

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 2.

E- CURRANTS

YRITWC MISSION STATEMENT

We the Indigenous peoples from the head waters to the mouth of the Yukon River including its tributaries, having been placed here by our creator, do hereby agree to initiate and continue the cleanup and preservation of the watershed, for the protection of our own and future generation of our indigenous peoples and for the continuation of our traditional native way of life!



Executive Editors Letter

With Spring on its way to the Yukon River, we here at the Watershed office are preparing for another busy field season. Brownfield staff will be making their way to a few of the communities to address brownfields sites. The watershed received two grants for clean-up in Galena and Tanana. See the Brownfields report for more information.

After a temporary hold of our USDA water and solid waste grants, we will be getting back to work on these one-year grants that were recently reinstated. Staff from the science and brownfield departments will work together to complete the grant work by end of September.

Our IGAP staff continue to support the science department under Dr. Edda Mutter and will also be back in the field continuing science work on water, erosion, permafrost melt, and more.

The Watershed continues to provide public testimonies and written comments to federal and state agencies advocating for our rivers and lands.

If you are in Anchorage, please stop by our offices for a cup of coffee and a chat with the staff.

--Theresa Clark, Executive Director

Executive Director Letter

Page 1

Brownfield updates

Page 2

Science: ION

Page 3

IGAP

Page 4

Kids Activity Sheet

Page 5

Staff Directory

Page 6

Theresa Clark



<http://www.yritwc.org>



(907)258-3337



201 East 3rd Ave Anchorage

Brownfields Update

2

What is a Brownfield?

Brownfields are contaminated sites which could be targeted for cleanup and redevelopment. According to the EPA, a brownfield site is defined as a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presents or protential presence of a hazardous subsitance, pullutant, or cantaminant.

Anna Bill

Waqaa my name is Anna Bill and I am originally from Mountain Village. I moved here to Anchorage and I am the Brownfields Outreach Technician here at YRITWC. I am very delighted to be working with all of you. I love to do a lot of subsistence hunting and gathering as well as watch Eskimo Dancing. I also love long road trips and camping.



Brian will be working on plans to hopefully get Tanana cleaned up this field season. We are meeting with the contractor to answer final questions and make sure documents are in order, and we get a green light from the State of Alaska DEC CS.

Brian is hoping to get an RFP out soon for work on the old BIA school in Galena. Hopefully work can begin next season. Please dont hesitate to contact Brian or Anna Bill for any Brownfields related concerns or questions you may have.

Brian Watts



Hello YRITWC Newsletter readers! I'm Brian Watts, the new Brownfields Program Coordinator. I moved to Anchorage, AK in 2002 while employed with Simon & Seafort's. I obtained a B.S. in Natural Science and a Biology minor in 2010. I began working for the State of Alaska as a lab technician and Microbiologist at the Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Health Laboratory. After more than 12 years at the EHL, I took a position with the DEC Contaminated Sites Program as an Environmental Program Specialist. I am excited to bring my expertise to the Watershed and work with the ANCSA Assistance and Targeted Brownfield Sites we manage to move them towards clean up and reuse scenarios.

I will be celebrating 20 years of marriage with my lovely and talented wife, Corrie, who just opened a small business, Copper River Custom Sewing & Gear Repair. I have two beautiful daughters, ages 12 and 19. My oldest is studying science and theology at Whitworth University and my youngest is an honor student at Central Middle School. I enjoy my church life, fishing, backpacking, birding, and any chance to be outdoors in Alaska.



<http://www.yritwc.org>



(907)258-3337



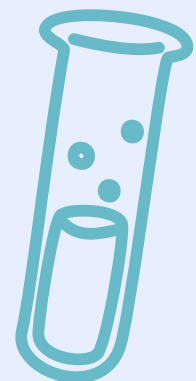
201 East 3rd Ave Anchorage

Science: ION Update

The ice is thawing, and the snow is melting, which means one thing. Summer is coming! As your science program prepares for upcoming fieldwork, please note that we are here to provide technical assistance with water quality and solid waste questions. We can assist with water quality sampling and answer any water quality questions you may have, whether it's about starting a water quality monitoring program, selecting equipment, developing a QAPP, or other topics. Additionally, through the Indigenous Observation Network (ION), we can help provide equipment and supplies to your Tribe to meet water quality monitoring Needs. I am excited to share updates on newly funded projects. The Arctic GRO program received funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to continue the water quality monitoring project. In collaboration with our project partners at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory and Oceanographic Institute, the Woodwell Climate Research Center, the University of Florida, and the University of Alberta, we will continue our water quality monitoring efforts on the Yukon and Mackenzie Rivers. For the next three years, we will sample the Yukon River at Pilot Station, Eagle Village, and additional sites in the headwaters to extend data collection and assess long-term water-chemistry trends and their influences on the Bering Sea. We will also collect samples to assess PFAS-related water quality issues.

With our Caltech, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and University of Southern California project partners, we received NSF R2I2 program funding to delve deeper into community resilience to address the impacts of riverbank erosion. The project kicked off with a workshop hosted at UAF in March, bringing together participants from Tribal, academic, federal agency, and private-sector partners to discuss community needs for addressing erosion and flooding impacts. The planning workshops are designed to brainstorm collaboration opportunities, communicate the NSF Erosion projects' findings more effectively, such as developing an online platform to visualize and illustrate erosion rate findings for sharing, and to identify action items to support Tribal entities. Upcoming events, we are hosting two water quality workshops, one in person on May 5th to 7th, and one ION refresher online workshop on May 11th and 12th. The workshops will provide you with insights into the ION water quality monitoring methodology, discuss QAPP and data management, and cover ION long-term trend analyses at local, regional, and watershed-wide scales. We will also discuss community reports and other data- sharing and illustration tools.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the training or water quality monitoring, please contact Edda Mutter at emutter@yritwc.org or Iris Brondz at ibrondz@yritwc.org.



Over the past several months, our work has centered on connecting with communities, supporting environmental monitoring efforts, and assisting environmental planning initiatives across Alaska.

Community Engagement

We reached out to several communities to learn more about local environmental priorities and the challenges people are seeing on the ground. Conversations have been focused on permafrost thaw, vulnerable infrastructure, landfill management, and local workforce needs. While some contacts were unavailable because of seasonal activities or leave, follow-up conversations are planned and contact lists have been updated. We have also connected with new IGAP staff who expressed interest in training opportunities and backhaul support.

Equipment and activity preparation for the upcoming monitoring season is underway! Water-sampling gear has been cleaned, organized, and restored for field use. Preparation of turbidity bottles has been completed, and alkalinity bottle cleaning is nearly finished. A continually emerging area of interest for the coming seasons is the use of drone-based aerial imagery, which is especially useful in erosion projects. New approaches explored during training this Winter may help improve efficiency in hazard mitigation planning and strengthen community planning efforts in the future.

Yukon River Field Engagement

Fieldwork and community engagement continued during travel to the Yukon River region. Theo, our Environmental Assistant, supported our Caltech research partner with methane sampling efforts in the Alakanuk Slough. During this trip, Theo also took part in a K-12 career fair representing YRITWC and our partnership erosion project with Caltech.

These visits created opportunities to connect with students, educators, and community members from several villages. Conversations focused on environmental careers, internships, and the many ways local knowledge and science can work together to support communities.

Iris Brondz

Hello! My name is Iris Brondz, I was raised in Bird Creek, AK, and I'm the new YRITWC Environmental Assistant. I recently graduated from Western Washington University's Environmental Studies program, and was very lucky to be this summer's YRITWC science intern through the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Ted Smith Conservation Internship program. Last summer, I enjoyed working towards the Watershed's goals along with my coworkers and the many involved stakeholders. I was very grateful to be hired after my internship ended, enabling me to continue developing as an environmental scientist, furthering my career in this amazing field, and traveling more around rural AK. In my new position, I will be working within the IGAP and science programs, assisting

Dr. Mutter with her science work and acting as a support resource for tribal IGAP coordinators within the watershed. I'm especially excited about resilient water resources, climate adaptation, technical assistance, and meeting all the driven individuals who are working to improve their local environmental conditions! So far since starting this position in late February, I've had the opportunity to attend some great conferences and webinars that familiarized me with the many elements of my position. I am also working on a Water Resource Resilience Toolkit for tribes within the Yukon River watershed in partnership with ACCAP and UAF. This project was started by our lovely previous YRITWC IGAP Coordinator, Anna Godduhn, and I'm excited and hopeful to start sharing the draft this Summer.

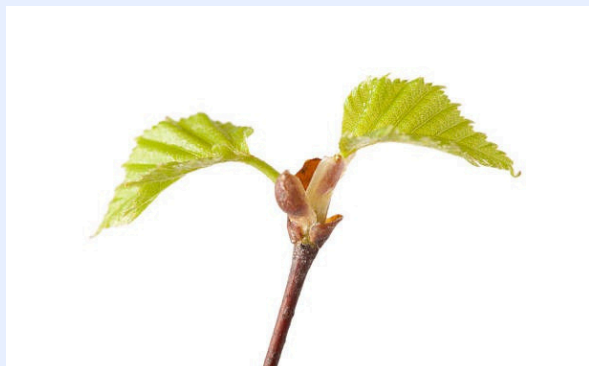


Spring Kids' Activity

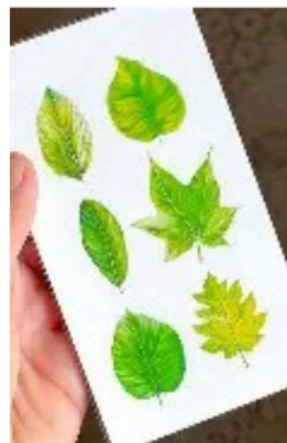
New Leaf Temporary Tattoos

Celebrate the new, green buds of Spring with all natural temporary tattoos!

Materials: New leaf and dry pigment of your choice (dust, chalk, coco powder, or dandelion pollen)



- Make sure you don't have tree allergies before you try this!
- Practice on paper before trying on skin
- Find a small, sticky, new green leaf on a tree or bush. These leaves are the newest buds of spring. They're recognizable by their bright green color and how sticky they are!
- Carefully pinch the leaf off the tree/bush
- Place the leaf ridge side up (so the top of the leaf when it was growing is against your skin)
- Press the leaf onto your skin for at least 30 seconds, then remove it
- Dust your skin (where you put the leaf) with a pigment of your choice to reveal your leaf tattoo! Try using dust, chalk dust, coco powder, or even dandelions for a light-yellow color. The pigment will stick to the sap left behind by the new bud!



Board Members

Yukon Flats:

Clarence Alexander
stephaniehinz@hotmail.com

Middle Yukon:

Kathleen Peters-Zuray
kpzuray@gmail.com

Tanana:

Kathleen Ketzler
ketzlerkathleen@gmail.com

Innoko Confluence:

Ron Kruger Sr.
rkrugeranvik@gmail.com

Koyukuk River:

Karen Kriska
k-kriska@hotmail.com

Lower Yukon:

Stanislaus Shepard
atcoperations@asarsarmiut.org

Coastal Communities:

John Olson Jr
j.olson@nvhpb.org

Elder Advisors

Peter Captain, Sr.

James Landlord

Nick Andrew Sr.

Trimble Gilbert

Sarah James

Office Information

201 E 3rd Ave Suite
100, Anchorage,
Alaska 99501
(907) 258 3337
8 am - 4:30 pm

Upcoming Holidays:

Memorial Day
05/25
Juneteenth 06/19
4th of July 07/03

Staff Directory

Executive Director

Theresa Clark
tclark@yritwc.org

Brownfields

Brian Watts, Brownfield
Coordinator
bwatts@yritwc.org

Anna Bill, Brownfield
Technician
abill@yritwc.org

IGAP

Iris Brondz, IGAP Coordinator
ibrondz@yritwc.org

Theodore Hamilton, IGAP
Assistant
thamilton@yritwc.org

Science

Edda Mutter, Science
Director
emutter@yritwc.org

Janet Angaiak, Coordinator
jangaiaak@yritwc.org

