

E-CURRENTS

Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council
Quarterly Newsletter



From the Alaska Executive Director

THERESA CLARK

Happy New Year! 2023 looks to be another exciting busy year for the Watershed. This year, after a three year hiatus from Covid, the Watershed will be hosting a Summit. Watch the newsletter, mail and facebook for details for location and dates. We have been raising funds for a Summit and now have sufficient funds to hold one. As the Watershed enters into its 24th year of existence, having been through some ups and downs, we are planning on revisiting our mission and looking towards the future. A lot has happened in those 24 years. We have and are experiencing increased water temperature and climate changes, looking at legal changes happening with water rights, food security, and declining salmon numbers. It's time to assess where we are at and if are we reaching our goals? Where do we go from here? We are also looking forward to visiting, reconnecting and enjoying each other's company. Please watch for upcoming announcements, post cards, and communications as we get closer to the dates and location.

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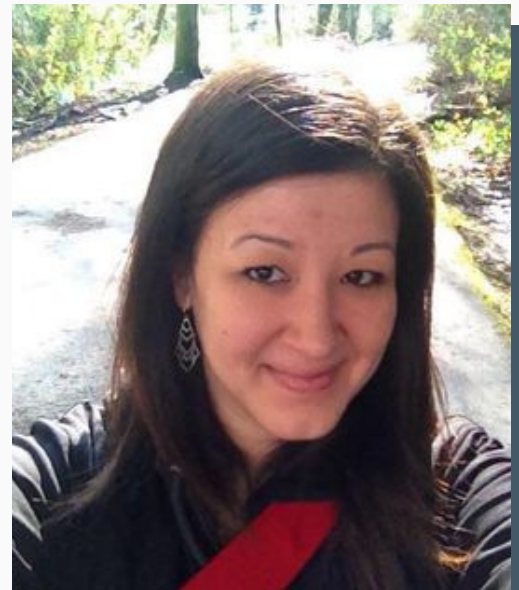
Welcome to YRITWC

Courtney Osolnik

Hello everyone, my name is Courtney Osolnik, Dena'ina Athabascan from Pedro Bay. For over 7 years I have worked with Tribal governments and local nonprofits writing grants and managing projects of varying sizes. Over the years I have had the enriching opportunity to collaborate with and learn from many Tribal members, leaders, and Environmental professionals.

I joined YRITWC in October of 2022, as the Environmental Specialist under the USDA's Technical Assistance and Training grant (formerly known as the Drinking Water Improvement Program). So far, I have researched numerous funding opportunities, YRB water quality results, DEC's water and wastewater program, RUBA training opportunities, and current issues with Water/Wastewater treatment systems in the region to better assist our partner Tribes.

We will be offering some training opportunities in the near future so please let us know what you would like offered. We currently have a quick survey requesting your choice; so please take a moment to give your opinion in the link on page 4. If you're having issues with drinking water or wastewater projects in your community, give us a call or feel free to reach me at cosolnik@yritwc.org. We are here to help. I look forward to working with YRITWC and all our partners. Thank you!



Charles Thorpe

Hello again, I am Charles Thorpe. I was an intern this summer and now I am an Environmental Technician working for the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council. This summer was such a blast and I learned so much that I wanted to continue on with YRITWC. Now I am helping Edda and Kari in the Science Department with a few projects. One of the things I assist Edda Mutter with is water quality monitoring trend analysis. Another task I do is turbidity and alkalinity measurements. While for Kari Young, I assist by helping with IGAP responsibilities from leading webinars to gathering papers for the Climate Change studies catalog. I can be reached by email at cthorge@yritwc.org.

Welcome to YRITWC continued



Sheila Cheverie

Hello again. My name is Sheila (Evans) Cheverie. I was hired as a Program and Administrative Assistant in October 2022. I was working as a temporary employee for almost a year with YRITWC before I was given a full-time permanent position. My position allows me to help in all the departments in the office. I am originally from Galena, Alaska. I attended the Sidney Huntington School District (formally known as Galena City School District), Mt. Edgecumbe High School, St. Mary's Catholic High School and Bristol Bay High School. I have two children and two grandchildren. I enjoy working with a great YRITWC staff. I hope you have a wonderful 2023! Feel free to reach me by email at scheverie@yritwc.org.

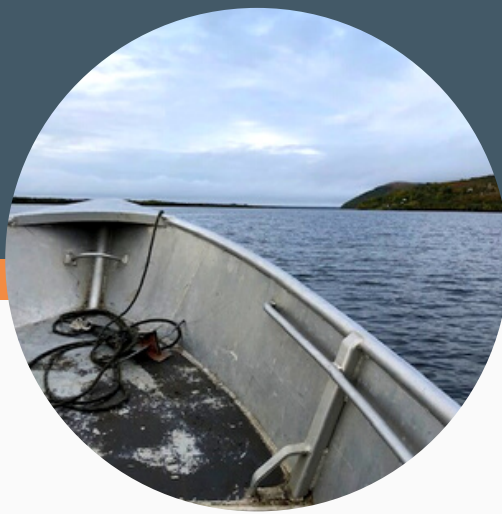
Welcome Our New Brownfields Coordinator

Jordan Finney

Jordan Finney has taken on the role of Brownfields Coordinator. She started at the YRITWC last May as an environmental technician. She's looking forward to continuing working with everybody in the Yukon Watershed on Brownfields Projects.

She can be reached by email at jfinney@yritwc.org.





Brownfields Update

JORDAN FINNEY

Hi everyone! I hope you all have had a wonderful holiday season. Enjoy this update from the Brownfields Department:

We are planning a training to host in the spring. We have sent a survey out for which training you would like to attend. The link for the survey options are below. We are planning on having two webinars one in March and another in April. Topics and dates for those will be announced soon. If you have any questions or want any more information you can contact me at jfinney@yritwc.org.

Upcoming in Brownfields

Trainings - Will be held in the Spring. More information will be coming.

Webinars - March 15 and April 12. Topics to be announced.

Survey: Training Options

TAKE SURVEY



HELP YRITWC DESIGN BETTER TRAINING OPTIONS FOR THIS YEAR, CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY. ANY INPUT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/X8AMMDFVFX1PKLVW5](https://forms.gle/X8AMMDFVFX1PKLVW5)



Making your IGAP Program Ready for Anything

KARI YOUNG

Happy 2023! For those involved with IGAP or other similar programs, I hope that your first quarter of the fiscal year went smoothly. Something that I recently did to better YRITWC's IGAP program was create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). An SOP is a blueprint to your job or program. An SOP lays out the step-by-step process to perform the functions of a job or program.

I decided to create an SOP for YRITWC's IGAP program last year as I have been managing the program for five years and I wanted to add this additional tool to better the program for the future. I didn't want any of the groundwork that I laid to get lost and I use the SOP to remember deadlines and requirements for IGAP. This past year I created a template SOP specifically for IGAP programs for Tribes to utilize. This template comes in Microsoft Word format with fillable sections indicated. It breaks down what needs to be done for your IGAP Program in a simple way and could be very handy for your program to use as a key document.

If you would be interested in the SOP template, please email me at kyoung@yritwc.org and I'll be sure to get it to you. I plan to have this template added to YRITWC's template library on our website as well. If you would like to learn more, feel free to check out my webinar recording from September here:

[Webinar Recording Link](#)

Passcode: G7.Ac*4K

Have a wonderful 2023!



YRITWC's IGAP Listserv

Interested in receiving emails with opportunities from YRITWC as well as other organizations that pertain to IGAP programs and staff? Just email Kari at kyoung@yritwc.org to be added to the listserv!





Chevak Youth Creating Videos with Elders

EDDA MUTTER & KARI YOUNG

YRITWC and the Exchange for Local Observations and Knowledge of the Arctic (ELOKA) partners have been collaborating on a National Science Foundation-funded project to exchange and preserve local observations and Indigenous Knowledge of the Arctic. The Arctic partners working together to achieve a deeper understanding on social and environmental changes in their regions. Under this project the Chevak Traditional Council, Chevak School and the YRITWC partnered to enhance Chevak's local online atlas, named the Nunaput Atlas. The Nunaput Atlas is a "community driven, interactive, online atlas for the Chevak Traditional Council and Chevak community members to preserve environmental observations, scientific data collection and Indigenous Knowledge, to share their stories about the land." Through this project, YRITWC was able to contract an Alaskan non-profit organization called the See Stories which specializes in digital storytelling and education. The See Stories staff worked directly with educators and youth in Chevak to teach and guide them through conducting interviews and to create videos. Through this learning opportunity, in November, sixth graders at Chevak School were able to interview Elders and create short videos with topics related to places significant to them. Some of the videos created included topics such as permafrost, Old Chevak, fish camp, and more. Additionally, the class was able to hold a viewing party for the entire school and invited community members as well. In the next steps, we will be working with the Chevak Traditional Council to get the youth-created videos uploaded onto the Nunaput Atlas.



Photos from See Stories, from left to right: Chevak student tests the video equipment, students filming an interview with a local elder, & students practicing with equipment in a group outside.

In Remembrance

YRITWC would like to pay tribute to Jon Waterhouse and Paul Schuster, who both passed away beginning November.

Written by Edda Mutter.

Jon Waterhouse (S'Klallam Chippema Cree) was previously the Executive Director of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council and during his tenure he was the creator of the Healing Journey's and the watershed wide clean-up effort, we now call the Backhauling program. The idea of the Healing Journey started when Jon was asked by Tribal leaders who were concerned with the health of their watershed to "go out and take the pulse of our river," the Yukon. After that, Jon paddled the rivers of the Yukon Watershed to collect environmental data and hear the stories from all you, who rely on the river. Jon's passion was environmental stewardship and with Tribal leaders, years of water quality data was used to create a Yukon Watershed Plan protect the rivers for future generations. For all his environmental stewardship efforts, Jon was appointed by President Obama to the 15-member Joint Public Advisory Committee on environmental challenges to advise leaders of Mexico, Canada, and the United States in 2010, and received the Indigenous Leader Awardee (Ecotrust) in 2012.

Jon Waterhouse



Paul Schuster



Paul Schuster started his career with the USGS in the New Jersey District in the Water Resources Division and moved to the University of Colorado, Boulder in the early 1990s. During the early 2000's, Paul worked under Rob Striegl as the as the Field Operations Chief on the USGS water quality assessment of the Yukon River Watershed. You may have meet Paul during this time or when he established with the YRITWC the Indigenous Observation Network (ION) in 2006. Paul loved to connect with everyone in the communities to share his knowledge about the changes he observed across the Yukon from the headwaters in British Columbia, through Yukon Territory across Alaska to the Bering Sea. In 2009, Paul traveled across the landscape to established the Active Layer Network and extend our knowledge on how climate change introduced permafrost thawing is changing rivers water chemistry. Paul retired from USGS in 2019 but continued his collaborations with many villages along the Yukon River, such as St. Mary's and Pilot Station. He also continued his effort on quantifying

the storage of mercury in permafrost, it's release to inland waters resulting from permafrost thaw, and the potential effects of that release on native subsistence fishery. Paul's work and publications will live on and I am so grateful for Paul's mentorship and guidance over the past 10 years. I had many enthusiastic conversations with Paul but one special quote will stay with me forever "Everything is chemistry".

ACTIVITY PAGE



YUKON RIVER SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the names of rivers below and fill in number slots at the bottom with the associated letters to find what all of the listed rivers have in common. Answers can be found on the very bottom of the page.

INTESL
1 9 10

ELYLP
15 16

HWTIE
14 5

ATTWRSE
13

ICPORUNPE
4

NAANTA
6

YOKUUKK
11 17

IVAKN
3

KSANIEFRAD
2 12

OIONNK
8 20 18 19

NAALAT
7

INAADJRK
7

B
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

16 17 18 19 20

hello
2023

WINTER MONTHS

Below are names for the months of December and January that can be found across Alaska in various Alaska Native languages. The names represent what is happening during that season in Alaska.

December

Tanana Athabaskan: Tatr'enatht'on (the sun goes down and is unable to rise)

Yup'ik: Uivik (time of going around)

Siberian Yup'ik: Kaneghyengesi (moon of the frozen dew)

Alutiiq: Agalgalux (month when harpoon hunting begins)

Gwich'in Athabaskan: Ch'atsal (low on food)

January

Koyukon Athabaskan: Neelkk'aa nodzaanh (month that separates long and short days)

Yup'ik: Iralull'er (the bad month)

Inupiaq: Siqinnatchiaq (month of new sunshine)

Gwich'in Athabaskan: Ahtr'aii shree choo (month of the big wind)

Information gathered from the Alaska Native Heritage Center and Alaska Native Language Center.

Thinking about what is happening seasonally in January, what would you name the month?

Did you know?

Alaska has 94,743 square miles of water areas in the state. That is equivalent to the size of the state of Michigan.