wedding at the Mouth of the Peel, and includes both Gwich'in and English text and colourful drawings. It is aimed at grades 3-6 and is by all accounts a huge success.

### ***Integrated Resource Management***

The GSCI continued to review and provide advice on land and water permit applications received from the Gwich'in Land and Water Board and Gwich'in Land Administration for possible impact on heritage and cultural resources.

### **Grace Blake**

***Acting Executive Director***

### **Ingrid Kritsch**

***Research Director***

### **Board of Directors:**

Wilbert Firth, Chair - Gwich'in Tribal Council

Mary Kendi - Aklavik

Bertha Francis - Fort McPherson

Walter Alexie - Fort McPherson

Catherine Mitchell - Inuvik

Sarah McLeod-Firth - Inuvik

Anna May MacLeod - Tsiigehtchic

### **GSCI Staff:**

Grace Blake, Acting Executive Director  
(March 2001 - February 2002)

Leslie McCartney - Executive Director  
(effective February 2002)

Mavis Clark - Administrative Assistant

Ingrid Kritsch - Research Director

Alestine Andre - Heritage Researcher

William George Firth - Language Manager

Lisa Andre - Linguist Trainee

Betty Vittrekwa - Coordinator,

Gwich'in Language Centre

Bertha Francis - Translator,

Gwich'in Language Centre