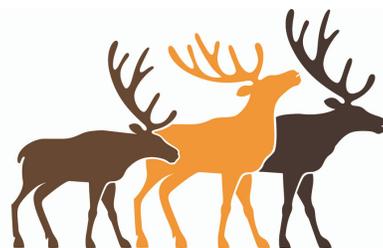


ANNUAL REPORT

GWICH'IN COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL



Gwich'in Council
INTERNATIONAL



APRIL 2017 TO MARCH 2018

CHAIRS' REPORT

Dear Friends,

It is with great pride that, as the Co-Chairs of Gwich'in Council International, that we present this Annual report. It outlines the activities and accomplishments of our organization between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018.

Over the last several years, GCI has been in a period of growth and rebuilding. GCI is in the first year of a new Strategic Plan that covers 2017-2019. The Strategic Plan commits us to improving internal governance, enhancing external communications and outreach, and diversifying funding sources. This annual report details how we have proceeded with meeting those objectives.

GCI is committed to building a strong organization that unites Gwich'in across Alaska, Yukon, and Northwest Territories. We strive to represent our common interests, as one nation, on the international stage.

We welcome all Gwich'in who are interested in taking part in Gwich'in Council International activities to reach out to us and let us know you want to be involved. We are always in search of representatives for different projects or speakers for events that aim to help the world understand who we are, as well as how the changing climate is impacting our people.

We aim to be an open and transparent organization and are committed to keeping you informed about what we're doing and encourage you to follow our Facebook Page @GwichinCouncil for regular updates. We thank you for taking the interest in GCI to learn more about our activities through reading this Annual Report.

Mahsi,

Edward Alexander, Co-Chair, Gwich'in Council International
Ethel Blake, Co-Chair, Gwich'in Council International

ABOUT US

Gwich'in Council International

Gwich'in Council International (GCI) represents 9,000 Gwich'in in the Northwest Territories (NWT), Yukon, and Alaska as a Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council; the only international organization where Indigenous peoples have a seat at the decision-making table alongside national governments. GCI supports Gwich'in by amplifying our voice on sustainable development and the environment at the international level to support resilient and healthy communities.

The Arctic Council

The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.

The Ottawa Declaration lists the following countries as Members of the Arctic Council: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States.

In addition, six organizations representing Arctic indigenous peoples have status as Permanent Participants. The category of Permanent Participant was created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous peoples within the Council. They include: the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and the Saami Council.

Observer status in the Arctic Council is open to non-Arctic states, along with inter-governmental, inter-parliamentary, global, regional and non-governmental organizations that the Council determines can contribute to its work. Arctic Council Observers primarily contribute through their engagement in the Council at the level of Working Groups.

Gwich'in Council International is active in two Working Groups of the Arctic Council: the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group; and the Sustainable Development Working Group.



BOARD MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENT

The Gwich'in Council International Board is a governing, rather than operating board. That means that the primary responsibility of the Board is to ensure the effectiveness of the organization and to focus on strategic decision-making.

The Board met with quorum in May, October, and March.

The focus of Board discussions during this period were focused on setting policy directions for engagement at the Arctic Council tables and on improving governance through the development of a Board Handbook.

The Board Handbook provides policy guidance to how GCI will operate, supplementing the By-laws. Examples of policies included in the new Handbook include: conflict of interest, procurement, job descriptions, revised mission/vision/values statements, etc.

In addition to the above, individual Board Members continue to engage in specific aspects of GCI's programming:

- Ethel Blake - Acted as Head of Delegation to the Senior Arctic Officials Meetings;
- Edward Alexander - Served as the Head of Delegation to the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group;
- Sam Alexander - Served as a Spokesperson for The Álgu Fund and represented GCI at the Arctic Economic Council;
- Joe Linklater - Served as Treasurer;
- Evon Peter - Organized cultural events and speaking engagements during the Arctic Council ministerial in Fairbanks, Alaska; and
- Jordan Peterson - Participated in the Arctic Renewable Energy Academy program, which GCI co-led.

Remembering Joe Linklater

It was with deep sadness that we said goodbye to our friend and the long-time chair of Gwich'in Council International, "Chief" Joe Linklater. Joe was the driving force behind Gwich'in Council International for many years and was involved from its early inception. He participated in every ministerial since GCI received Permanent Participant status in 2000. Beyond being a champion for Gwich'in engagement in the Circumpolar Forum, Joe was a kind and gentle man, who cared deeply about those he worked for and with. In the days since Joe's passing, there has been an outpouring of kind words and fond stories from across Arctic Indigenous nations and others who have worked alongside Joe in the Arctic Council. GCI would like to thank all of those who reached out to help us to celebrate Joe's full and vibrant life.



Joe Linklater as the Head of Delegation for Gwich'in Council International in Sweden

MEETINGS ATTENDED

April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Arctic Officials Meeting (New York).
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic Council Ministerial (Fairbanks). • Bilateral Meetings with U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland (Fairbanks). • Launch of The Álgu Fund (Fairbanks). • Arctic Economic Council Annual Meeting (Fairbanks).
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual General Assembly (Fort McPherson).
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic Energy Summit (Helsinki, Finland). • Sustainable Development Working Group (Inari, Finland). • Arctic Council Advisory Committee (Teleconference).
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Arctic Official Meeting (Oulu, Finland).
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Impact Assessment Workshop (Barrow, Alaska).
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic Council Advisory Committee Meeting (Ottawa). • Arctic Policy Framework Meeting (Whitehorse). • Arctic as a Food Producing Region Steering Committee (Edmonton).
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arctic Council Strategic Planning Meeting (London, U.K.)
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group Meeting (Fairbanks/Fort Yukon). • Arctic Council Advisory Committee Meeting (Whitehorse).
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Arctic Official Meeting (Levi, Finland). • Sustainable Development Working Group (Levi, Finland). • Arctic as a Food Producing Region Steering Committee (Edmonton).

Arctic Council Ministerial in Fairbanks, Alaska

On the margins of the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska on May 10, 2017, GCI met with then Secretary of State Rex Tillerson about Gwich'in concerns related to cross-border mobility with Canada, the Alaska National Wildlife Reserve, and support for American-based Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council. The Ministerial also provided the opportunity for a bilateral with Minister of Foreign Affairs for Canada, Chrystia Freeland.

As part of the Ministerial, GCI made an intervention to the eight Arctic Ministers. The intervention was quoted widely in the media, principally the line that, "Without significant, sustained, and coordinated approaches to addressing the causes of the warming Arctic climate, our culture, linked so closely to the Porcupine Caribou Herd, cannot survive."

Evon Peter, Board Member from Alaska, organized the cultural activities related to the Ministerial, including signing, dancing, drumming, and a speech by Trimble Gilbert.



Excerpt - Speech delivered at the Ministerial

On behalf of the Gwich'in Council International, I would like to welcome you to our traditional territory, which is just to the north of where we sit. Fairbanks has traditionally been a meeting place of different Dene' peoples and we are honoured that it is able to play this role for the Arctic Council as we celebrate the twentieth anniversary.

Leaders among the Gwich'in nation serve in many capacities - on our tribal councils and in our village corporations - so we are intimately aware of the need for social and economic development in our communities and with the associated challenges.

For Gwich'in in Canada, one of the major benefits of land claims is that it has allowed us, as landowners and rights- holders, the right to determine our own balance between safeguarding the Arctic environment, which has sustained our peoples since time immemorial, and our participation in the modern resource economy. The balance between jobs and the environment, is one that is always at the forefront of our communities.

Without significant, sustained, and coordinated approaches to addressing the causes of the warming Arctic climate, our culture, linked so closely to the Porcupine Caribou Herd, cannot survive. It is for this reason, that we need the Arctic Council to continue to show leadership, not only through the important projects of the Working Groups, but at the highest political levels, as well.

We appreciate the support of those around the table, who continue to be allies with us, not only through their efforts to address climate change both within and outside the Arctic, but also in the advancement of our Indigenous rights. We look forward to working with the incoming Finnish chairmanship over the next two years and in particular welcome their initiative on Best Practices in Environmental Impact Assessment, which is a critical tool for evaluating this balance that needs to be struck between protecting the environment and facilitating economic development.

Community Visit to Fort Yukon, Alaska

On February 4, 2018 the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group Board took a trip to Fort Yukon, Alaska to meet with the community and share information about what the Working Group does. As part of the excursion, CAFF took an aerial tour of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The trip was organized by Board Member, Ed Alexander and was attended by Sam Alexander.



COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Improving communications has been a significant focus of GCI's efforts in 2017. The new website www.gwichincouncil.com is being continually updated and we aim for 2-3 Facebook posts per week. The number of followers of the @GwichinCouncil Facebook page has increased to 300 follows.

Sam Alexander and Ethel Blake were interviewed by Discovery Channel's program Mars. The episode will air in October 2018. During the interview, they talked about colonization, Indigenous rights, environmental protection, and economic development.

About Mars

The year is 2033, and humanity's first crewed mission to Mars is about to become a reality. As a clock counts down the final 90 seconds to landing, an expert crew of astronauts endures the final harrowing moments before touching down on the red planet. Even with the best training and resources available, the maiden crew of the Daedalus spacecraft must push itself to the brink of human capability in order to successfully establish the first sustainable colony on Mars. Set both in the future and in the present day, the global miniseries event MARS blends feature film-caliber scripted elements set in the future with documentary vérité interviews with today's best and brightest minds in modern science and innovation, illuminating how research and development is creating the space technology that will enable our first attempt at a mission to Mars.



AFFILIATIONS

Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat

In May 2018, Gwich'in Council International completed its two-year term as the Chair of the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat of the Arctic Council, passing the baton to Arctic Athabaskan Council.

In June 2017, Elle Merete Omma, a Saami woman from Norway, stepped down as the Executive Secretary of IPS. Anna Dageteva, a who is Indigenous from Russia, was recruited as the new Executive Secretary and took up her position in Tromsø, Norway in the early fall.

Arctic Economic Council

Geordie Hungerford, Board Member for Gwich'in Development Corporation, serves as the Gwich'in Council International representative at the Arctic Economic Council. The Arctic Economic Council (AEC) is an independent organization that facilitates Arctic business-to-business activities and responsible economic development through the sharing of best practices, technological solutions, standards, and other information.

Within the AEC, GCI is participating in three working groups:

1. **Responsible Resource Development**
Within this Working Group, GCI has provided input into a forthcoming best practices report, focusing its efforts on meeting the obligations of free, prior, and informed consent and duty to consult and accommodate.
2. **Arctic Stewardship**
Aims to provide the necessary framework for being good business partners in the Arctic with indigenous residents and communities. The Working Group will examine and publish guidelines on appropriate engagement with indigenous residents and communities with respect to traditional knowledge, stewardship and small and medium enterprise development.

3. Investment and Infrastructure

Will focus its work on the principles related to responsible investments in the Arctic.

The Álgu Fund

The Álgu Fund is a new charitable organization set up by five of the Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council - Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, GCI, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and Saami Council - to support their engagement in the Arctic Council. The goal of The Álgu Fund is to raise an endowment that will provide stable, predictable, and reliable funding to the participating organizations. GCI was active in the development of the The Álgu Fund throughout 2016 and 2017, acting as the project manager for funding received from The Arctic Funders' Collaborative.

Additional information on The Álgu Fund is available at: <https://www.algufund.org>.



SHAPING POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Development of the Arctic Council

GCI seeks to support the continual development of the Arctic Council to ensure that it is enhanced and maintained as the pre-eminent forum for intergovernmental discussions among the Arctic States. As well, GCI seeks to give full expression to the intent of the Ottawa Declaration in the creation of the category of “Permanent Participant” and for the active and robust inclusion of Indigenous viewpoints within its deliberations. To further these aims in 2017, GCI participated in a Strategic Planning session in January in London and provided input into reviews of observers and the recruitment of a new Executive Director for the Arctic Council Secretariat.

GCI also participates in the Arctic Council Advisory Committee (ACAC). The ACAC provides the opportunity for Canadian-based Permanent Participants, provinces, territories, and federal departments outside of Global Affairs to discuss what is going on at the Arctic Council and coordinate their activities. GCI participated in ACAC meetings throughout the year.

Arctic Policy Framework

On December 20, 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that a new Arctic Policy Framework will be co-developed in collaboration with Indigenous, territorial and provincial partners to replace Canada's Northern Strategy (2009) and the Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy (2010).

GCI participated in the Working Groups to draft the international chapter, the Whitehorse roundtable, and made a written submission to the process.

RESEARCH

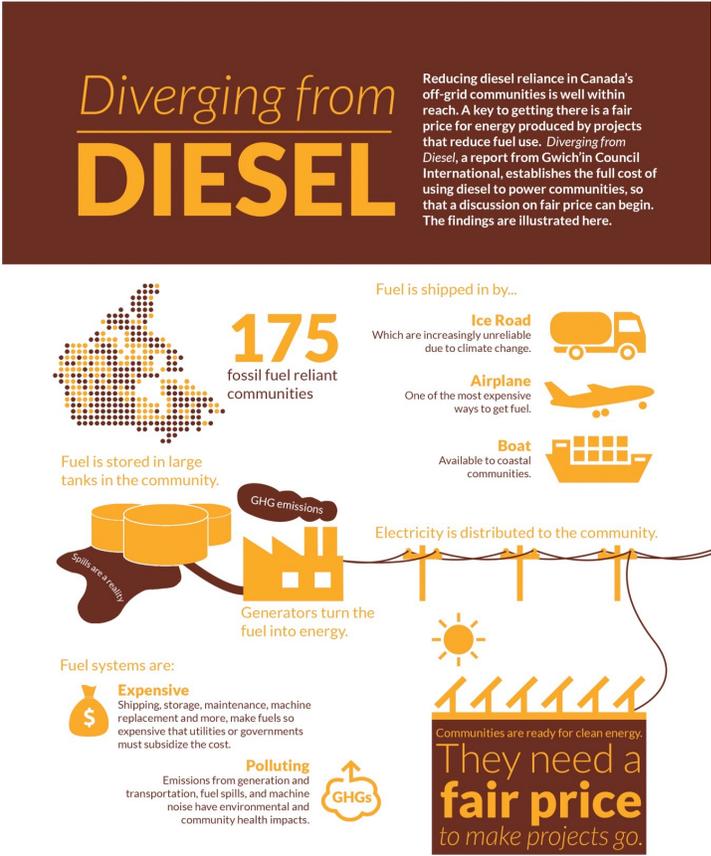
GCI commissions studies to help fill research gaps that help to link Arctic Council initiatives to the communities. With renewable energy a focus at the Sustainable Development Working Group, in 2017, GCI commissioned a study to segment and measure the costs related to diesel electricity generation in these non-grid areas.

These costs included:

1. Current Utility Costs;
2. Costs arising from the emission of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions; and
3. External social impact costs resulting for a reliance on diesel fuel.

Focusing on a transparent analysis of the full costs of diesel generated electricity in northern off-grid communities, the study utilizes utility-supplied rate filing documentation provided to governments and energy regulators by utilities; government carbon tax costs; and research related to the direct and indirect social costs associated with the use of diesel for electricity generation and building heating purposes. Information was gathered on 9 northern, off-grid communities in the Northwest Territories (3), Yukon (2), and Nunavut (4).

The full report, as well as an infographic, is available on the GCI website at: <https://gwichincouncil.com/diverging-diesel>.



PROJECTS

While the high-level events, such as the Ministerial, tends to get most of the public attention for the Arctic Council, in fact, the vast majority of the Council's work is carried out by the Working Groups in the form of projects.

GCI is currently involved in the following projects in a co-lead capacity: Arctic as a Food Producing Region; Arctic Energy Summit; Arctic Renewable Network Academy; and Good Practices in Environmental Impact Assessment. In addition, GCI has proposed its first project at the Arctic Council, Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit.

Arctic as a Food Producing Region

The aim of this project is to assess the potential for increased production and added value of food from the Arctic, with the overarching aim of improving economic and social conditions of Arctic communities. The Arctic or northern areas are already important as a food producing region, but has potential to become even bigger. By focusing on biological (climate change), industry (commercial resources, infrastructure and industry policy) and market conditions the project will explore and describe possible paths of development for arctic food production. The aim is to identify conditions for increased production, new species and last but not least the potential for added value of food from the Arctic.

The following studies were part of the research:

1. **Regional and National Inventories of Commercial Food Producers**
An inventory of over 315 value chain actors, including producers, processors, transportation services, and wholesalers has been completed. In addition to identifying the total export of wild foods, the total volume of southern imports of meat products to northern communities (e.g., beef, chicken, pork, processed meat products) will be determined. These two inventories will demonstrate to the total import and export of meat products and the associated costs/revenues.

2. Legal Analysis of Commercial Food Production

A legal analysis of northern commercial food production in Canada will consider how land claims and other regional restrictions influence the transportation and sale of country foods.

Norma Kassi, the GCI representative to the Arctic as a Food Producing Region Canadian-PP Steering Committee for this project, took part in meetings in December, February, and March.

GCI also secured a Gwich'in participant's involvement in the "Country Food Processing Course" in Inuvik in March 2018.

Arctic Renewable Network Academy

The project will bring together a group of participants for 3 on-site week-long workshops to visit projects and learn from current technology, community, and project development leaders in the renewable energy sector. The goal is to build capacity of renewable energy champions who are able to raise awareness of opportunities within their own communities to pursue renewable energy project and to impart the skills to help them lead such projects.

Two GCI representatives took part in the inaugural cohort in 2018. GCI continues to work with the Circumpolar Affairs Division at INAC to scope out opportunities for continued GCI involvement in ARENA and we have submitted a project proposal for 2018 to continue this work.

Good Practices in Environmental Impact Assessment

In 2017, GCI joined on as a project lead for the Good Practices in Environmental Impact. The objectives of the project are:

1. To ensure that environmental considerations specific to the Arctic including social and health aspects, are explicitly addressed and incorporated into the planning, design and decision making of large-scale economic projects.

2. To identify existing good practices through sharing and learning with the aim of developing good practice recommendations for EIA in the Arctic.
3. To promote meaningful practices of public participation, especially the participation of indigenous peoples, and the integration of traditional and local knowledge in EIA within the Arctic.
4. To build a viable network of Arctic EIA actors.

In 2017, GCI participated in the Barrow, Alaska Workshop.

Arctic Energy Summit

The Arctic Energy Summit is a multi-disciplinary event that draws several hundred industry officials, scientists, academics, policy makers, energy professionals and community leaders together to collaborate and share leading approaches on Arctic energy issues.

The 2017 Summit addressed energy in the Arctic as it relates to: small and off-grid community energy solutions; oil and gas development; renewable energy; regulation and financing; and transportation and transmission.

GCI was a co-lead of the Summit, helping to organize the Program. Representatives also attended the Summit.

Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit

In 2017, GCI hit a critical milestone: it proposed its first initiative at the Arctic Council, the Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit, at the Sustainable Development Working Group.

The Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit will be a print and web-based guide for communities to follow when developing their comprehensive community energy plans. This step-by-step toolkit will transfer knowledge using best practices, resource guides, case studies, videos, worksheets, and templated pathways to help communities create and implement their energy visions. In addition, the Toolkit will provide resources to increase energy literacy and capacity for community members build bridges between communities and agency officials and subject matter experts, and create a network of circumpolar community energy leaders.

Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit

There is a growing need for Arctic communities, working closely with regional governments and utilities, to play a substantive part in the energy planning process in their respective areas. The Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit will bring together the essential resources that enable communities to develop and champion their own energy plans.

The Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit will be a print and web-based guide to assist communities in developing their own energy plans – to improve energy efficiency and reduce electricity consumption at a community level. This step-by-step toolkit will share best practices, resource guides, case studies, videos, templates, and pathways from across the Arctic. This knowledge transfer will help communities create and implement their energy visions. The Toolkit will also provide resources to increase energy literacy and capacity for community members.

Through the Arctic Energy Futures Toolkit, communities will be able to:



Increase energy literacy and engagement around energy infrastructure, energy efficiency and conservation, and clean energy opportunities (both small- and utility-scale projects);



Understand the impacts of diesel power reliance on social conditions, the environment, and economic development in their regions;



Examine lessons learned from communities across the Arctic;



Examine short and medium-term energy demand trends and requirements in their region;



Identify options for energy demand reduction; and



Create and implement a community energy plans.

In developing the Toolkit, the project team will follow an open and transparent process. They will engage and incorporate feedback from multiple stakeholder groups including: Member States and Permanent Participants, communities, utilities, energy subject matter experts, and others.

FUNDING

In 2017, GCI received financial support from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Global Affairs Canada, and Mitacs.

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