

# Dehcho First Nations



2006  
Annual Report





## **Declaration of Rights**

Dehcho First Nations



We the Dene of the Deh Cho have lived on our homeland according to our own laws and systems of government since time immemorial.

Our homeland is comprised of the ancestral territories and waters of the Deh Cho Dene. We were put here by the Creator as keepers of our waters and lands.

The Peace Treaties of 1899 and 1921 with the non-Dene recognize the inherent political rights and powers of the Deh Cho First Nation. Only sovereign peoples can make treaties with each other. Therefore, our aboriginal rights and titles and oral treaties cannot be extinguished by any Euro-Canadian government.

Our laws from the Creator do not allow us to cede, release, surrender, or extinguish our inherent rights. The leadership of the Deh Cho upholds the teachings of the Elders as the guiding principles of Dene government now and in the future.

Today we reaffirm, assert, and exercise our inherent rights and powers to govern ourselves as a nation.

We the Dene of the Deh Cho stand firm behind our First Nation government.

Declaration was passed at Ka'a'gee Tu,  
(Kakisa Lake) August 19, 1993.



  


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## Grand Chief's Report

The Dehcho First Nations has been living in some interesting times, especially in the last twelve months, since last year's assembly in Kakisa. I say this because there are a number of major issues that we are dealing with in our territory. Of course, the main priority has always been the resolution of the Dehcho Land and Governance issues, which have been at a stand still for almost a year and a half as a result of the pipeline litigation. We have gone beyond that and now we are now dealing with issue of getting the negotiations back on track there's been some good movement in trying to get the thing back on track.



Since the federal election, there has been a new government that has come onside which is the Conservative Government that has made things more interesting because this government takes a totally different view on dealing with First Nations across the country. The Dehcho First Nations is no different. We are one of the bigger groups that still need some resolution to our negotiations. And, of course, having the Mackenzie Gas pipeline right on our back door the big discussion there is whether the pipeline would go ahead and we always said that the land and governance issues is the big ticket for us; but at this point we're still standing firm. We believe that the Dehcho Process negotiations need to be moving forward.

Over the last few months I was able to meet with the new minister Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs, and we had put a position to him that we would put everybody, people in the north and across Canada, in a win-win situation. If we were to get our process moving forward, then there would be the ability to start resolving the pipeline issues and all the other issues that are at a stand still as a result of our position. We believe that if we can move forward and make some very positive decisions then we think there would be enough benefits for everyone in the Dehcho territory and down the Valley. The process has been underway for close to ten years and we've done everything we could to get this moving forward.

This new government had taken a totally different approach. All along the Dehcho has always said that the whole traditional land needs to remain intact, that the Dehcho were not thinking of releasing any land. Instead, we wanted to keep everything intact, and we're also talking about a primary public government for the Dehcho territory and that had always been the goal and now a new government has just come in and their view is that the Dehcho needs to be selecting land. The entire Dehcho Territory that we live on, is roughly about 220 000 square kilometers. If we go on this land selection route it would mean that we would end up with roughly 17% of that for ourselves, and elders and chiefs and people in communities appear not to be in favor of that at this point. The Dehcho needs to have an internal discussion and figure out where we want to go with this.

Of course there is some good initiatives that we've put in place; there's the whole South Nahanni Watershed protection initiative that is going on, where we want to protect the entire South Nahanni watershed and try to get all the three mines out of the watershed so that people would be able to have clean water down the river, especially people in Nahanni Butte who depend on the water that comes out of the South Nahanni. So that has been a big issue for us and we're making a lot of headway over that right now. Roughly 80% of the South Nahanni Watershed is under some form of protection and we're







also using the Park Canada's legislation to make sure that the entire watershed will be protected.

Another initiative that we've been moving forward with is the Land Use Planning for the entire Dehcho Territory. In the Dehcho Territory we've been working for the last six years in trying to get a plan in place. A plan would mean that the entire territory will have a plan on how development would take place in the Dehcho. Mining, oil & gas, forestry, tourism, all those different types of development, will now have to comply with the Dehcho Land Use Plan once it is finalized and we're at the final stage of finalizing the plan. So far we have the Leadership that had approved the Dehcho Land Use Plan and now it goes to Canada as they would also need to approve and also the Territorial Government. The Dehcho Land Use Plan was a three way joint venture between the Dehcho, Canada, and the Northwest Territories and we believe that this was a very true and solid initiative that needs to be moving forward.

The plan is important because of all the development that is coming mainly due to the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline and of course all the mines that seem to be sprouting out across the country. We need to have some type of a mechanism in dealing with all these different developments. So the Land Use Plan will become a tool for the people of the Dehcho and for the first time, especially in this part of the valley, we would be the first ones that would have a Land Use Plan in place.

In 1977, when Judge Justice Thomas Berger came up here to report on the pipeline back in those days he recommended a series of initiatives that needed to take place and one of them was good land use planning had to be done down the Valley. So far no one had done anything on that maybe to some small degree in different areas but the Dehcho, our people, we have gone all out and had done a complete land use plan so this is very exciting for all of us.

The pipeline litigation has been a big issue too because we were always of the view that the pipeline was going to go ahead we needed to be involved in the full environmental assessment and that didn't happen and of course we then had to litigate. As a result of that we weren't able to get the seats that we required on the Joint Review Panel but we were able to settle for some dollars so that we can get our people ready for the pipeline if the decision was made for it to go ahead. So all in all it has been pretty exciting.

The elders have been going all out in helping the First Nations. They've always have been the foundation for the entire nation. The youth, they've been very instrumental in helping out and of course the great leadership of the Dehcho have also been very key in maneuvering around some of these great issues. All along we're still moving ahead it's like we're just one big camp and moving along and taking on all the problems that seem to be coming our way. We have pulled through a tough year and now we're moving forward to resolve some of these outstanding issues that are before us. Mainly trying to get the Dehcho Process back on track and trying to make sure that we can align ourselves with the rest of the group so that northerners would be able to take a big chunk of what they are entitled to and we're hoping that the Dehcho First Nations would be able to be there to benefit. All-in-all we are all quite positive and I want to thank people for being patient and understanding. We need to continue to support one another and just take on the issues that are coming our way, and we have pretty big issues like the Mackenzie gas pipeline coming our way and people think that money is going to resolve all our problems but that isn't the answer. What people need to know is that if you have your foot on the ground and you know that the land belongs to you and it is your forefathers' land and your moccasins are on the land and you are standing there looking at the horizon and feeling good about yourself then you will feel good about your future and you will feel good about your children that are coming behind you.

So again I want to thank the great Dehcho Territory and the great people that live in it for continuing to give the leadership and our elders the full support that we require. And again we will continue to take on the big fight that is before us. Again I'd like to say mahsi cho.







# Executive Committee Report

By Sara McLeod, Executive Secretary

The Draft Dehcho Constitution authorizes the Executive Committee in its roles as the body responsible for the administration of the Dehcho First Nations office.

The Executive Committee monitors the overall office operations and financial integrity, authorizes major financial transactions and ensures operations and protocols are reflective of the 1993 Dehcho Declaration. The Executive Committee reports to Leadership quarterly and to the Assembly annually.



In 1999, the Dehcho Annual Assembly passed a resolution for the selection of the Executive Committee (2 leaders, 2 elders and 2 members at large). The term of the Executive Committee is three years concurrent with the term of the Grand Chief. The Dehcho First Nations Executive Committee was:

- Berna Landry, Chief,
- Roy Fabian, Chief
- Flora Cli, Elder
- Ted Landry, Elder
- Celine Antoine, Member at Large
- Stanley Sanguetz, Member at Large – became Chief November 2005

The Chiefs and Members at Large were appointed November 2003 by way of a motion in a Leadership meeting held in Ft. Simpson. Elder Flora Cli was appointed in December 2003 and Elder Ted Landry was appointed in March 2004 in an Elders meeting.

The Executive Committee held seven face-to-face meetings and three teleconferences for fiscal year 2005-2006.

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Dehcho Assembly a new Executive Committee was appointed. The newly appointed Executive Committee Members consists of:



- Berna Landry, Chief
- Eric Betsaka, Chief
- Violet Cli, Elder
- Margaret Leishman, Elder
- Joanne Deneron, Member at Large
- Richard Lafferty, Member at Large







# Dehcho Process Report

By Georges Erasmus and Chris Reid

## AiP Negotiations

On May 30, federal negotiators tabled a proposal for an Agreement-in-Principle (AiP) as a basis for negotiating a final agreement to end the Dehcho Process. The federal offer is based on the 1990 Dene/Metis comprehensive land claim agreements, with elements of the Tlicho comprehensive land claim final agreement added. Canada continues to take the position that its' negotiators only have a mandate to negotiate a comprehensive land claim agreement comparable to other agreements in the NWT and based on land selection.

At the January, 2006 Leadership meeting in Trout Lake, the DFN leaders reaffirmed that they would not negotiate an agreement based on land selection. Instead, the DFN have continued to propose an agreement based on public government and shared stewardship of all lands and resources in the Dehcho.

## Land Use Plan

The Dehcho Land Use Plan is now in its final phase, requiring approval from the DFN, Canada and the GNWT. The Plan must first be approved by the DFN and then will be submitted to Canada and the GNWT for approval and implementation.

The Plan was supposed to have been finalized in February 2006, however some DFN Leaders at that time requested an extension in order to allow for further input into the Plan. Following further consultations with DFN communities, the Plan was expected to be approved at the May 31 Leadership meeting in Ft. Liard. At that time, however, PKFN requested additional changes in the Plan. The Leaders then passed a resolution approving the Plan "in principle" subject to the amendments sought by PKFN and ratification by the Kakisa Assembly. Annual Assembly ratified the Dehcho Land Use Plan.

## Canada's Position

At the November, 2005 negotiating session in Ft. Providence, Canada's negotiators informed the DFN that there is "no support" in Ottawa for the unique type of final agreement which the DFN seeks, based on a Dehcho public government having jurisdiction over the entire Dehcho territory. Instead, they tabled a proposal to negotiate a conventional comprehensive claim final agreement, based on land selection, similar to the Gwich'in and Sahtu agreements, but in some ways, less than what the Dene obtained in those agreements.

In February, 2006 the DFN leadership reaffirmed that they will not negotiate a comprehensive land claim agreement based on land selection. When he met Minister Prentice in April, Grand Chief asked that Canada give its' negotiators a mandate to negotiate a shared stewardship agreement instead of a typical comprehensive claim.







On May 30, the federal negotiators informed the DFN again that they have no mandate to negotiate anything other than a comprehensive land claim agreement based on land selection. At the same time they tabled an “offer” to settle the Dehcho Process on terms “comparable” to other comprehensive land claims agreements in the NWT. The federal offer would give the DFN ownership of about 17% of their traditional territory and \$104 million paid over 15 years. If the DFN decide to negotiate based on this offer it is likely that the land quantum would be increased to approximately 25% of the Dehcho territory.

### **The DFN Position – Shared Stewardship / Public Government**

The DFN rejected the final agreement which resulted from the failed Dene/Metis negotiations for many reasons, but mainly because that agreement would “chop up” the land into selected blocks owned by First Nations with the remainder being Crown land owned by Canada. The *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act (MVRMA)* was developed and implemented to fit within this model.

The DFN have a long-standing policy, affirmed in the Dehcho Declaration, the Dehcho Proposal and numerous Assembly resolutions, of opposing comprehensive claims settlement models based on “land selection”. It is intended that the Dehcho government will have jurisdiction over the entire Dehcho territory, for all residents of the Dehcho.

Some steps towards this goal have already been taken. The Dehcho IMA also established the *Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee*. The DLUPC can be seen as an institution of public government. It is comprised of 2 Dehcho appointees, one federal appointee and one GNWT, appointee, plus a Chair agreed to by the parties. The DLUPC has a mandate to develop a draft land use plan for the entire Dehcho territory, not just selected parcels. The plan must then be approved by the DFN and Canada before it is implemented. A Dehcho final agreement could incorporate land use planning for the whole territory. It would also recognize a *Dehcho Resource Management Authority (DRMA)* which would regulate the use and protection of lands and resources, under the authority of the Dehcho government.

### **Dehcho Constitution**

The DFN are in the process of developing a constitution which will describe how the government of the territory will be structured, how it will be chosen, and how it will function. The constitution will also describe how the residents of the Dehcho, both Dene and non-Dene, will relate to their government and how powers will be divided between local community governments and the regional Dehcho government.

In order to avoid land selection and keep the Dehcho territory intact, it will be necessary to give non-Dene settlers who meet the residency requirements set out in the final agreement a role in electing the government of the Dehcho. This is why the government of the Dehcho would be called a “public government” – because it will be a government for all residents of the Dehcho not just for Dene and Metis.

It is important to note that the work to date in developing a Dehcho constitution has been based on the assumption that the Dehcho will not negotiate a land selection based comprehensive land claim agreement with Canada. The draft constitution under development is based upon the concept of shared stewardship and public government. If the DFN decide







selection, the constitution may have to be significantly revised as it will only apply on selected Dehcho title lands.

### **Land Withdrawals**

During interim land withdrawal negotiations between 2001 and 2003 PKFN decided to pursue a different approach to land protection, using the PAS. When the PAS failed to deliver results, PKFN asked to re-open the May, 2003 land withdrawals agreement between Canada and the DFN. The 2005 Settlement Agreement contains a clause requiring negotiations on land withdrawals for the PKFN territory. Agreement in principle has now been reached on a package of land withdrawal in the PKFN territory. The agreement will create buffer around Blackwater Lake and other key lakes and rivers and will become part of the DFN land withdrawals package signed in May, 2003.



### **KFN Working Group**

The KFN working group is a “side table” created by the Dehcho Process main table. Its’ mandate is to address issues which primarily affect the KFN, including KFN’s Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claims which seek additional reserve lands, and issues concerning the status of the Town of Hay River. Sam Gargan represents the DFN negotiating team on the KFN working group.

The settlement proposal recently tabled by Canada states that it is Canada’s position that the KFN will be able to sign either a Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claim agreement with Canada, or the Dehcho Process final agreement, but not both. If they choose the Dehcho Process they will not have a reserve but instead will have a share of Dehcho title (fee simple) lands.

Obviously, the people of KFN will have some important decisions to make in the near future.

### **Nahanni Park and the PAS**

The DFN continue to push for the protection of the entire South Nahanni watershed as a high priority. Currently approximately 85% of the watershed is protected through the 2003 interim land withdrawals agreement with Canada.

The DFN also continue to support the Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) as a way of protecting sensitive lands which have not yet been protected through the interim land withdrawals agreement or through the draft Dehcho land use plan.

Jonas Antoine represents the DFN in these initiatives. He will provide a more detailed report.

### **Training / Capacity Building**

The negotiations team is working to develop a plan for training and capacity building to ensure that DFN members are capable of taking advantage of employment opportunities which may result from implementing a Dehcho final agreement. Although a final agreement is probably still several years away, we want to give DFN members every opportunity to be ready to take on new jobs when the Dehcho territory finally becomes, once again, self-governing.







# Nahecho Report

By Samuel Gargan, Assistant Negotiator

## Introduction

Traditionally, the Elders' role in a family or group, was as keepers of the language and culture, protectors of the land and all living things, and to be wise and trusted advisors and mentors. Elders carried out their duties to pass on their Traditional Knowledge. Each member of a community also had a role to play by providing protection, shelter and nourishment. The men and women had a role just as a child would. Elders were depended upon to care for the grandchildren while parents provided water, wood and other essentials. The survival of the Nation depended on their Traditional Knowledge. Today this knowledge is slowly being



eroded, impacted upon and assaulted by outside influence and technology. This concerns the Elders as well as the Leadership. Recognizing this could further erode our way of life, so the leadership made a decision to create the Elders Council to address and discuss all urgent issues and concerns, before all is lost. The Elders recognize the important role they play in addressing all the critical issues we face, and they are willing to participate in discussing all urgent issues which are important to our Nation.

## Purpose

Through trial and error the Nahecho (Elders) manage to discuss what their traditional roles and responsibilities were. As an advisory body the Elders operate using their collective wisdom and knowledge to promote a vision of human dignity, decency and respect for all living things. As a result from numerous meetings, discussions and deliberations the Nahecho (Elders) have managed to develop a clear mandate, guidelines, protocol and policy under which the Elders can operate and conduct business. There is no definition for the term "Elder", therefore, their role (as in the past) will be to pass on their knowledge, language, culture and their common scene approach to all issues. This broad area of responsibility also includes protecting the integrity of our homeland, and Aboriginal and Treaty rights. The Elders will conduct their meetings in relation to the seasonal activities, and focus on allowing other activities and events to fit into the culture. All issues brought before the Elders go through careful scrutiny, examination and review on an continual bases. By going through this routine the Elders have managed to successfully accomplish many different tasks. The following are examples of what can be achieved when consensus government operates harmoniously:



## Annual Budget

The Nahecho (Elders) have an annual budget of approximately seventy-five thousand dollars which allows them to operate and conduct their business. During the last fiscal year the Nahecho (Elders) managed to hold five large gatherings, four small gatherings and several Nahecho, harvesters and youth meetings. The option to hold additional gatherings to deal with urgent DFN matters would be at the discretion of the Grand Chief and Leadership.







### Elders Participation

Although the Nahecho (Elders) have been very active members, participating in numerous meetings and workshops, selecting their members to serve on boards has been a challenge. However, their role has been slightly altered since the last Annual Assembly, now the Nahecho (Elders) are limited in their participation. Their role and responsibilities have changed from being mentors and advisors to being observers. This is unfortunate since it is clear what their role and responsibility is in the “Dehcho Declaration”

### Elder’s “Term of Reference”

Through years of observation the Nahecho (Elders) possess knowledge about weather patterns, seasonal trends, wildlife, when to gather and harvest, the human cycle, spirituality and how to make wise decisions on how the land is used. Through research and the use of other examples, we discussed, consulted and eventually developed a draft “Terms of Reference” that guided the operation of the Nahecho (Elders) group. Although the document started as one document we now operate under two separate “Terms of Reference”. The rationale behind this was to manage and administer the two groups more efficiently and create consistency.

### Towards a Dehcho Government

In developing our Dehcho Government Constitution, the Nahecho (Elders) recognized the need to focus on our relationship with the land and all living things. The term self-government is linked to home-rule or independence. Therefore under colonial rules the most any indigenous culture can hope for is reserve-type rules with limited autonomy. Nahecho (Elders) do not understand how we can secure a future without a land base and Aboriginal title. We must develop a constitution that has assurances on the term “extinguishment”, and our relationship with the land. For this reason, the only option is to co-exist and co-manage within our Treaty area. How we conduct ourselves as a nation with certain values and principles is indeed very important to the Nahecho (Elders). Our constitution or decree which would be our supreme law of our land must reflect our collectiveness and our unique style of consensus government. Through ongoing consultation and public forums the ‘Towards a Dehcho Government’ document has been improved substantially. The Elders are encouraged by membership participation, however, since the last Annual Assembly the direction has changed to a working group developing a Dene version on our constitution and headed by Assistant Negotiator, Ria Letcher. As discussions continue at the DFN and community level, the constitutional working group, leadership, Elders and membership-at-large continue to review, revise and improve details within the document.

### The term “Dene”

The Elders have expressed concern over the terminology “Dene”, what do we mean? Should the person speak the language, practice the culture, possess traditional knowledge and is generally an all-around good Dene role model? The Elders seem to think so. Most other countries speak their native tongue and conduct their affairs accordingly. If we are to revitalize ourselves to those cherished qualifications that made us who we are, we must adopt the definition of Dene to include: speaking the language, practicing the culture and possessing some traditional knowledge. The Elders realize this will be controversial,







but they believe this hard line needs to be taken if we are to survive as a people; therefore they are not prepared to compromise on this definition.

**Special Areas Initiative, “Spiritual and Sacred Sites”**

As a member of the Negotiation Team I have been given the task of keeping track by documenting and recording traditional place names, and spiritual and sacred sites. The Elders recognize the importance of passing on this knowledge to family members, tribal members and the new generation through their traditional land, verbal communication and visual

observation. Most of the information given by the Elders is done orally or through traditional activities; information given depends on their comfort level. Most information is in the possession of immediate family members, tribal members or community members; this all depends on the circumstance or situation. Today documentation are being by initiated by governments, industries and First Nations which is important (bringing forth the question of intellectual property).

**Creating Alliance With Other First Nations**

All First Nations in the Americas have common issues regarding their land, language and way of life. Issues on how to cope and overcome adversities, experiences of encroachment on lands, and the impact of developments should all be information that is shared amongst First Nations. Can we learn from other’s experiences? The only way this can be achieved is through dialogue, exchange visits and creating alliances. The Nahecho (Elders) are encouraging the leadership and members to consider this. Today we work closely with Akaitcho Treaty 8 regarding the Great Slave Lake and commercial fishing, tourism and the state of our fish stock. We also work alongside the Dene Tha in northern Alberta on the boundary issue.

**Joint Review Panel Public Hearing Preparation Work**

The Mackenzie Gas Project may eventually be built, however the Nahecho (Elders) wonder how we are prepared to address the many issues involved with the building of a pipeline? The environmental process issues, the impacts and the devastation to our lands and wildlife. On the interim who is addressing the critical issue facing our membership and communities? As public hearings on the Mackenzie Gas Project are carried out, the Nahecho (Elders) are faced with many issues the members and communities need to address. With the assistance of Mr. Joe Acorn, Rene Lamothe and Chris Paci, the Nahecho / harvesters and youth have intervener status on the Mackenzie Gas Project in both the Joint Review Panel and the National Energy Board. While many issues are being addressed, a single community will not be able to do all the work required, therefore the communities need to coordinate their efforts collectively. During the months of May and June, the Nahecho (Elders) have been able to get a small degree of cooperation for the public hearing. Currently, we are strategizing to do a final presentation to the Joint Review Panel in Yellowknife on August 18, 2006.

**Language and Culture**

The Nahecho (Elders) continue to express concerns over the erosion and disappearance of our . We must begin revitalizing our language and culture now, by first realizing that we cannot delete language and culture. Euro-Canadian influences have greatly contributed to this decline. The Elders realize we







cannot change what exists now nor can we turn back the clock or go back to a homeland to relearn what is being lost. The concern now is not to dwell on it, wait for others, or do further studies or research the problem, or isolate the influence. However, we need to take bold steps and drastic action. Extinction can come in many forms. The question is how prepared are we to allow this to happen? The Nahecho (Elders) see many problems with the delivery of our language and culture in a what they consider a foreign institution. They also do not know what the future holds or how long they will be around to pass on their knowledge to future generations. We could lose every thing if we continue to wait. Hopefully, meetings held to date, and concerns expressed, and a continuous lobbying efforts will help to address these critical issue. In Hobbema, the First Nations bolted their own institution for language immersion to promote Cree language and culture. (This works for them)

### Winter Leadership Referral On Resolution #17

In March of 2005, a Special Elders Working Group met to deal with resolution # 17. As a result, two motions were passed to resolve the impasse creates. The first was to encourage leadership to review all relevant motions and resolutions related to the oil and gas and pipeline issues, and follow-up on the spirit and intent of those motions and resolutions.

The second was to encourage the leadership to explore other experiences, examples, initiatives and agreements on resource development, review all our agreements to date and draw on the spirit and intent of those agreements. However, in April during the Socio Economic Impacts conference held in Fort Simpson the leadership listened politely to the Elders presentation and decided to resolve their issues by creating two separate groups to deal with one pipeline issue. The hope by the Nahecho (Elders) was to create an atmosphere of cooperation, dialogue and unity to address all aspect of development. Unfortunately this did not happen,.

### Trans Boundary Watershed Initiative

The Nahecho (Elders) found the need to address the issue of water since climate change and pollution can impact our water system and make it a scarce commodity. Their opinion is that there is a higher power that guides the minds of our people. The mandate given by the Creator is to live off the land and take care of it so our grandchildren can enjoy it as well. Any major development that impacts our people, the wildlife, our streams, creeks and river system, the First Nation must be consulted to ensure the well-being of our water.



The Nahecho (Elders) recognize the need to develop a strategy to address all these critical issues, therefore, the recommendation is to host a major gathering in the Dehcho to address the watershed and protecting our lakes and rivers needs to be address. We now have a major water conference scheduled in Fort Simpson for September 5-7, 2006.

The summary report to-date with direction and implementation is

based on numerous motions and resolutions passed at the Nahecho (Elders) and Leadership meeting.







## Youth/Elder Gathering Report

By Lee Thom, Acting Resource Mgmt Coordinator

On June 23, Youth and Elders from the communities travelled to Kakisa Lake for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth/Elder Gathering. Once they arrived they spent time setting up their campsites and visiting with other youth and elders.

The gathering began with the fire feeding ceremony. A delegate from each community were invited to pay their respects to the lake. Chief Lloyd Chicot welcomed the delegates with opening remarks. Introductions of the delegates provided an opportunity for the youth and elders to speak about any concerns they may have regarding the language and culture.

Gloria Buboire, the AHRDA Coordinator, presented information on the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement training and employment Opportunities. Alison de Pelham, the Executive Director, provided information on the how to get a youth council started. Mavis Wasp-Colin, the ASEP Coordinator, presented possible training and employment opportunities with the Mackenzie Gas project. Violet Sanguez, the Language Specialist, review basic terminology in Slavey.



The youth and Elders were divided into groups to work together on setting up a camp site complete with spruce boughs and fire pit. This event was a lot of fun and demonstrated leadership and organizational skills for those who participated. The weekend ended with entertainment by Johnny Landry and friends.

The youth and elders presented the Leadership with a motion for funding to assist with the organizing of a youth council.

Mahsi cho to the facilitators for the traditional activities for their expertise in the following areas:



- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Laura Sanguez        | Bannock Making                            |
| Laura Sabourin       | Sweet Grass Breeding                      |
| Elsie Marcellais     | Plant Identification                      |
| Jonas Antoine        | Beaver Hide Stretching                    |
| Chris Chicot         | Fishnet Setting                           |
| Walter Landry        | Tipi Setting & Spruce<br>Bough Collecting |
| Mavis Wasp-Colin     | Dream Catchers                            |
| Caroline Bonnetrouge | Dry Fish Making                           |
| Sarah Hardisty       | Tufting                                   |
| Laura Sanguez        | Beading                                   |
| Cliff McLeod         | Hand Games                                |

Mahsi cho to Margaret Leishman for chairing the meeting. Also would like to thank the Deh Gah Gotie Dene Drummers for their assistance.

Mahsi cho to the Elders who shared their traditional knowledge and wisdom with the youth.







## Language/Literacy Report

By Sara McLeod, Executive Secretary

### Language Program

In previous years, Dehcho First Nations received Language funding from Education, Cultural and Employment, GNWT. Again, Dehcho First Nations administration held the contribution agreement and distributed funds to the ten member organizations. The community allocations are done by formula (population percentage) per community of the 1996 census.

For fiscal year 2005-2006 Dehcho First Nations received \$224,500.00 and additional \$38,000.00 for language program and is empowered at the community level. Allocation of the funding went to the following member organizations:

Acho Dene Koe  
Deh Gah Got'ie Dene Council  
Jean Marie River First Nation  
Ka'a'gee Tue First Nation  
Katlodeeche First Nation  
Liidlii Kue First Nation  
Nahanni Butte Dene Band  
Pehdzeh Ki First Nation  
Sambaa K'e Dene Band  
West Point First Nation

The purpose for this funding was to assist in the preservation and revitalization of the South Slavey language through programs and activities as outline in the Strategic Language Plan.



Courtesy of George Tsetso for picture of Language Working Group

To summarize a couple for the activities that were done:

Jean Marie River First Nations held a Traditional Winter Camp during the month of March 2006. The youth learned the South Slavey language, survival skills, hunting and fishing, spirituality, traditional morals and values and cultural/traditional activities.

Liidlii Kue First Nation held a Slavey/Cultural Camp at Cli Lake the month of August 2006. Five families attended the camp. South Slavey language mini lessons were taught, reading and introduction to Dene alphabets. The Slavey/Cultural camp was well attended and was successful.

For more information on the Language Program, please contact the Dehcho First Nations.

### Dene Language Development Plan

The Interim Language Working Group held two meetings one in Fort Simpson, NT on February 14-16, 2006, which administration dollars were used to conduct this meeting. Dehcho First Nations received funds from ECE, GNWT to hold the second meeting, which was held on March 21-23, 2006 on







the Hay River Reserve.

The purpose for the meetings was to update the 2003-2008 Dene Language Development Plan and to put a Language Working Group together. However, the people on the Language Working Group seem to be changing a lot and not consistent.

The Dene Language Development Plan (2006-2009) has now been revised and is now pending approval from the Dehcho First Nations Leadership in order to move forward with the preliminary Implementation Strategy.



If you wish to have a copy of the revised 2006-2009 Dene Language Development, please contact the Dehcho First Nations office or go onto the DFN website at [www.dehchofirstnations.com](http://www.dehchofirstnations.com) under Working Groups.

### **Literacy**

For fiscal year 2005-2006 Dehcho First Nations received \$30,000 for the whole Dehcho region, which was allocated to four member organizations:

Deh Gah Got'ie Dene Council  
Katlodeeche First Nation  
Nahanni Butte Dene Band  
Sambaa K'e Dene Band

The purpose for this funding was to assist in promoting, enhancing and revitalizing the South Slavey language in the Dehcho region.

To summarize a couple of the activities done by the member communities:



Deh Gah Got'ie Dene Council has done a number of activities such as publishing the Zhahti Kue Dictionary, which is on-going, collecting elders' stories, cultural healing workshop at Moose Point.

Katlodeeche First Nation also has done a number of activities. They held Summer Days Camps for the youth and preschoolers, slavey classes and cultural workshops in various organizations/programs and using the local radio station to promote the South Slavey.







# Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA) Report

By Gloria Buboire, AHRDA Coordinator

Dehcho First Nations (DFN) receives an annual budget of \$1.4 million from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to administer human resources development programs and services for the Dehcho Region. Based on the 1996 Census, DFN allocates 57% (\$807,627) of AHRDA funds to 11 Aboriginal community organizations. Each Aboriginal community organization delivers human resources programs and services to all Aboriginal people residing in their community.

## CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND (CRF) (\$1,069,317)

The majority of AHRDA funding comes from the Consolidated Revenue Fund which is broken down as follows:

### **CRF Programs (\$440,605)**

Funding is distributed to the 11 Aboriginal community organizations on a quarterly basis. The primary authority and responsibility over education and training rests at the community level. Communities utilized the majority of program funding (\$428,396) by providing: assistance to individuals returning to school, post-secondary education, tuition cost for courses related to on-the-job training, wage subsidies, job creation partnerships, skills development and self-employment initiatives. Included in the \$428,396 expenditure was a \$10,089 exchange for EI funds with \$5,014 of the exchanged CRF funds provided to another community. The remaining \$7,134 deferred by the communities and \$5,075 deferred by DFN will be used on 2006-2007 program funding.

### **CRF Youth (\$50,798)**

Funding is distributed to the 11 AHRDA holders in the first quarter of the year. Each community utilizes the funding in its own unique way by enabling youth to find or obtain summer employment and on-the-job experience. Communities utilized the majority of youth funding (\$49,797) by providing 29 students with summer employment and 2 students were provided with return transportation during the Christmas holiday season. The remaining \$1,001 deferred by the communities will be used on 2006-2007 youth funding.



### **CRF Capacity Building (\$22,474)**

\$22,474 was used primarily for community staff members responsible for the AHRDA program to attend AHRDA regional meetings as well as DFN's AHRDA staff training.

### **CRF Childcare (\$341,703)**

Funding is based on the number of licensed day care seats operated by an Aboriginal community organization. The majority of the childcare funding (\$295,391) was allocated to five daycares in the region (3 existing licensed daycares and 2 daycares waiting inspection). \$293,078 was expended on the operation of the daycares. The remaining \$2,313 deferred by the communities will be used on 2006-2007 childcare funding.







\$46,312 in Childcare funding was allocated to the Regional Childcare Training program with \$34,306 (\$9,816 CRF & \$24,490 EI) being expended on Health, Safety & Nutrition and Child Growth & Development (incomplete \$12,006 deferred). EI program funding was utilized for a portion of the Childcare training modules as 4 of the daycare workers were EI eligible as reach-backs. The remaining \$36,496 (\$12,006 + \$24,490) will be used on 2006-2007 childcare funding.



**CRF Urban Initiatives (\$24,279)**

Funding is proposal driven. Aboriginal community organizations or Aboriginal people who have been denied funding from the community in which they reside due to lack of funding are requested to submit a proposal complete with budget breakdown. All proposals must be accompanied by DFN AHRDA application and funding denial letter from the community in which you reside. \$24,279 was utilized by 6 students for training in Community Addictions, Bookkeeping, Nursing, Acting and General Studies. Students used the funds for: tuition, books, living and travel allowance.

**Administration Budget (\$189,458)**

\$124,223 of the administration budget is utilized by staffing and operation of the AHRDA office. \$52,797 of the administration budget provided funding to Aboriginal clients and community organizations that do not fit the funding criteria of other AHRDA programs or have been denied at the community level due to lack of funding. The remaining \$12,438 will be used on 2006-2007 administration funding.

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (EI) (\$342,997)**

A smaller portion of AHRDA funding comes from Employment Insurance Fund which is broken down as follows:

**EI Programs (\$316,224)**

Funding is distributed to the 11 AHRDA holders on a quarterly basis. The primary authority and responsibility over education and training rests at the community level. A number of communities are experiencing difficulty in expending their EI funds as they do not have clients who are EI Eligible or EI Reach-back. As a result, EI allocations have been returned by the communities, reallocated by DFN or DFN will invoice communities for unexpended amounts. Of the \$295,823 distributed to the communities, \$286,639 was utilized by providing: assistance to individuals returning to school, post-secondary education, tuition cost for courses related to on-the-job training, wage subsidies, job creation partnerships and skills development. DFN will invoice 3 communities for a total of \$9,184 in unexpended funds.

Available funding at year-end totaled \$29,585 consisting of \$20,401 unallocated and \$9,184 invoiced amount. As 4 daycare workers attending the Early Childhood Education training modules were EI Reach-backs, \$24,490 in EI funds were utilized. The remaining \$5,095 will be returned to HRSDC as all EI funds not expended in a fiscal year have to be returned.







### **EI Persons with Disabilities (\$13,518)**

Funding is proposal driven. Aboriginal community organizations are requested to submit a proposal complete with budget breakdown. All proposals must be accompanied by DFN AHRDA applications. The majority of the funding (\$13,437.68) provided: a computer upgrade for a wheelchair bound individual and an employment support project for 7 disabled clients in a supportive living home. DFN will invoice 1 community for a total of \$80.32 in unexpended funds which will be returned to HRSDC as all EI funds not expended in a fiscal year have to be returned.



### **EI Urban Initiatives (\$13,255)**

Funding is proposal driven. Aboriginal community organizations or Aboriginal people who have been denied funding from the community in which they reside due to lack of funding are requested to submit a proposal complete with budget breakdown. All proposals must be accompanied by DFN AHRDA application and funding denial letter from the community in which you reside. \$13,255 was utilized by two proposals: a community organization wage subsidy and sponsorship of 2 EI eligible clients.

Total EI funds to be returned to HRSDC are \$5,175.33 (\$5,095.01 Employment Benefits, \$80.32 Persons with Disabilities).

### **CONTACT IV – HRSDC’S DATABASE**

DFN enters data from application forms and service contracts into Contact IV. The information entered into the database is used to verify the AHRDA program dollars expended by each Aboriginal community organization. Contact IV data is uploaded to the Data Gateway program which Ottawa uses to extract statistical information regarding the number of clients and types of programs accessed.

The 2004-2005 statistics indicated there was a 77% drop in employment results for the Dehcho Region. In order to increase our employment results, the DFN office has been vigilant in ensuring required data from application forms and service contracts are received, entered into Contact IV and successfully uploaded to the Data Gateway.



This fiscal year, the DFN AHRDA office entered 714 clients into Contact IV and successfully uploaded to Data Gateway. The number of clients entered into the system should significantly increase the regions employment results.







## Scholarship Report

By Gloria Buboire, AHRDA Coordinator

DFN provides scholarship funds to encourage membership to pursue or complete their post-secondary education. Scholarships are awarded at the Annual Assembly.

### DFN Scholarship Program (\$44,000)

Students pursuing a one-year college certificate, a two-year college diploma, or a university degree are encouraged to apply for a \$2,000 scholarship. Scholarship deadline is June 20<sup>th</sup> of each year, however, applications are collected throughout the year.

17 of the 22 available scholarships were awarded at the 2006 Annual Assembly in Kakisa Lake. The 2006 DFN Scholarship Recipients are:

Danita Allaire – LKFN  
Thor Amundson – LKFN  
Jeremy Antoine – LKFN  
Ronald Bonnetrouge – DGG  
Leanna Cazon – LKFN  
Christine Champagne – LKFN  
Hillary Deneron - ADK  
Darren Hardisty - LKFN  
Malerie Hardisty – JMR  
Crystal Hope – ADK  
Darnell Horassi – LKFN  
Keri-Ann Loutit – LKFN  
Jessie Loutit – LKFN  
Michelle McLeod – DGG  
Shayla McLeod - ADK  
Tiffany Pedersen – LKFN  
Misty Sabourin – KFN



The Scholarship Committee recommended the Scholarship deadline be extended to July 10, 2006 to ensure all available scholarships are awarded. Scholarship recommendations will be presented to Leadership at the next Leadership meeting. The scholarship announcement will follow.

### DFN Phoebe Nahanni Memorial Scholarship Program (\$12,000)

Mature university students pursuing academic programs in the field of Science, Socio-Economics or First Nations Arts Programs who have successfully completed their first year are encouraged to complete a scholarship application.

DFN will award one \$12,000 memorial scholarship annually to encourage membership to complete their University degree (\$4,000/year for 3 years), Masters (\$6,000/year for 2 years) or Doctorate (\$6,000/year for 2 years).







## Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) Report

By Mavis Wasp-Colin, ASEP Coordinator

This report will explain and describe the activities that have occurred within the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) Program for the fiscal year of 2005/2006. I have taken on the duties of the ASEP Coordinator as of October 03, 2005. Coming into a job position with no procedures and processes set in place was a challenge. I did not have the guidance and direction as to what and how everything is done for the ASEP program. I took the initiative to familiarize and educate myself as much as possible about the ASEP program and the duties and responsibilities as entailed in the job description of the ASEP Program Coordinator. I created files, guidelines and procedures to be followed by the eleven member First Nations and Organizations. I set up a logical system that would ensure that all the reporting requirements and the general operations of the ASEP Program will be met.

### General Operations

The Dehcho First Nations ASEP program operates in a manner that meets the needs of each of the eleven member communities while complying with the reporting requirements of the Aboriginal Futures. The Dehcho First Nations is the delivery agent of the Dehcho Territory ASEP Program with the member communities being the third party delivery agents. The deliverance of the training programs and projects are identified by each community through a work plan that is completed on an annual basis. On completion of each project the communities are responsible for submitting invoices and all the proper documentation required to process the payments of all the invoices. The expenses are incurred by Dehcho First Nations on behalf of each of the eleven communities and the final report is compiled and submitted to Aboriginal Futures by the ASEP Coordinator. The communities are responsible for requesting any changes that may be required with their annual workplans. It is justifiable to state that all projected training plans may not occur due to unavoidable and special circumstances such as weather conditions, participation interest, timing and location of training projects.

### Program Objectives

The Objective of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) Program is to create sustainable employment opportunities for the aboriginal peoples in the areas of northern mining, oil and gas, forestry, and hydro development. The expected outcome of the program is to create a more diversified workforce within Aboriginal communities. This program will provide opportunities for the Aboriginal Peoples to; obtain increased skills levels in the workforce, increased direct and indirect employment, decreased unemployment and dependency on social assistance, improved education levels and increased business opportunities.

The ASEP program objectives were identified by the 2005/2006 Dehcho Territory workplan which is the consolidated workplans set forth by each of the eleven member communities. The Program objectives include; BEST Program, Camp Catering, Drill Rig, Development Studies, Facilitated Life Skills, Heavy Equipment Operator, Office Administration, Safety Certification Training, Small Engine Repair, Trades Access, Train the Trainer, Training on the Job, Truck Driving and







## University and College Access.

### Review of Activities

The 2005/2006 fiscal year has been very successful for the Dehcho Territory ASEP program. The Dehcho Region received a budget of \$ 1,007,925.00 for the 2005/2006 fiscal year. The total expenditures for this year had a total of \$ 877,943.98 with a remaining balance of \$129,981.02. A total of \$ 805,166.62 was spent on training projects that were completed by the eleven member communities. There were a total of 516 individuals that have participated in the training plans and projects. The interest and success rate for the completed training plans were very high. There were a number of different training projects that were completed in the Dehcho Region. The following chart is the summary of all the completed training projects for the 2005/2006 fiscal year outlining the cost of each project and the percentage of interest.

#### 2005 /2006 DELIVERED TRAININGS PROGRAMS

LABOUR MARKET PRIORITY	NUMBER OF TRAINEES	COST	PERCENT-AGE OF INTEREST
BEST	25	18,888.32	2.36%
CAMP CATERING	12	30,054.65	3.75%
DRILL RIG	0	-	0.00%
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	10	18,107.00	2.26%
FACILITATED LIFE SKILLS	6	12,443.67	1.55%
HEAVY EQUIPMENT	9	72,026.64	8.99%
OFFICE ADMINISTRATION	18	24,982.20	3.12%
SAFETY TRAINING	295	264,609.62	33.02%
SMALL ENGINE REPAIR	3	150.00	0.02%
TRADES ACCESS	20	94,411.73	11.78%
TRAIN THE TRAINER	0	-	0.00%
TRAINING ON THE JOB	33	79,818.95	9.96%
TRUCK DRIVING	69	131,287.50	15.91%
UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE ACCESS	16	46,386.34	5.79%
THIRD PARTY ADMIN FEE	0	12,000.00	1.50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>\$ 805,166.62</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Upon review of the above chart you will notice that the most popular projects were; safety certification training, truck driving, training on the job and BEST program. These projects proved to be most popular because the participants can enter the workforce promptly upon the completion of the training projects to obtain employment. Although Drill Rig and Train the Trainer were identified in the Action Plan for 2005/2006, none of the communities sponsored any participants to undertake such trainings. The overall participation rate and interest in all the training projects were successful.

### Challenges

There were a number of challenges that were encountered with the ASEP Program for the fiscal year 2005/2006. The major challenge this year is not having the direct contact with the First Nation Administrator who is responsible for the implementation of the ASEP program. I find that I cannot get the information I need on time because the person that deals with the ASEP program is not available and no body else is capable of assisting me. Therefore, receiving all the necessary information and documentation from the communities on a timely basis is a big challenge. The invoices and supporting documents







are not submitted directly after the projects are complete. I do not receive all the required reports after every completed project. The invoices that are submitted are received after the quarter has been completed and the final reports have been submitted to the Aboriginal Futures. I need to have all the invoices and documentation on all the completed ASEP projects that have occurred within the quarter that I am reporting for. My reports do not reflect what actually happened within the quarter because I receive information after the quarter has been completed and final reports have been submitted.



The year end proved to be another challenge. I received invoices from some communities for projects that happened within the whole year. The information that I received was not accurate or organized in any way. I had the challenge of figuring out who did what and when it was done. A lot of the necessary information and reports were not submitted to the ASEP Office.

There is a great deal of confusion when the communities spread the cost of training projects between the AHRDA program and the ASEP program. Allocating expenses in such manner does not give a true account of what was actually spent on providing and implementing the training project. The funds should be utilized from either the AHRDA or ASEP Program to sponsor the total cost of the training project. I would strongly recommend that the communities utilize the EI portion of ARHDA program before considering accessing funds from the ASEP Program.

### Recommendations

I would recommend that the smaller communities combine their funding allocation and have the ASEP Coordinator implement the training projects on behalf of the communities by request. These communities do not have the extra human resources needed to meet the needs and requirements for the AHRDA and the ASEP Program. This will lessen the workload and paperwork for the communities.

The only invoices that will be processed for payments are the ones that have been received within the quarter that the training project has been completed. Anything received after the final reports are completed and submitted will not be processed for payment. The invoices have to contain the proper financial backup, all completed client applications and a brief written report outlining the successes, failures, challenges and recommendations. This will ensure that the reports that are submitted to Aboriginal Futures reflect each quarter more accurately.

I have received recommendations by the Executive Director of Aboriginal Futures to consider operating the Dehcho Territory ASEP Program on a regional basis in the same manner that the ASEP programs are being managed in the other regions. Another option was to take a portion of each percentage that goes to each community and set up category to coordinate and implement regional trainings and projects. This could include regional trainings with AHRDA and ASEP combined.

There still appears to be a great deal of confusion with the reporting requirements with the ASEP Program. I would suggest holding regional meetings combined with the AHRDA Program within each quarter to set forth plans and to ensure that projects are being completed and the funds are being spent within each quarter.







## Resource Management Report

By Chris Paci, Ph.D. June 20, 2006

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### Advisory committee members are:

Leo Norwegian and Peter Corneille - Liidlii Kue First Nation (LKFN) Reps  
Jonas Lafferty - Ft. Simpson Metis  
Tim Lennie - Pehdzeh Ki First Nation (PKFN) Rep  
Dolphus Codille - Acho Dene Koe Band (ADK) Rep  
Darrell Betsaka - Nahanni Butte Dene Band (NBDB)  
Fred Jumbo - Sambaa Ke Dene Band (SKDB)  
Peter Sabourin -Katlodeeche First Nation (KFN)  
Fred Simba -Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation (KTFN)  
■ Jim Thomas - Ts'ueh Nda (WPFN)  
■ George Low and Rob Smith (DFO, Hay River)  
■ Chris Paci - Acting Program Coordinator and Committee Secretary  
Lee Thom – Acting DFN Resources Management Coordinator

The Advisory committee drafted (April 19-20, Liidlii Kue) a terms of reference and directed the acting program coordinator and committee secretary to work with DFN to develop a multi-year Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management (AAROM) funding proposal to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Committee also recommended that Leadership be updated and the terms of reference be approved by the Deh Cho Leadership.

The AAROM proposal was submitted in early May.

The Dehcho Watershed Ecosystem Advisory Committee (DWEAC) meeting minutes, the AAROM proposal, and the draft terms of reference were submitted to the leadership (Acho Dene Koe -Ft. Liard, May 2006). A motion was drafted, presented and passed by the leadership supporting the terms of reference and giving the committee a mandate to form and develop fisheries co-management in the Dehcho.

DFO contacted DFN in early June with proposal revision comments. By mid June the proposal was revised and resubmitted to DFO.

The co-management process is being hindered by administrative demands of an overly bureaucratic fisheries department. The inherent challenge for DFN is to establish effective co-management. Dene have Treaty (Treaty 11) and Aboriginal rights; however, we do not have clear legislative authority (i.e. Fisheries Act, NWT Waters Act, etc.) to manager the fisheries.

Furthermore, the authority (both legal and natural resource management capacity) to ensure the integrity of Deh Cho watersheds is fragmented and there are competing interests “managing” Deh Cho fisheries and aquatic resources (DFO, Environment Canada, GNWT, etc.). DFN does not have a historical record of institutional structures for the implementation of fisheries management (which has been to date held exclusively by DFO). Finally, the funding to build Deh Cho capacity to manage is held by DFO. The funds are contained in a program and this program (AAROM) requires DFN to adhere to DFO rules, rules we are still learning about.

At this time it is unfortunate but the proposal process is dragging on (far too long). DWEAC needs to establish the secretariat and a hiring committee for a coordinator in the next sixty days or risk losing funding that was earmarked for this year.







## Keepers of the Water: Watershed Gathering

Liidlil Kue (Ft. Simpson), NT

September 5-8, 2006



Water and our knowledge of healthy watersheds have always been very important to Dehcho Dene and Metis. Will the next generation be able to count on reliable and accessible clean water with as much confidence as past generations? Increasingly we have to work to ensure the integrity of our water is safe. This gathering is being organized by Dehcho First Nations, with sponsorship support from Canadian Boreal Initiative, toward ensuring the integrity of our water.

The Committee *organizing committee* was struck following the March DCFN Leadership Meeting and continue to meet and plan. The committee consists of:

Grand Chief Herb Norwegian - Dehcho First Nation  
Chief Karen Felker - Ts'ueh Nda - West Point First Nation  
Chief Keyna Norwegian - Liidlil Kue First Nation (Manager Lands, Allen Bouvier alternate)  
Alison de Pelham and Lee Marie Thom - Dehcho First Nations  
Chris Paci - Conference Coordinator

Initial contact was made with various stakeholders, ENGOS, GNWT, Federal government (EC, DFO), Aboriginal governments in Alberta, and watershed councils. Quite a few organizations are interested in attending including First Nations Technical Services Advisory Group, Center for Indigenous Environment and Resources, and the Mackenzie River Basin Board (MRBB).

1. The gathering is an initiative of Deh Cho First Nations (DCFN), sponsored by Canadian Boreal Initiative.
2. A watershed is a distinctive region characterized by the physical flow of water: rivers, creeks and wetlands, lakes, seas, and oceans. Watersheds are separated topographically by a height of land; each has a drainage basin with independent drainage system(s).







A poster was designed and mail-out and on-line registration was prepared.

- Are communities interested in canoeing into Liidlii Kue for the meeting (starting in each community)?
- The Alberta government recently circulated our invitation letter from Grand Chief in the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance newsletter (this was sent to me from Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Industry Relations Corp.).
- Others we need to contact include: Alberta Research Institute, Assembly of First Nations, Dene Nation (following the election), Akaitcho AAROM Board, GSLAC, Limnologist, guest speakers (potentially: Phil Fontaine, Al Gore, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Dr. David Schindler...), Fort Chipewyan re: oil sands, pulp and paper companies (other industries).

Purpose of the gather is to bring together people and build relationships with all First Nations/Aboriginal governments/agencies, industrial interests, and others who share the Mackenzie River basin. The gathering will attract media attention and raise awareness on the state of the watershed. The gathering will focus participants' attention on four themes to protect our waters:

1. cultures and traditions
2. land use planning
3. governance based on local watersheds
4. best practices, lessons learned, partnerships

Dehcho is inviting other governments, including: federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal; in addition to industry and significant land users/owners whose activities are influencing the *Arctic Ocean drainage basin* (see map). A *letter of introduction and invitation* were drafted in May (following a teleconference) and faxed out from DFN.

The watershed gathering will feature an outdoor opening, feeding the water and feeding the fire (morning of day one), as well as elder's teachings. Following the first half day, the conference will move indoors with sessions on land use planning, watershed management/governance, and best practices (PowerPoint presentations, posters, etc.).

