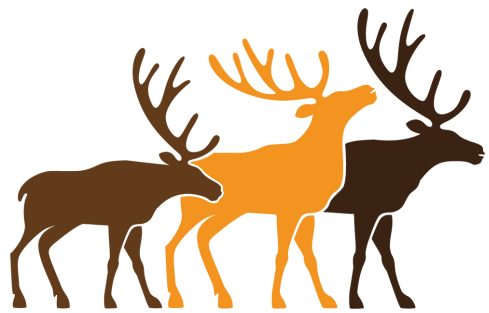


Gwich'in Council INTERNATIONAL



December 2021 Update



IN THIS UPDATE:

Spotlight on Food
Security

Gwich'in Leadership:
Arctic Council Sharing
Circle on Wildland Fire

Celebrating
Achievements

Governance Update:
New Co-Chair

Energy Toolkit Video

Involving Members

Planning for 2022

AMPLIFYING GWICH'IN VOICES IN THE ARCTIC: ARCTIC COUNCIL ACTIVITIES & MEETINGS

In May 2021, the Russian Federation began their two-year chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Gwich'in Council International (GCI) participates at the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) discussions, in three of the six Working Groups, and with the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat. All groups are working to advance the implementation of the Arctic Council Strategic Plan, develop and work on projects for the next two years, and cooperate on issues of importance across the Arctic.

Highlights of our involvement include participation and/or presentations at:

- Senior Arctic Officials Executive Meetings (June & November 2021) and Plenary Meeting (Dec 2021)
- Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) Plenary & Executive Meetings (Oct 2021)
- Conservation of Arctic Flora & Fauna (CAFF) Working Group Executive & Board Meetings (Sept 2021)
- Emergency Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (EPPR) Executive & Plenary Meetings (Nov 2021) (photo above)
- Indigenous Peoples Secretariat Board Meeting (Nov 2021) and Permanent Participant Caucus Meetings (Aug, Sept, Nov 2021)
- Intellectual Property Rights & the Digitization of Indigenous Languages seminar (Sept 2021)
- Canada's Arctic Cooperation Advisory Committee Meeting (Nov 2021)



SPOTLIGHT ON FOOD SECURITY

From May–October 2021, GCI Project Coordinator Rena Squirrel explored different food security initiatives occurring across Gwich'in territory, and learned about individual and community-level activities and programs promoting healthy eating, harvesting, food growing, and local networks. Information was gathered under the auspices of the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group project, Arctic Food Innovation Cluster, and GCI's desire to understand activities in planning how we can complement and respond to ongoing work and gaps.

Rena presented her work in a webinar that is now up on our YouTube channel. Hai' cho to everyone who shared their stories and experiences.

GWICH'IN LEADERSHIP: ARCTIC COUNCIL SHARING CIRCLE ON WILDLAND FIRE

In November 2021, GCI worked with the Conservation of Arctic Flora & Fauna Working Group (CAFF), the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Working Group (EPPR), and the USA to co-host the Arctic Council Wildland Fire Sharing Circle November 17–18, 2021. The virtual event was intended to:

- Enable projects and organizations to share, through presentations and written materials, highlights of their work, driving questions, and opportunities for involvement.
- Enable people to learn about the different projects to assess their interest and capacity to participate, identify synergies and potential alignment of priorities and/or activities, and avoid duplication of work.

The event was opened by SAO Chair Ambassador Nikolay Korchunov, and featured a keynote from GCI co-chair Edward Alexander, reflections from CAFF Chair Mia Rönkä and EPPR Chair Kathy Nghiem, 18 presentations on projects and initiatives from across the circumpolar Arctic, and break out discussions. Over 70 people participated each day. Recordings of presentations and a summary report will be shared in English and Russian will be available in the coming months.



CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS: DINJII ZHUH SCHOLARS

We are inspired and proud of the achievements we see across the Gwich'in Nation, and have begun to feature Dinjii Zhuh Scholars through a poster series on our Facebook page @GwichinCouncil. Mashi' cho to those who have already shared their stories – we love them. We know that knowledge can be gained through schools, on the land, from Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and experiences, and are looking for more Scholars to feature in the new year. Reach out if you or someone you know should be featured.

GOVERNANCE UPDATE: WELCOMING SHARLA GREENLAND AS CO-CHAIR

GCI is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, composed of four members from Canada and four from Alaska. Canada and Alaska each appoint a co-chair from its members, with GTC and VGFN rotating the co-chair role biennially. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Sharla Greenland as the Canadian Co-Chair. We offer sincere thanks to Erin Linklater, who served as the previous Co-Chair and will remain on the Board.

Sharla Greenland is the youngest daughter of Freddie and Bella Greenland. She is Ehditaat Gwich'in on her father's side and Vuntut Gwich'in on her mother's. Sharla was raised in Aklavik NT, and enjoyed most of her childhood summers in Old Crow YT. She spent many of her early years on her family trap-line in the Mackenzie Delta, as well as on family hunting trips up the Porcupine River, learning the Gwich'in lifestyle from her parents, grandparents and the Elders in her communities.



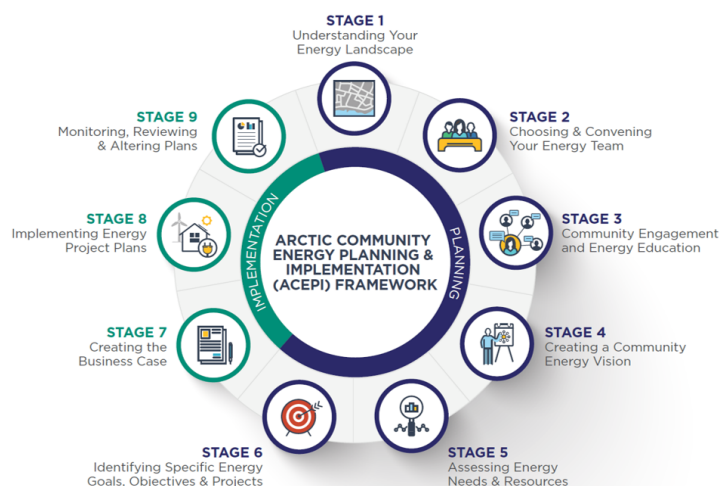
Sharla's full bio, and bios of other Board members, can be found here:
<https://gwichincouncil.com/board-directors>

RELEASE OF THE ARCTIC ENERGY PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT VIDEO

Gwich'in Council International worked with Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, and the Netherlands in the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group to develop the Arctic Energy Planning & Implementation Toolkit, and it is illustrative of the value that we saw in the Arctic Council. Gwich'in communities are powered by environmentally dirty and economically expensive diesel. There is a commitment of many of the Arctic states, as well as Observers, to shift their power generation towards renewable sources. Gwich'in communities are aiming to do the same, and in many instances, are acting as project proponents and are even owning the infrastructure and leasing it back to government or selling energy to the power corporation.

This video gives an overview of the Toolkit – an opportunity to bring together the best in circumpolar thinking on clean energy in a format that is easy-to-follow and accessible to Arctic residents. We are proud to have been able to see this project to fruition as it also marks an important milestone for GCI: it is the first project that we proposed and completed at the Arctic Council.

Hai' cho to Rena Squirrel for leading this video.



BRINGING GWICH'IN MEMBERS INTO GCI WORK

We look for ongoing ways to provide learning, development, and employment opportunities. We encourage people to fill out our Engagement Survey, linked on our website, to identify areas of interest so we can match people with opportunities and be respectful of the ways people wants to hear from us. Some of the ways we've engaged members in the past six months include:

- Inclusion in GCI's Arctic Council delegations to Working Group and Senior Arctic Officials' meetings
- Contract Employment opportunities
- Conference, webinar, and learning exchange opportunities
- Setting up school practicum opportunities

Mashi' cho to everyone who's shared their time, expertise, and feedback!

PLANNING FOR 2022: LOCAL 2 GLOBAL: YOUTH DIGITAL STORIES AND COMMUNITY EXCHANGE



GCI partnered with the Western Arctic Youth Collective (WAYC) to bring and build on the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group project Local 2 Global to Inuvik, NT in March 2021. With a focus on mental health and wellbeing, WAYC planned and delivered three days of virtual and in-person events, including film screenings, a reverse Town Hall with youth and elected leaders, discussion panels, speakers, and beading and paint workshops. The full program report and guide are available on our website: <https://gwichincouncil.com/local-2-global>

In early 2022, WAYC will deliver activities in Old Crow, YT and Inuvik NT, building on lessons learned and feedback from community members. Both sites have Advisory Committees guiding the planning, and everyone is invited. Stay tuned to us on Facebook where we'll post updates, or reach out to WAYC or GCI to get involved.

COMING UP

We are excited to continue projects and planning which advance our mission and goals. In the coming months, we are looking forward to:

- **Proud to be Gwich'in Contest** – hai' cho to everyone who entered, judging is underway and we'll share results when ready!
- **Local 2 Global Activities in Old Crow, YT and Inuvik, NT** – in-person events, with covid precautions, coming up in the new year in partnership with the Western Arctic Youth Committee.
- **Partnership with UBC on Gwich'in Language Initiatives** – we are working with a 4th Year Gwich'in student on a research project to catalogue and better understand the different language initiatives across the Nation.
- Focus on **engagement** and hearing from members on how we engage – with much going on, we want to learn how we can better communicate and serve.
- **Employment opportunities** – we are building our programming and looking to fill roles to advance projects related to wildland fires, covid-19, and youth.

Stay tuned on Facebook and our website.

CONTACT US

Devlin Fernandes,
Executive Director
Yellowknife Canada

GCI.executivedirector@gmail.com
+1 778-884-0152

Facebook: @GwichinCouncil
<https://www.facebook.com/GwichinCouncil/>

<https://gwichincouncil.com/>