

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

Summer flew by, and fall is upon us. Good luck to all the hunters for a successful hunt. I would like to thank the Alaska Conservation Foundation for sponsoring interns for the Watershed Council. We were pleased to have Annalisa Mayo-Ramos as our intern this summer. A bonus was that she and her family are originally from the Stevens Village-Beaver region. Not to forget, thanks to our Water Plant Operator interns, Wesley Bergman from Mountain Village and Trevor Tritt-Yatlin from Arctic Village. Sadly, USDA is ending the Water and Solid Waste grant programs that YRITWC administered for many years; we will not be able to provide these services until we find a replacement grant.

The Brownfield Program awarded a contract to Shannon & Wilson last year, and fieldwork kicked off with 1,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil near the Tanana Community Hall, hiring an all-local field crew. We are at a standstill on this project and may be looking to return to Tanana next year to complete the cleanup. See the Brownfields report for more details.

We received sad news in July of the passing of founding board member Harold Gatensby from Carcross, Yukon Territory. Myself, elder advisors Peter Captain Sr. and Sarah James, as well as Executive Committee member and Science Director Edda Mutter, represented YRITWC at his Celebration of Life in August. Sincere condolences go out to Colleen, his wife, and other family members. Sincere condolences also go out to Executive Committee member Ron Kruger of Anvik, Alaska, as he, his wife, and family suffered the loss of his son.

Last but not least, as we head into winter, we are starting the process of planning the 2027 YRITWC Summit and are asking if any tribe/community would like to host it. Please contact the office at 907.258.3337 or tclark@yritwc.org for more details.



Theresa Clark

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Brownfields Update



New Brownfields Technician introduction-Wes Goodwin

My name is Wesley Goodwin and my Inupiaq name is Pannick. I am a ½ Oglala Lakota Sioux and ½ Inupiaq from the Native Village of Kotzebue. My late mother is an Oglala Lakota Sioux from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. My father is an enrolled member of the Native Village of Kotzebue/Kotzebue IRA.

I joined the YRITWC as a Brownfields Technician in mid July. My background includes having applied for, administered and reported for a variety of different types of private, state and federal grants including serving as Housing Director developing annual workplans and reporting for the TDHE in northwest Alaska. I've also worked as a strategic planning facilitator and capital projects grantwriter for our regional non-profit corporation Maniilaq Association.

I enjoy drumming, singing and Inupiaq dancing, researching genealogy and I am a former community advisory board & volunteer at the largest Native American public radio station KNBA-90.3 FM-Anchorage.

I am a father of 6 children and have 12 grandchildren.

I look forward to being an asset to the Watershed and I am looking forward to meeting the communities we serve along the Yukon river.

Taikuulapiaq!

ANCSA Assistance August 2026 update – Tanana Community Hall

The Brownfields Program has been busy with several projects. Recently I visited the community of Tanana to provide oversight for the Tanana Community Hall contaminated site cleanup that began earlier this summer. Recent precipitation has slowed collection of confirmation samples from the excavation that included at least 1,000 cubic yards of contaminated material, but a plan is in place to remove water if necessary in order to complete the project safely and in a timely manner.

With fall darkness approaching, the community has expressed concern about marking the fencing around the site with reflective tape until backfill of the excavation is completed. We will do our best to have our contractors provide this temporary service. Although there is concern about unexpected contamination adjacent to the current project, YRITWC will be working closely with the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Contaminated Sites Program and the U.S. EPA to address any contamination that exceeds State of Alaska cleanup levels.

Science

Our Science Intern : Analisa Mayo-Ramos

Do'eent'aa! My name is Analisa Mayo-Ramos and I am a summer intern with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council. I have had the privilege of being a part of the Alaska

Conservation Foundation Ted Smith conservation internship program. I just graduated in May of 2026 with my Masters in Physics through the University of Texas at San Antonio. I am Koyukon Athabascan, my family is from Steven's Village, and I grew up in Fairbanks. I have been very excited to be able to apply my scientific knowledge as a means of serving communities along the river and being able to connect with new people who are passionate about land stewardship.

As the science intern, I have been helping out with water sampling throughout the Yukon River watershed as well as compiling a review of climate change impacts in the region through the Indigenous Observation Network and Active Permafrost Layer data. My highlights so far include attending the On the Land Gathering in the Yukon Territory, teaching science lessons at the Beaver Culture Camp, and collecting water samples in Coldfoot and Wiseman. I look forward to continuing to learn about the policies unique to Alaska and the Indigenous communities here as a way of protecting our environment.

Personell Changes

Iris Brondz, EA, is unfortunately leaving the organization. "I have very much appreciated the opportunity to work at this organization. It was a dream of mine and has introduced me to so many new skills and interesting aspects of environmental work. It's been an honor to be part of such a meaningful mission and vibrant community of scientists, organizers, and like-minded individuals. I've truly valued my time learning from Theresa Clark, Dr. Mutter, this position, my wonderful coworkers, and from speaking with Tribal members.

I sincerely wish the Tribes and communities we serve, my colleagues, and the organization continued success in the future, and I hope to bump into everyone again in my future work." To support this transition, Iris has aided the closure of the USDA grant, carried out her final IGAP responsibilities, and organized a clear folder of research and writing for the continuation of the ACCAP Water Resource Resilience Toolkit. As it continues to pass over people's desks at YRITWC, this large workbook project gathers unique perspectives and research from many different employees.



USDA

This summer, YRITWC has been wrapping up a \$150,000 grant from USDA for “Water and Waste Disposal Technical Assistance and Training.” The main goals of this grant are: to create paid internship opportunities for locals to train under qualified water-plant operators to gain experience, to provide technical assistance for improvements in water and waste management systems, gather information about traditional drinking water sources with attention to PFAS concerns, and provide a Quickbooks training focused on rural utility management.

Environmental assistants Iris and Theo have been working on this grant under Dr. Mutter, focusing individually on solid waste or drinking water systems. This grant has been rapid, as the working timeline was shortened due to a grant freeze and multiple staffing changes. Fortunately, we were able to make great progress on this project during this Spring and Summer. Two interns successfully completed their water-plant internships in Mountain Village and Arctic Village. These two young men both spoke highly of their experiences and gained many useful and niche water-plant-operator skills within this two-month program, which can serve them and their communities in their future careers. Technical assistance needs were informed by phone and online surveys, which allowed YRITWC science staff to connect village IGAP staff with drinking-water-quality resources, state-specific assistance opportunities, training opportunities, and relevant grants. Dr. Mutter and Theo Hamilton will carry out site visits to communities that were flagged for persistent water and solid waste issues. Additionally, a Quickbooks training is scheduled to take place this September 15th-17th and a PFAS webinar with supporting materials will be held on September 1st. This webinar is a crossover IGAP/ USDA topic.

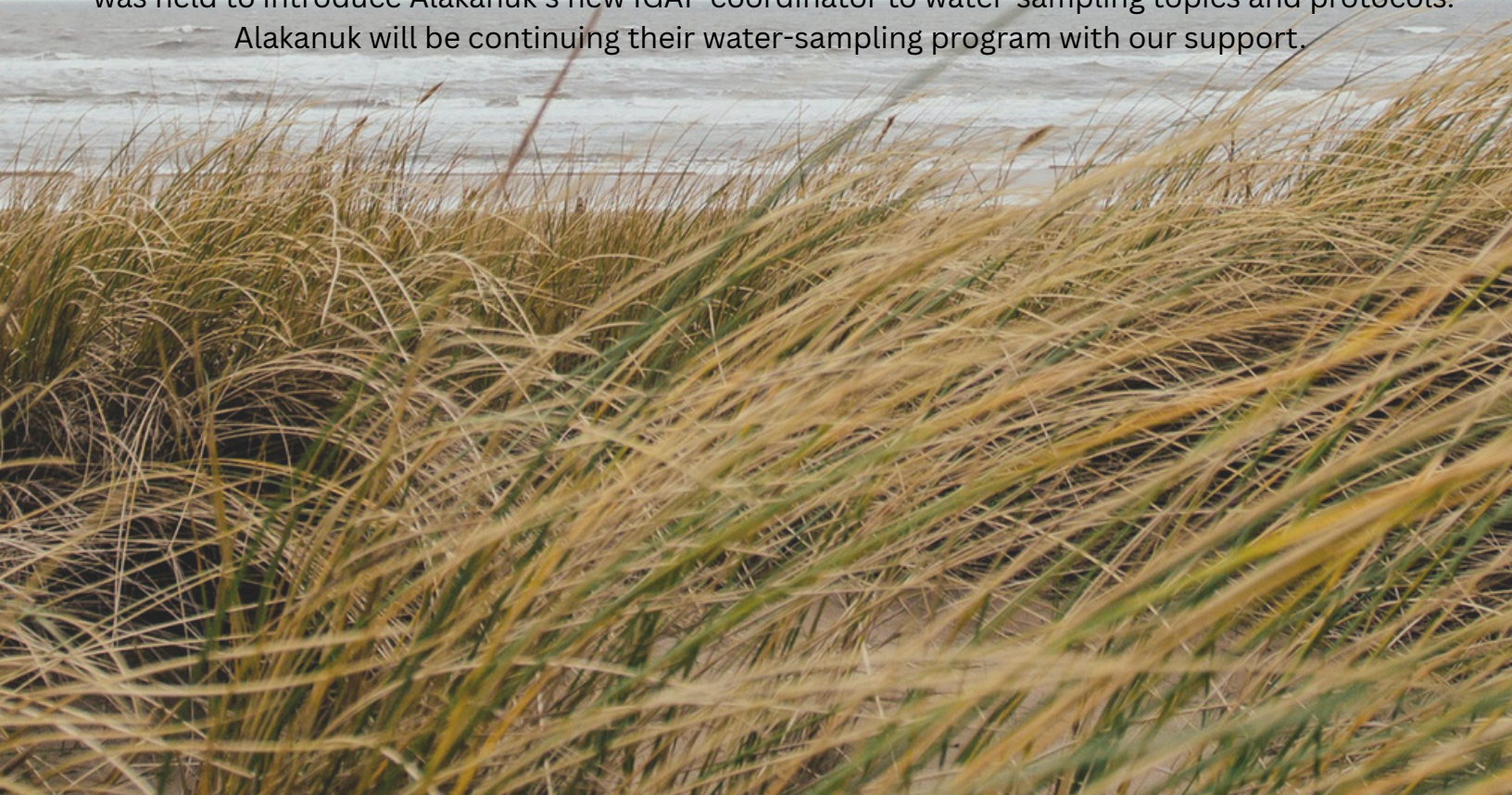
IGAP

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

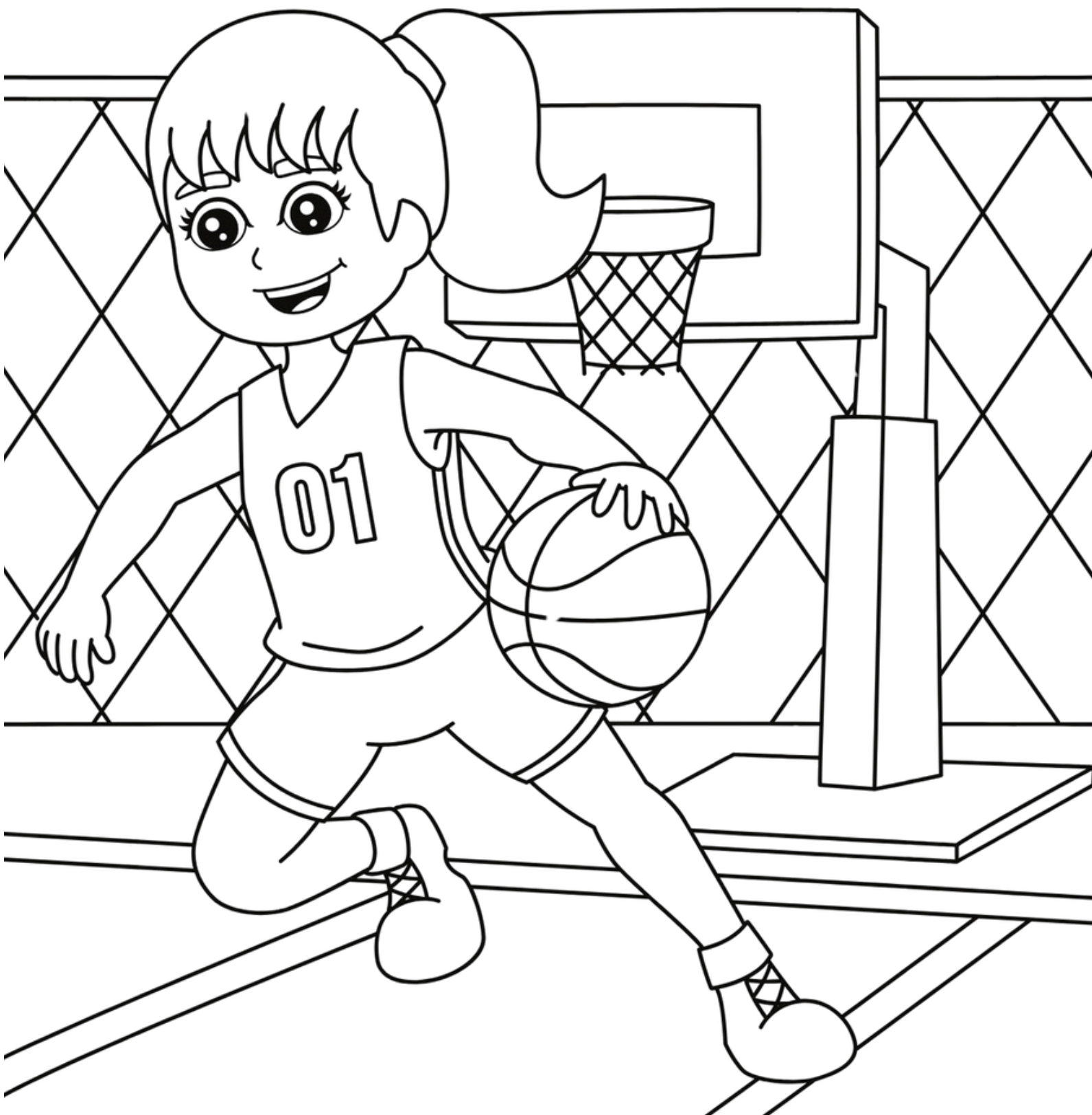
Community Engagement

We utilized the community engagement efforts within the USDA grant to support our community engagement for the IGAP program as well. We have reached out to many communities across the watershed to learn more about local environmental priorities and the challenges people are seeing on the ground. Conversations have been focused on flooding, permafrost thaw, vulnerable infrastructure, water-treatment systems, landfill management, and local workforce needs. While some contacts were unavailable because of seasonal activities or leave, follow-up conversations are continual and contact lists have been updated. We have also connected with new IGAP staff who expressed interest in water and waste grants, training opportunities, backhaul support.

An IGAP webinar on the topic of small-landfill solid waste best-management-practices was held by Theo Hamilton on July 31st. Another IGAP webinar will be presented by Iris Brondz over PFAS and rural Alaska on August 31st. These webinars provide useful overviews on environmental topics to support deeper knowledge or practical application. Additionally, an ION water-sampling webinar was presented by Iris and Analisa, our ACF science intern, on August 10th. This training was held to introduce Alakanuk's new IGAP coordinator to water-sampling topics and protocols. Alakanuk will be continuing their water-sampling program with our support.



Kids Section



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