

The Gwich'in (people who dwell at a certain place) is one of the most northerly Aboriginal peoples on the North American continent, living at the northwestern limits of the boreal forest. Only the Inuit live further north. We are part of a larger family of Aboriginal people known as Athapaskans, which include peoples such as the Slavey, Dogrib, Han and Tutchone but our language and way of life is distinct.

The Gwich'in of the Mackenzie Delta is also celebrating 15 years since the signing of their landclaim agreement. The Objectives of the claim have been established: to give the Gwich'in and the government clear and secure rights to land, water and wildlife; to understand that some Gwich'in treaty rights are surrendered with the signing of the landclaim; to support and encourage the Gwich'in way of life, which is based on traditional relationships with the land; to help Gwich'in play an important role in the economy; to give Gwich'in special benefits, including a cash settlement, ownership of land and other economic benefits; to give Gwich'in the right to hunt, trap and fish and take part in decisions about how these activities are managed; to give the Gwich'in the right to sit on Boards and participate in decisions about the use, management and protection of land, water and wildlife; to protect the people, land, water, air and wildlife of the settlement area; and to give the Gwich'in rights to negotiate self-government agreements.

The Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) held its 24th Annual General Assembly in Tsiigehtchic August 13-17. Their days were spent indoors attending to administrative issues while their evenings were spent competing in canoe races, tea boiling, geese plucking and setting up tents.



Credit Lawrence Norbert/GTC photo

The GTC is a member of the Gwich'in Council International (GCI). The Executive Director of the GCI delivered its presentation on its current activities to the assembly. The GCI uses this forum to report back to its members; to seek future direction; and to hear individual perspectives on issues affecting and impacting on their way of life.

The Board and staff of GCI offer their heartfelt sympathy to Greta Sittichinli and family on the passing of their daughter Kendra. Below is a picture of Kendra at The Coastal Zone Canada 2006 Conference in Tuktoyuktuk, NT. Kendra graduated from grade 12 this past June in Lethbridge, AB where she was to return to University to study Geomatics Engineering. Kendra was very excited to start this journey and was committed to the years it would take her to complete her degree. Kendra was a fun loving, energetic and adventurous young lady. We will all truly miss her.



Credit Catherine L. Koizumi