

Gwich'in Council
International



Tribute to the
Late Tommy Ross Sr. excellent
Gwich'in language speaker,
musician & harvester. One year he
harvested 6000 muskrats

About Gwich'in Council International

- Established in 1999 as a not-for profit organization to ensure all Gwich'in members of the GCI are represented at the Arctic Council Forum
- GCI's mandate provides a means for the Gwich'in to protect, perpetuate, strengthen and enrich the social, cultural (language & traditions) political and economic fabric of Gwich'in communities

- The Gwich'in Council International founding members represent approximately 9000 Indigenous People of Gwich'in descent.
- The GCI permanent office is located in Inuvik in the Alex Moses Greenland Building.
- The Executive Director, Bridget Larocque can be reached by phone at 867-777-3782, by fax 867-777-3783 or via email blarocque_gci@northwestel.net
- The GCI webpage is www.gwichin.org

GCI Members

The Gwich'in of the United States of America and Canada acting through the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) in Alaska, The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN) in the Yukon, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) in the Northwest Territories.

GCI receives its mandate from Leadership decisions at the Biennial Gwich'in Gathering and from the Annual Assemblies of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Tanana Chiefs Council.

GCI Communities

- Alaska
 - Arctic Village (Vashraii K'oo)
 - Neets'ait Gwich'in (residents of the north side)
 - Nomadic lives before 1950
 - Traditional Gwich'in community maintaining a subsistence lifestyle
 - Chalkyitsik (fish hooking place)
 - Draan'jik Gwich'in (black river Indians)
 - Seasonal fishing site for Gwich'in
 - Traditional Gwich'in community with a subsistence lifestyle
 - Fort Yukon (Gwichyaa Zhee)
 - Gwich'yaa Gwich'in (people of the flats)
 - Traditional Gwich'in community maintaining a subsistence lifestyle



GCI Members Continued

- Alaska continued
 - Birch Creek (Deenduu)
 - Dendu Gwich'in (foothill mountain people)
 - Traditional Gwich'in community maintaining a subsistence lifestyle
 - Circle (Dan Zhit Haainlaii)
 - Danzhit Hanlaih Gwich'in (water flowing out of the mountains)
 - Traditional Gwich'in community with a subsistence lifestyle
 - Venetie (Viihtaii)
 - Gwichyaa Gwich'in (people of the flats)
 - Home to the descendants from the Neets'aii and Dihaii Gwich'in



GCI Communities Continued

- Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation, Yukon
 - Old Crow, Yukon
 - Vuntut Gwitchin (people of the lakes)
- Gwich'in Tribal Council represents all participants enrolled in the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement and its four communities within the Gwich'in Settlement Area:
 - Fort McPherson
 - Teetl'it Gwich'in (people of the headwaters)
 - Aklavik
 - Edhiitat Gwich'in (delta people)
 - Inuvik
 - Nihtat Gwich'in (mixed nations)
 - Tsiigehtchic
 - Gwichya Gwich'in (people of the flats)



Arctic Council

- The Mandate of the Arctic Council is to undertake a broad programme to include all dimensions of sustainable development and its objective is to address the environment, social and economic concerns
- The Arctic Council is made up of 8 member states; Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States
- The Arctic Council through its Permanent Participants provides for the active participation and full consultation with the arctic indigenous peoples:
 - Gwich'in Council International (GCI)
 - Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)
 - Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
 - Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)
 - Aleut International Association (AIA)
 - Saami Council (SC)

Working Groups

- Sustainable Development working group (SDWG)
- Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP)
- Protection of Arctic Marine Environment working group (PAME)
- Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)
- Emergency Prevention Preparedness and Response working group (EPPR)
- Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP)

Special Interest Assessments:

- The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA)
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Concern for Ocean Management

- The Beaufort Sea and its many challenges

The people of the Beaufort Delta rely heavily on the mammals of the sea.

Their ability to harvest whales & seals yearly is paramount to their health and culture

Quotas

We cannot rely on scientific research alone to determine quotas, we have to use our traditional knowledge

Our people need to harvest healthy sea mammals without being considered inhumane

Availability of Traditional Food

Depends on Migration

Population levels

Changing water levels

Increase in activity of the seas

Affects on Fishing, Hunting, Harvesting

- Tourism
- Transportation
- Oil & Gas Development
- Gravel and Sand Extraction

Environmental Influence

- The Mackenzie River: changes salt levels; brings sediment & nutrients to the sea
- Sea-ice: allows for seasonal travel for humans & animals; stops the sunlight from entering the water
- Open water: provides food for animals

Effective Management

- Needs traditional Knowledge research & education
- Land Claim execution
- Policy development based on Indigenous Rights
- Communication & Advocacy

Closing comment

- Our culture and traditions depends on our access to traditional food and clean water. We refuse to pack up and move. If our food and water gets contaminated we become sick and perish. Our food chain & water must be protected if we, as indigenous people, are to remain resilient and continue to adapt to climate change and the many other changes to our environment and economy