

E-CURRENTS

Volume 23. Issue 4.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS LETTER

Summer and fall seem like it passed in a blink of an eye! Thank you to all of the tribes represented at the YRITWC Summit held in Nenana. New members were selected to our Executive Committee. We welcome Stanislaus Shepard of Mountain Village for the Lower Yukon Region and John O Olson, Jr of Hooper Bay for the Coastal Villages as primary executive council members. Welcome back to Clarence Alexander, Kathleen Peter-Zuray, Kalthleen Demientieff, Ron Kruger, and Karen Kriska who represent the Yukon Flats, Middle Yukon, Tanana River, Innoko Confluence, and Koyukuk River respectively. An appreciative thank you to James Akerelrea for serving as the outgoing Coastal representative. Newly elected alternates are Dacho Alexander for the Yukon Flats, Lawrence Ketzler for the Tanana River, Darrel Vent Sr. for the Koyukuk River and Eucebias for the coastal communities regions. Thanks go out to Josie Dayton, Victor Lord, and Wassily Alexie for serving as outgoing alternates.

Since the Summit, I have had the opportunity to meet with Chuck Sams, National Director for the National Park Service with our tribal member village chiefs from Alatna, Bettles, Evansville, and Tanana where we got to address opposition to the Ambler Road. In 2019 our membership passed a resolution to oppose Ambler Road. The DOI Bureau of Land Management will be conducting public hearings and taking comments until December 16, 2023. We encourage you to make comments about how this proposed road will affect your ability to hunt, fish and subsist. A special thanks goes to Executive Committee member Kathleenn Peters-Zuray who has represented YRITWC, locally and nationally expressing opposition to the Ambler Road to carry out the provision of this YRITWC resolution.

As fall ends and winters holidays start, we wish you all happy holidays blessings

Theresa Clark



Executive Director Letter

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Science Projects Updates

By Edda Mutter, Science Director

Halloween passed and winter is on the way, which means Indigenous Observation Network (ION) monitoring field season is completed for 2023. It has been another successful open water season with over 170 water samples and physical water quality measurements collected cross the Yukon River basin. Additionally, the ION Team visited 12 active layer sites to collect active layer depth, soil moisture and temperature data in order to achieve a deeper understanding about landscape changes, such as permafrost thawing and its influences to water quality. The next couple of months, I will be working on community reports to share our collected ION data that will illustrate long-term trend records in your region.



For the Arctic Rivers Project, a collaboration between the University of Colorado Boulder, USGS, National Center of Atmospheric Research, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals and YRITWC, we were able to install 14 sensors with the help of your Tribal and First Nations environmental programs. These sensors have measured continuous water temperature and conductance over the past three summers. The data generated by these sensors will be combined with the project river modeling activities as well as shared via your community reports this spring.





We worked on expanding our Yukon Stewards Mining Watchdog Program to enhance the capacity of Alaska Native Tribes to respond to historical and active mining impacts to water resources. Thanks to the support of the Lannan Foundation we were able to collect water samples around the Tolovana, Circle and Chicken mining district. Additionally, we established new sample sites at the Koyukuk River headwaters and at the Tanana River above Tok.

The science team also assisted the Hooper Bay Traditional Council with their landfill and sewage lagoon site assessment, supported the Alakanuk Traditional Council with their landfill sampling effort, and assisted the EPA RESE team with the Northway and Nulato landfill assessments this fall.



Another river erosion season has been completed with our project partners, the University of Alaska Anchorage, the California Institute of Technology, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, and the University of Southern California. This project aims to develop capacity for planning and adapting to riverbank erosion at Huslia, Alakanuk, and Beaver Village.



I also would like to express a huge “Thank You!” to the Alaska Conservation Foundation and the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals for their support that provided us with the opportunity to host two interns this season. Amy Patterson and Annalee Bishop has been a huge help to support all the science efforts.



Tribal Environmental Program

By Courtney Osolnik

Hey Everyone, I can't believe it's already November! The Watershed has been busy; YRITWC held its first summit since 2019, Anchorage had its first major snowfall, final quarter reports are all done, and it's almost time for Thanksgiving. The Environmental programs have been busy as well, here are a few updates:

IGAP



We hired a new IGAP assistant! Theo Hamilton from Alakanuk joined us in September. He definitely brings a youthful energy to the office and we're looking forward to his insight as one of our young leaders. We attended a 7 Generations Climate Adaptation workshop in September and met with some of our Watershed tribes and others around the state to strengthen our adaptation planning strategies. To those that were there, it was great to meet you! In October, Theo and I attended the Solid Waste Bootcamp held by the ADEC to strengthen our ability assist with ISWMPs, Backhaul, and other solid waste issues. Lastly, reporting. I'm sure you are all in the same boat, with the end of the fiscal year and the start of the new year, it's a busy time. Especially for those who had to close out a multi-year grant – Congratulations to you!

The FY25 NOFA was released and we're looking forward to submitting our proposal for the next 5 years. The preliminary draft is due to your project officer by January 19th! If you need assistance with your proposal, workplan, budget, ETEP, or anything, feel free to contact me at cosolnik@yritwc.org, or reach out to your Project Officer. Either of us will be happy to help!

Don't forget Zender's Virtual Backhaul training November 28-30! You can register on their website. Hope to see you there!

ACCAP - Alaska Center for Climate Adaption and Policy

By Courtney Osolnik

We are looking for volunteers! We need tribes that are looking for assistance with a climate adaptation plan. Whether you are seeking funding to create one, draft a new one, update a current one, or anything else (including workforce development) we would like to help. I have been attending monthly climate webinars hosted by Dr. Rick Thoman about the changing climate, current weather conditions, emerging trends, and a variety of topics related to climate events in Alaska. If you haven't checked it out yet, you definitely should.

They're free and can be found at their website <https://uaf-accap.org/events/about-accap-webinars/>. Additionally, in November I attended a Tribal Health & Climate conference in California with tribes from across the country and have gained insight into some innovative approaches and would like to share them with our Watershed. Please contact me for more information.





Updates from TRP: Networking, Outreach, and Funding Opportunities

TRP has been eagerly pursuing its goals in recent months. In July, the biennial Watershed Summit was held, which Jordan and Ben attended. Later in August, they also took part in the National Brownfields Conference, expanding their network and gaining insights into funding opportunities. Jordan also visited Rampart as part of the outreach program. Additionally, TRP applied for the Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) program in Chevak after being approached for assistance with a brownfield site. Regarding Hughes' TBA, the Phase II has been postponed to next summer, while a Phase I has been completed in St. Mary's. Currently, TRP is working on securing funding for the next steps.

B R O W N F I E L D S

By Jordan Finney



Recent Community Meetings and Assessments: Progress Update

We're excited to share that we hosted successful community meetings in Grayling, Russian Mission, Huslia, and Alakanuk. In July, Phase I assessments were carried out in Huslia and Alakanuk, while Russian Mission's Hazardous Building Material Inspection (HBMI) was completed in August. Additionally, Grayling had its Phase II conducted in October. These are big strides towards cleanup! We're currently waiting for the final reports from the contractors. Once we receive them, we'll create action plans to determine the next steps for each site.



Technical Assistance and Training (TAT)

By Janet Angaiak

Waqaa! (Hello in Yupik)

I have transitioned from the Summit Coordinator to the position of TAT Coordinator. I made 2 trips so far to our YRITWC Signatory tribes. With my position in the Technical Assistance and Training, I see that there is a great need for Water plant Operators within the YRITWC region to get certifications and to keep up with maintaining that their certifications don't expire. I am targeting the areas with the low Best Practice Scores and trying to help in ways that we can help with required tests/classes to improve the community scores. If you have any questions or request for me to help our Signatory region areas, please feel free to give me a call!



New Additions!



Anna Godduhn

Hello, what an honor to join YRITWC staff in full circle from my days as an intern – way back when these efforts were just beginning! I grew up in Brooklyn, NY and moved north and west in stages. When I got to Fairbanks, I enrolled at UAF, learned to jour, and never thought about leaving. At the beginning of the century, I approached the YRITWC for work and wound up back in school with an internship; I attended the 2001 Summit at Teslin Lake, and watching the 2002 Unified Watershed Assessment develop was very powerful for me – I learned a lot, especially that I had a LOT to learn! When I finished school in 2011, I worked for ADF&G Subsistence Division and found my best education with tea at elders' tables. During the pandemic, I worked as a contact tracer and, after, as a substitute teacher in Fairbanks. I am excited to support community-based research across the watershed!

Theodore Hamilton Jr

Hello! I'm Theodore, from the village of Alakanuk, fresh outta high school. I've started through a NASA internship for 2 summers, then Kwik'Pak for a summer, all the way to my current position as an Environmental-IGAP assistant at the YRITWC, my journey truly kicked off at the 2023 Summit in Nenana. I find intellectual stimulation in YouTube channels like Hamza's and The Why Files, and I continually explore my spirituality to God. When I'm off duty, I express my love for the powerful rhythms and melodies of Metallica on my guitar, a testament to my belief in the harmonious blend of aggression and melody. My journey is by improving my mental health, and testament to the heights passion and dedication can take you.

Here's to all of us continuing to rock on!

-Theo



Protecting the Arctic Refuge



Kathleen Peters-Zuray, a YRITWC board member, protested against the construction of the Ambler Road in Alaska. Her involvement highlights her commitment to protecting the environment and preserving the Arctic Refuge, emphasizing the importance of individual actions in safeguarding the planet for future generations.

Mining

By Courtney Osolinik

Thanks to support from the Lannan Foundation we have been ramping up our involvement in environmental regulatory issues around mining. We went to Fairbanks and Theresa Clark and Katherine Peters-Zuray made virtual comments about failings of the DSEIS for the Ambler Road to address climate change, the effects to water quality to the surrounding area, as well as the impacts to our traditional and subsistence ways of life.



We attended the AKMIN (Alaska Mining Impacts Network) annual meeting in October and gained valuable knowledge and partnerships. We also submitted written comments and letters about the state assumption of the CWA 404 and failings of the BLM to address impacts of the Ambler Road. The comment period is still open for the Ambler Industrial Access Road until mid-December, if you or any other tribal member would like to make a comment, let us know and we can make it happen. If you would like more information or to be included in some of our other mining issues, please let me know.

SUMMIT



It would not be a Watershed Summit without a Water Ceremony. Thank you to those who brought river water to Nenana for the Water Ceremony. Thank you to Reverend Marilyn Duggar of Nenana Episcopal Church who conducted the blessing of the Watershed rivers.

YRITWC gives thanks to Summit Hosts, Participants, Facilitators and Presenters

The staff of YRITWC and Executive Committee members gives its thanks and appreciation to the community. The Native Village of Nenana, City of Nenana, Nenana Schools and the Nenana Ice Classic for its provided facilities and assistance and acted as hosts for the YRITWC 2023 Summit. YRITWC also gives thanks and appreciation to all of the partners that attended; it would not have been a Summit without your presence and participation. A very sincere appreciation and thanks also goes out to Ms. Leann Sommer for facilitating, to presenters Hal Sheppard (Water Rights), Mike Spindler (Mining and Development); Eva Burk (Food Sovereignty), Courtney Osolnik (Youth) and Dr. Edda Mutter (Climate Change) and last but not least Rob Rosenfeld for YRITWC history and policies and advice. We could not have had a successful summit without you all! Hope to see you all in 2025!



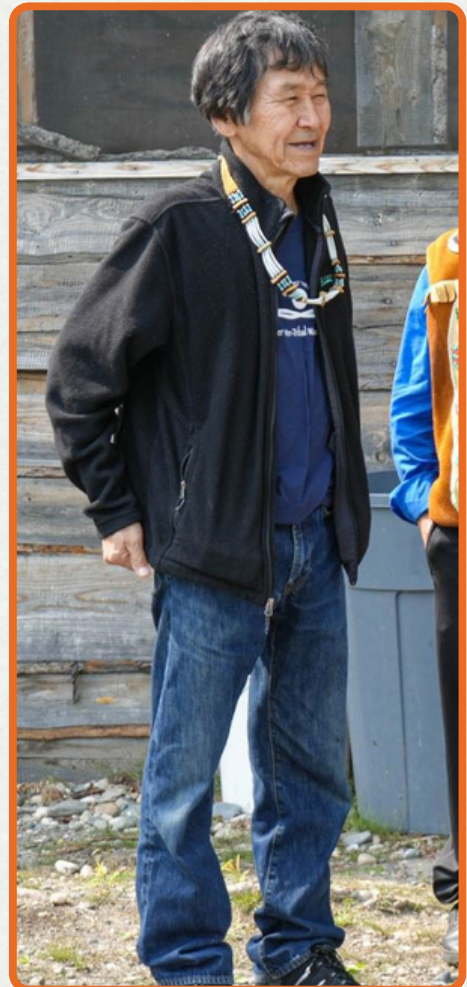
SUMMIT



During the Summit our signature communities also voted on new board members and elder advisors. YRITWC welcomes in our new representative for the Lower Yukon Board Member Stanislaus Shepard and our new representative for our Coastal Communities Board Member John Olson Jr. We have also invited in a new Elder Advisor Sarah James who will be replacing Martha Wright. Thank you for your ongoing work to better our watershed!



Let's give it up for Mr. James Landlord! The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council is thrilled to celebrate your outstanding commitment and contributions to preserving our beloved watershed for a grand total of 25 years. Your unwavering passion and hard work will be sorely missed!



Board Members

Yukon Flats:

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Tanana:

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Elder Advisors

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Benedict Jones

Eliza Jones

Nick Andrew Sr.

Trimble Gilbert

Sarah James



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Upcoming Holidays:

Veterans Day 11/10
Thanksgiving 11/23
Black Friday 11/24
Christmas 12/25
New Years 01/01



Staff Directory

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Science

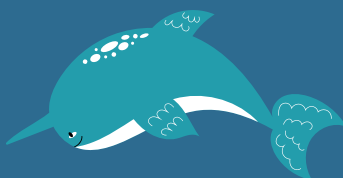
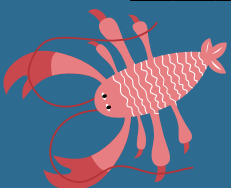
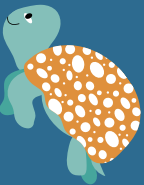
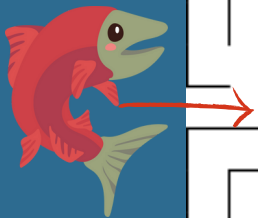
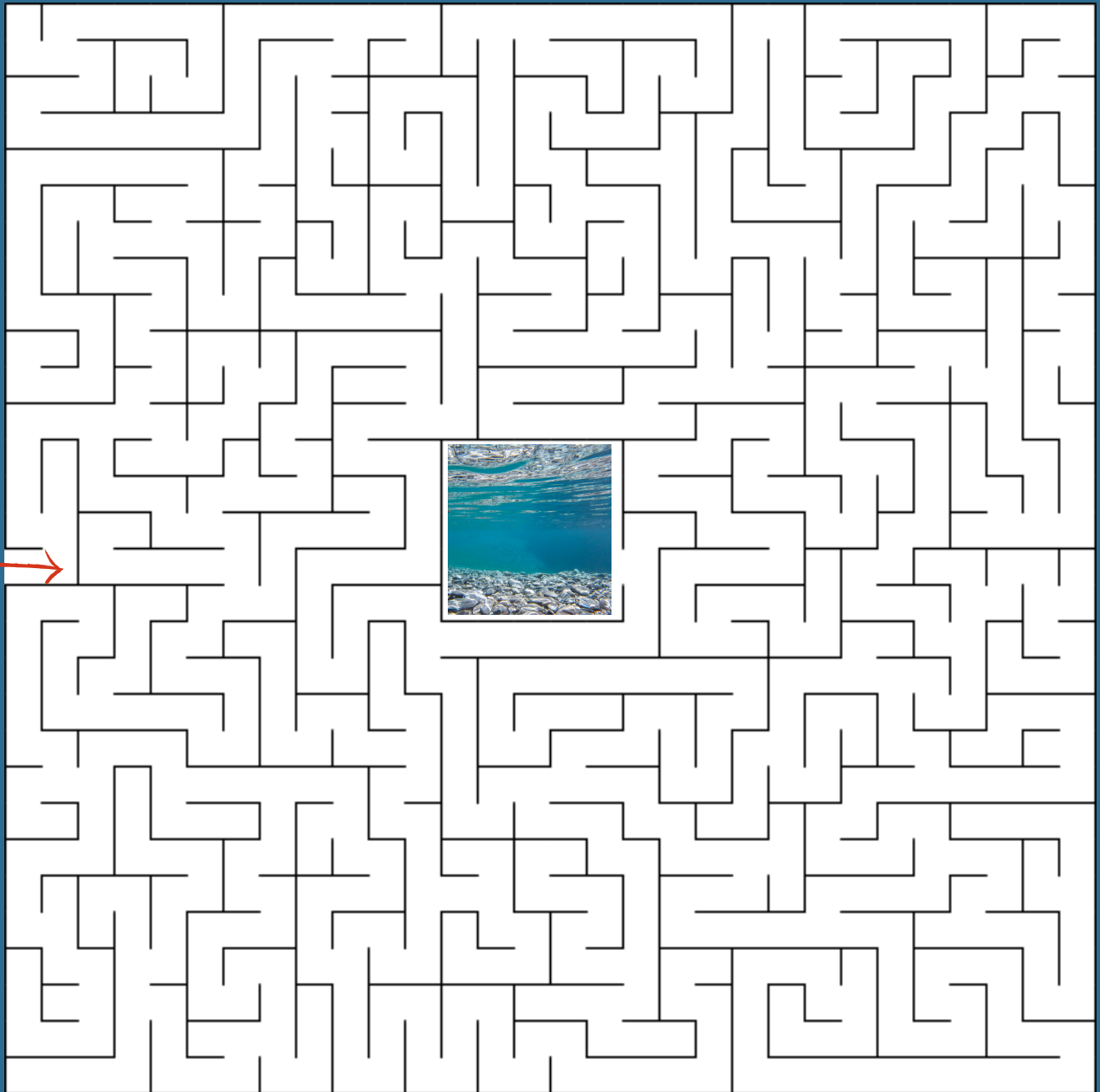
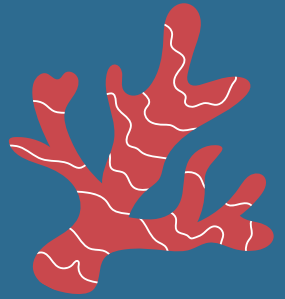
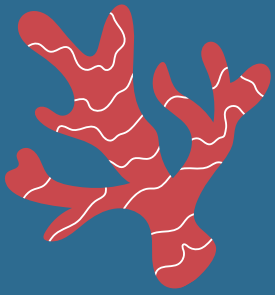
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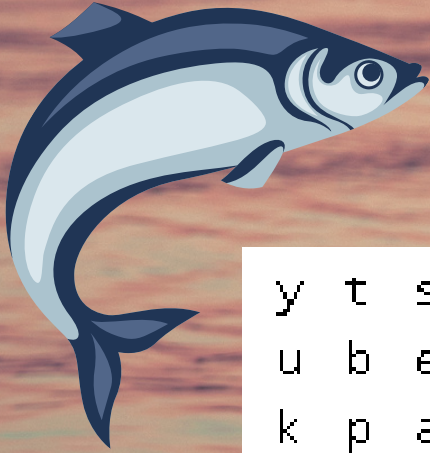
TAT

Janet Angaiak, TAT Coordinator
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Mrs. Salmon
needs your help
getting up river
to spawn!



Water! Water! Water!



y t s s g w k a n n p y w c v
u b e r a j h j i u x f g m s
k p a f b l k a i c l j n w n
o n p t i a m n l o b s i g o
n f l p h s a o o e l m m o o
r i a f i e h d n o m j r f l
i s n i c k s i g i d l a y l
v h e o z o n g n i a r w t a
e n z b y d i g c g p v l s b
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v b l t n i w r e i c a l g a
w a t e r b o t t l e l g h w
a e t g j e n w a r x n r i j

Boat Fishing

Fishnet

Floods

Globalwarming

Logging

Mistyfog

Ocean

Rain

RodNReel

Salmon

SeaPlane

Swimming

Tea

Waterballoon

Waterbottle

Whale

Yukonriver

Glacier



