



**Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments
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To: Bruce Thomas and Craig Fleener
From: Bryan Neubert
Subject: Trip Report – ACAP Steering committee meeting – Moscow, Russia
Date: September 28, 2005

I traveled to Moscow, Russia to participate in the Arctic Council Action Program (ACAP) Steering Committee meeting as a technical advisor to Gwich'in Council International (GCI). The purpose of my trip was to present a report on the CATG/GCI “Community Based Model for PCB Mitigation in the Arctic” project. This project was accepted in principle by the ACAP Steering Committee meetings in October 2004 and March 2005. In addition to reporting the progress of our PCB project, I also reported other environmental issues of concern in our villages. For example, I talked about drum dumps, open dumping with limited recycling capacity, open dump burning, burn barrels, lead acid batteries, etc. See attached report for more information on the status of the PCB project.

RAIPON presented a proposal for a project to do similar work as our PCB project. They are proposing to use our project as a “model” to address obsolete PCB containing electrical transformers in Russian Indigenous Villages. In addition to this project proposal, RAIPON also proposed that ACAP create a working group focused solely on Community Based Action projects to address pollution in Indigenous Communities. This work group should be structured with the co-chair being held by one of the Permanent Participants. I offered support for this project idea on behalf of GCI.

ACAP Steering committee members supported this idea in principle but they shared similar concerns. They were concerned that this type of working group would duplicate the efforts of IPS, how would this working group be financed, and how would this working group coordinate meetings with other working groups. The ACAP Chairman recommended that RAIPON and GCI prepare a proposal to address these concerns and describe in more detail how the working group will be organized. He asked for this proposal to be prepared before the next SAO meeting on October 12 and 13.

After the ACAP meeting on Friday I traveled with Mikail Todyshev and Larisa Abruyutina of RAIPON to the RAIPON office in Moscow. We started work on a proposal for the working group before I had to depart for the airport. I will coordinate and assist RAIPON prepare this proposal and submit it to the USEPA for comments before distributing to ACAP Steering Committee members for review.

A representative from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) gave a presentation to the ACAP SC on some of their projects and funding opportunities through

UNDP. UNDP is in the beginning stages of developing a community based action program to address pollution in Indigenous Communities around the world. They are very much interested in working with GCI and RAIPON on their Community Action projects initiative. There is a good chance that they will fund efforts for GCI to provide assistance to RAIPON and vice versa. They could potentially support projects in Russia but not the US or Canada. If this is the case, it may be possible to get the USEPA to support domestic work in the US that could be used as a model to other indigenous communities. This avenue could open up a significant source of non-competitive funding to address pollution issues in our villages and help other indigenous communities in Russia.