

Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

The Council

Incorporated as Dena' Nena' Henash
Vol. 49 No. 6 • June 2024



17th Annual Gathering of Remembrance

The 17th Annual Gathering of Remembrance for missing and murdered Indigenous people in Interior Alaska was held April 26th in downtown Fairbanks.

Shirley Lee, Strategic Development Director for Fairbanks Native Association (FNA), led the gathering. Speakers included Chief Steve Ginnis, Executive Director of FNA, Brian Ridley, Chief of Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), Reverent John Holtz, Vicar of St. Jude's Church in North Pole, and Scott Fisher, Reverent of St. Matthews Episcopal Church. There was also representation from the Alaska State Troopers, Fairbanks Police De-

partment, the Fairbanks District Attorney's Office, and City of Fairbanks Mayor David Pruhs.

The gathering opened with a prayer by Reverent Holtz, and a note of gratitude by Shirley Lee, who thanked the law enforcement presence and the families of the missing and murdered for being present in spite of their pain.

In his address, Chief Steve Ginnis pointed out the power of collective advocacy, noting the 2023 solving of Sophie Sergie's murder, which occurred in 1993.

TCC Chief Brian Ridley pointed out the importance of a unified voice in the quest for justice. "Your support is

everything to the friends and family of those that we've lost. In times of sadness and hardship, it's important that we stand together and support each other; that's our way," he said.

TCC recently partnered with the Department of Justice to create a community response plan which was approved by our Tribes at this year's Annual Convention and Full Board of Directors Meeting. Ridley said that he hopes that by working together we can improve the response to these cases.

Lieutenant Jess Carson from Alaska State Troopers reiterated the difference that unity in advocacy for our

Continued On Page 4

Submit Your Graduation Photos

Tanana Chiefs Conference wants to feature our 2024 Graduates in the July edition of *The Council*. Submit your information and photos on our website today!

The deadline to submit is Monday, June 10th.

Submit your entry here:

<https://bit.ly/2024TCCGrads>

SCAN ME!



IN THIS ISSUE...

PAGE 3: New Tribal Resource Stewardship Division Director

PAGE 5: CHAP Spotlight

PAGE 6: TCC GO Career Explorers

PAGE 7: Salmon Spawning Productivity

PAGE 9: Recognizing Minto Students

PAGE 11: TCC Gets A+ Fitch Rating



Mission

Tanana Chiefs Conference provides a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior Alaska Native people.

Vision

Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

Executive Board

Trimble Gilbert, Arctic Village
1st Traditional Chief

Andrew Jimmie, Minto
2nd Traditional Chief

Brian Ridley, Eagle
Chief/Chairman

Sharon Hildebrand, Nulato
Vice-President

Charlie Wright, Rampart
Secretary/Treasurer

Herbie Demit, Tanacross
Upper Tanana

Claude 'Joe' Petruska, Nikolai
Upper Kuskokwim

Nancy James, Gwichyaa Zhee
Yukon Flats

Ivan Demientieff, Grayling
Lower Yukon

Lori Baker, Minto
Yukon Tanana

Charlie Green, Galena
Yukon Koyukuk

Peter Demoski, Nulato
Elder Advisor

Mackenzie Englishoe, Gwichyaa Zhee
Youth Advisor



Letter from the Chief

Dear Tribes and Tribal Members,

We recently received confirmation that Fitch Ratings has given TCC an A+ rating and upgraded our outlook from 'stable' to 'positive'. This excellent rating reflects our ongoing commitment to sound financial management and ensures we can continue providing vital services to our Tribes and Tribal Members. A huge thank you goes to all of our hard-working employees at TCC, especially our Finance and Accounting division. Your expertise and dedication are fundamental to our financial health and our ability to plan for the future with confidence.



Last month, we held our annual Tribal Court Conference in Fairbanks. This event brought together 73 Tribes from throughout the State and provides a forum for learning, fostering connection and strengthening Tribal Courts.

We also participated in the annual Gathering of Remembrance, honoring the victims of unsolved homicides in the Fairbanks area. It's vital that we continue to hold this event each year to remember those we've lost and to ensure that justice is served in these cases.

At the beginning of May, TCC held its annual all-staff meeting, which we have been conducting virtually since we now have over 1,200 employees working for the organization. The all-staff meeting provides an opportunity for us to thank our amazing staff for all the work they do, update them on important policies and requirements, and of course, have fun. I appreciate our staff for the great work they do each and every day for our Tribes, Tribal Members, and Patients.

Finally, I had the opportunity to visit the villages of Kaltag and Ruby alongside several staff to hold discussions with Tribal leaders and community members. These trips are always a great opportunity to hear from our communities on important projects and how TCC's programs and services can offer support. My goal for this year is to visit two communities every month as these trips are the most valuable and ensure that we are taking the time to listen to our Tribes.

Mahsi' Choo,
Chief Brian Ridley

2024 TCC Calendars Now Available!

Send your mailing address to
Communications_Dept@tananachiefs.org
or call 907-452-8251 ext. 3424
to get your copy!



Help Save a Life!

Get FREE Narcan Spray

**Stop Fentanyl Overdose in
its Tracks!**

Questions? Call
Wellness & Prevention:
(907) 452-8251 ext. 3941



Introducing Diloola Erickson TCC's New Tribal Resource Stewardship Division Director

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is excited to welcome Diloola Erickson as our new Tribal Resource Stewardship Division (TRSD) Director! Diloola spent most of her childhood on Tlingit Aani ('our land' in Tlingit) in the village of Hoonah, and recalls spending a lot of time on the beach, in the woods, and learning the Tlingit language and culture in school. In high school, she moved to Galena where she began to learn her Athabascan culture before moving to Fairbanks to attend University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). Diloola has also lived in Galena and Kaltag, where she is currently enrolled as a Tribal member. She has family ties to Tok, where her late grandpa John Erickson and grandma Joyce Erickson settled during the territory days.



At UAF, Diloola earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Bachelor of Arts in Rural Development, which she intended to use towards building rural infrastructure. She quickly realized, however, that language revitalization was a more passionate pursuit for her. She worked at Doyon Foundation in their language program where she acted as the Doyon Languages Online II Project Manager. Following her work there, she transferred to Native Movement as their Environmental Justice Director, where she rooted herself in Indigenous advocacy for land and wa-

ter rights. "I have always had a mind, as many young people raised in the village do, of going out, getting my education, and then returning home to use my skills to serve my community," she says. "It's because of that directive that I pursued my degrees with intention, and in my career path, I now find myself here at TCC," she adds.

When speaking of her goals at TCC, Diloola says she wants to spend the first year building out the Tribal Resource Stewardship Division (TRSD) team in order to support Tribal advocates who have been doing this work for generations. Her long-term goal is for the team to work closely with Tribal leaders in advancing the priorities of TRSD so that the work is deeply rooted in Athabascan values and heavily guided by the frontline advocates who live and teach our ways of life. "One of the priorities I'm really keen on building is the use of Indigenous Knowledge in tandem with Western science to build towards Tribal-led co-stewardship of our lands, waters, and animals," she says.

Diloola enjoys honing her skills in traditional Athabascan arts like beading, quill work, caribou tufting, and skin sewing, as well as contemporary fiber arts such as knitting and crocheting. She is also being taught by her auntie the art of brain tanning moose and caribou hides. She loves spending time with her Kaltag family, learn-

ing the Denaakk'e language and joining them in coaching their Youth in the Denaakk'e dub-over of Molly of Denali. "Learning my language with my family and community and teaching it to my daughter is one of my biggest sources of joy," she recounts. Diloola also enjoys being on the land, harvesting with her family.

Diloola's immersion into and passion for our culture infuses her career choices with exactly the right attributes TCC seeks in the leader of our Tribal Resource Stewardship Division, and we are so proud and honored to welcome her!

Deloole'aanh se'ooze'. Eeana'e Susan Erickson me'ooze'. Eetaa'e Arne Erickson me'ooze'. Setsoo yet setseye eeana'e medetnekkaa Irene Solomon yet Alex Solomon Jr. hev'ooz gheelaa. Setsoo eetaa'e medetnekkaa Joyce Erickson me'ooze'. Setseye eetaa'e medetnekkaa John Erickson me'ooz gheelaa. Sedenaa Kylah Huntington me'ooze'. Ggaat Doh huts'enh ts'aadaanslet, Fairbanks lesdo. Denaakk'e hedohudege'eeh.

(My name is Deloole'aanh. My mom is Susan Erickson (from Kaltag) and my Father is Arne Erickson (from Tok). My grandparents on my mom's side were the late Irene Solomon and Alex Solomon Jr. (from Kaltag). My Grandparents on my dad's side are Joyce Erickson and the late John Erickson (from Tok). My daughter's name is Kylah Huntington. I come from Kaltag, and I live in Fairbanks. I am learning my language.)

TCC Shuttle Service

TCC's complementary Patient Shuttle Service now has extended hours to meet the needs of patients traveling to Fairbanks for medical appointments.

WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

Monday - Friday • 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM

Call (907) 347-0765 for appointments outside of the route schedule.

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Saturday - Sunday • 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM

Call (907) 687-8338

AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION

Monday - Friday • 5:30 AM - 8:00 PM

Saturday • 6:30 AM - 8:00 PM

Sunday • 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

SCAN TO VIEW MORE SHUTTLE INFO!



Let's Talk!

Helping you help loved ones struggling with substance misuse. This support group is open to everyone and is completely free! It does not require a commitment or active engagement in services. Drop in whenever you need support!



Scan the QR Code for more info & join us Wednesdays via Zoom 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM



17th Annual Gathering of Remembrance, Continued

Continued From Page 1

missing and murdered loved ones is making within the law enforcement community. "This group led by FNA and TCC has done more than I have ever seen any other activist group do. Because of all the work you have done, we have more people working on these cases than ever before," he said.

Currently, there are three investigators out of Anchorage dedicated to solving these cases.

In her closing address, Shirley Lee recounted the conversation she had with Shirley Demientieff, the former leader of the annual Gatherings of Remembrance, on her deathbed, recalling that Demientieff could recite every case from memory, as well as the names of their families and their contact information.

"We are here today to honor these people whose names we have put on signs," Lee said in conclusion, "Behind each of these names is a story, not of their tragic death or their unsolved mystery, but of each child of God who was loved."



Join Our Facebook Event Group!

We are thrilled to introduce the Joint TCC/FNA/DL Native Interior Alaska Events Group! This new platform is a collaborative effort between Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), Fairbanks Native Association (FNA), and Doyon, Limited (DL), with the aim of uniting the community through shared information about local events.

Our mission is to offer a space for sharing and discovering events happening within Interior Alaska. This includes, but is not limited to, potlatches, burials and funerals, hardship fundraisers, bazaars, events hosted by TCC, FNA, and Doyon, sporting events such as mushing, boat races, basketball, and more.

This group is open to the public, primarily serving Doyon, Limited shareholders, and beneficiaries of the Tanana Chiefs Conference and Fairbanks Native Association. We encourage members to submit events for approval to ensure our community stays informed and connected.

SCAN ME!



Scan the QR Code to follow or visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1845822969252229/>



Seeking a small school where you can experience a warm and tight-knit community?

You have a choice!



Call us for more info
907-474-0958

Our School:

- Grades 7-12
- Small Class Size
- A Fall Subsistence Break
- The Chance to learn about native culture and traditions.
- College Classes Sponsored by TCC GO

601 Loftus Rd, Fairbanks, AK 99709

k12northstar.org/effiekokrine

Community Health Aide *Spotlight*

Mariah Moses-Bergman - Hughes

By Linden Stackiokas

When people talk about their jobs, a lot of them don't seem very enthusiastic about what they do day after day. Not so with Mariah Moses-Bergman, who practically radiates with love for her position as the Health Aide for the village of Hughes. She is so thrilled to be doing the work she does that she even volunteers to give talks to school children about how and why to become health aides.

Mariah was born in Hughes, a village of about a hundred people located on the Koyukuk River, located 210 air miles from Fairbanks. When she left home to go to college, she always intended to return. After attending the University of Alaska Anchorage, she had the opportunity to move back in 2015. At that time, there weren't any health aides in Hughes, so when she saw the advertisement for the job, Mariah eagerly applied.

She had always been interested in science, and in fact, at UAA, she had been taking the classes required in order to enter the nursing program. She heard plenty about the career by listening and observing an aunt who had been a health aide, as well as from other friends in the field. The village approved her application, and soon Mariah was in Fairbanks completing the first of four training levels. She became a Community Health Practitioner in 2016.

The first session taught her basic anatomy and how each system in the body operates. Three other sessions, each about a month long and conducted in Fairbanks, taught her increasingly specific details about the body, as well as how to diagnose and

treat various illnesses. She finished her fourth segment of the training in 2019. As Mariah put it, "After every session, you become a little more independent in that you can do more with and for patients. The truth is that even with the book learning and the work you do with actual patients during the trainings, your real learning happens when you are on the job as a health aide."

Asked how being a health aide is different from being a nurse, Mariah explains that "A Health Aide is sort of in between a nurse and a provider like a physician's assistant is to a doctor. We have to make more decisions in the field, where a nurse might have to ask a doctor's permission to do the same things in a hospital or clinic setting."

Still, the training did not prepare her for the large amount of clinic administrative work she would encounter on the job. Since Hughes had not had a health aide, she had to organize the entire clinic. The independence of being the one in charge is freeing but stressful.

Mariah receives her greatest satisfaction in being able to "help people when they really need it." Although she learns very confidential information, some of it about people she has known her entire life, she does not find it difficult to keep this information to herself. As she says, "Whatever I learn in this building, stays in this building."

The hardest part of being a health

aide, as one might imagine, is losing people. Mariah says, "It does not get any easier to watch people die. Learning how to come back to the job after responding to a trauma can be very difficult. It changes you - you are not the same person you were."

To cope, she spends time with her husband, Aaron, and their four children, ages 1 through 12. She says that her husband makes it possible for her to be a health aide because he takes on the bulk of the household responsibilities and is able to be the sole caretaker for the periods when she is in training. When she does have free time, Mariah relaxes by beading. Not that she has much free time; Mariah is also on the City Council, the Tribal Council, and the Community School Council.

Although her life is too jam-packed now, Mariah is looking toward perhaps becoming a Physician's Assistant (PA) in the future. TCC encourages career mobility and, to that end, will pay for tuition and some of the expenses involved in training to become a PA.

For now, she plans to stick with being a health aide. "It is an amazing job, and I love it."

When asked to comment on Mariah, Keith Lund, Mariah's supervisor, stated, "Mariah is an integral part of the community as she is the rock-solid go-between for each patient and their care team at Chiefs. She offers an amazing level of caring and concern for each patient in Hughes. We love her!"



TCC Leadership Visits Beaver & Venetie

Last month, TCC leadership had the opportunity to travel to the communities of Beaver and Venetie to meet with Tribal Leaders and community members to learn about their local priorities and identify how TCC can offer support.

We would like to thank both Tribes for their hospitality and allowing us to spend time in their community. Mahsi' Choo!



Honoring Men's Health Month: Empowering Wellness & Well-Being

In June, we recognize Men's Health Month, a time to focus on the health and well-being of our partners, brothers, sons and uncles. Men are significantly less likely to seek medical help than women for symptoms that may lead to serious health problems down the line. This month is important for shedding light on the health issues men face and encouraging proactive steps towards better health.

Important Facts About Men's Health

- Men have mortality rates that are 41% higher than women, and they are at greater risk for dying from heart disease, cancer, strokes or diabetes. Make sure to have regular checkups with your healthcare provider to protect your health at every stage of life.
- Alaska Natives are two times more likely to get diagnosed with colon cancer than non-Natives. Get your first colonoscopy screening at age 40 and every five years after that.
- 31% of men suffer from depression in their lifetime, but only 25% have connected with mental health providers. Pay attention to signs of depression and seek help if you need it.
- Accidents are the third leading cause of death for men. Practice safe habits when boating, operating other vehicles, and when using dangerous equipment to protect yourself and others.
- About 31% of men have had 5 or more drinks in one sitting in the past year, and 13.2% have smoked or used tobacco products in the last year. Both are linked to poor health outcomes. To protect your health, never use tobacco products and limit alcohol use.

Talk to your medical providers for more information about the actions you can take to support your health this month and for many years to come.

Celebrating Collaboration: A Transformative Journey with the Nulato TCC GO Career Explorers Program

By Angela Rutman, TCC GO Student Support Coordinator

We are thrilled to share the remarkable success of our recent collaboration with the Yukon-Koyukuk School District (YKSD), the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and the TCC GO teams in bringing forth the Nulato Career Explorers class. This endeavor exemplified the power of partnership and the profound impact it can have on student learning and community engagement.

As we decompress from our time in Nulato, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the enriching experience we shared. The journey began with a sense of anticipation and excitement, and it quickly evolved into a transformative adventure for all involved.

Our students, the heart of this initiative, displayed unwavering enthusiasm, curiosity, and determination throughout the program. Seven juniors and seniors from the Yukon-Koyukuk School District participated in a UAF class titled "Professional Development: How to Prepare for a Job & Other Survival Skills." This course provided a comprehensive view of planning and implementation of career advancement strategies, inter-

viewing scenarios, action plans, and job-seeking skills used in business. We congratulate each and every one of the participants for their dedication and commitment to completing the class.

It was a pleasure to witness the students' eagerness to explore new career paths and acquire essential skills, knowing that they were earning one university credit in the process.

The supportive environment fostered by the YKSD/CTE staff played a pivotal role in the success of the program. Their dedication to student success created a sense of belonging and empowerment, allowing us to connect deeply with the community and its youth.

Central to the program's success were UAF instructors, Amanda Langhorst and Jillian Bjornstad, whose expertise and passion for career development were instrumental in guiding our students on their journeys. Amanda and Jillian's innovative approach and unwavering commitment ensured that every session was engaging and impactful.

As we reflect on this collaborative



endeavor, we are filled with gratitude for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our students. It is through partnerships like these that we can create meaningful learning experiences and empower our students to reach their fullest potential.

In closing, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to the success of the Nulato Career Explorers class, especially our students. Your dedication, passion, and unwavering support made this journey possible. We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts and making a lasting impact on our students and communities.

Increasing Spawning Productivity of Kings and Chum on the Yukon River

By Gale K. Vick, Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee Member



We know that getting more fish to the spawning grounds is a goal for rebuilding Chinook and chum stocks in the Yukon River Drainage, but we may not have considered the more nuanced concern over age, sex and length and what that means to the productivity of salmon beyond just counting fish.

With the extreme decline of Chinook and chum stocks, demographics and productivity often get overlooked in our discussions. However, these factors become more critical as we think about regrowing the stocks of salmon in our rivers. The Yukon has not met escapement goals in most of the Alaska-side tributaries for years. Chinook are getting smaller and thinner and the dominant year classes are getting lower, meaning the fish are spending less time maturing in the ocean before they come back to spawn. The situation is so bad for Canadian-bound Chinook that a new agreement with Canada requires a seven-year moratorium on catching Chinook for any purpose beyond limited harvests for ceremonial purposes.

While Pilot Station numbers are only estimates of passage and not escapement, it is the entry into the river measurement by which the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) determines fishing opportunity. There is a 90% confidence level attached to the passage estimates.¹ This chart from 2016-2023 tells us part of the story of a long-term decline for Chinook and fall chum especially.

LOCATION	SPECIES	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PILOT STATION	CHINOOK / KING	176,898	263,014	161,831	219,624	162,252	124,874	48,439	58,529
PASSAGE	SUMMER CHUM	1,921,748	3,093,735	1,612,688	1,402.93	682,602	153,497	463,806	845,988
ESTIMATES	FALL CHUM	NA	1,829,931	928,664	NA	262,439	146,172	325,202	370,015
	COHO / SILVER	168,297	166,320	136,347	86,401	107,680	37,257	92,102	48,697
	HUMPY / PINKS	NA	166,529	689,607	NA	207,942	22,184	158,767	9,735
	SOCKEYE / REDS							4,184	5,857

But our reliance on just numbers may have been insufficient for decades in assessing Canadian and Alaska-bound Chinook and fall chum abundance. For instance, without truly assessing productivity on the spawning grounds and by utilizing gear types that target bigger fish, we may have inadvertently hastened the demise of big Chinook genetics.

Size reduction equals less ability to produce an abundance of offspring, or fecundity, in females, leading to fewer eggs on the ground. Productivity of salmon spawners is linked directly to the fertility of female fish. Along with egg size, egg number is closely related to the reproductive potential of a spawning population. Getting BOFFFFs (big, old, fat, fertile, female fish) is the primary goal for increasing the chances of salmon to survive.

As a female Chum salmon grows larger so too does the number of eggs she will be able to produce when spawning. These eggs will also be larger because she is able to devote more energy to developing them. Over time, scientists have found that the size of the Chum salmon on the Yukon is shrinking due to factors related to biological and environmental variables, which means that the Chum that are running now will produce fewer and smaller eggs than those that ran in previous generations.

Measuring fertility is one of the most difficult tasks in assessing salmon health. Monitoring hundreds of salmon streams within the Yukon River drainage is an almost impossible task. It's a discussion we should be having relative to planning, educational materials and community based monitoring options.

Between Pilot Station and Eagle Station border crossing, there are almost 1,200 river miles, with another 800 in Canada. That's a long way to travel after coming in from the ocean, and it can often take weeks for salmon to reach spawning grounds. Since migrating salmon are no longer feeding, they use up body energy stored in fat reserves with each mile upstream. This is all the more reason to protect the bigger fish. There is a single certainty; once a pre-spawning female salmon is taken out of the water for any reason, its contribution to productivity is lost.

This goes to the heart of handling practices en route. Gear type becomes extremely important in the effort to protect pre-spawning females. This is why there is so much emphasis on reduced net mesh and utilizing dip nets as conservation gear.

Aside from in-river conservation measures to protect the age, sex, and size of salmon, we are all keenly aware there are still major impacts of ocean conditions, prey, competition for food, bycatch and intercept that we must continually monitor and factor into our conservation plans. There are many ways we can help salmon stocks rebuild. Monitoring safe passage and productivity on the spawning grounds is at the top of the list.

¹JTC/ Joint Technical Committee 2023 season review / Yukon River Panel



Tribal Resource Stewardship Corner

Climate - Climate - Climate

By Betty Ross, Tribal Client Services Deputy Director



Life is cyclical, weather is cyclical, and some things never change...then there is change. Since the 1970s, discussions on the climate appeared in the news and in politics. In 1988, Dr. James Hansen, Columbia University's Climate Scientist, testified in a Senate hearing on the greenhouse effect. Since then, there are interrelated crises of climate issues and wildlife issues within Alaska and throughout the world. In Alaska, the fish are fewer (some areas not coming back at all), there are fewer birds, less caribou, moose, and other wildlife.

Rather than talk about change, why not talk about adaptation? According to an article published by the Natural Resources Defense Council, a recap of the Inter-Governmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) stated that we need to pass on a livable planet to future generations. This requires a shift in how we look at nature and a break from any destructive ideas around economic progress.

The IPBES encourage:

- Trash the 200+ years of economic thinking
- Stop destroying and degrading carbon- and species-rich ecosystems
- Increase conservation actions
- Stop the subsidizing the destruction of biodiversity by governments
- Reject false climate change solutions

Indigenous Tribes throughout the world encourage:

- Reliance on Indigenous knowledge and respect of nature rather than economic progress
- Protection of all aspects of life and any habitat to combat the climate & biodiversity crisis
- Protection of all land, water, air, and all ecosystems by restoration
- Prevention of land use when warranted - avoid exploiting land/air/wildlife for commercialization
- Reliance on Indigenous knowledge and ways of life that have been passed down for over 2,000 years

Indigenous nations must help co-manage lands, wildlife, and all ecosystems by protecting and restoring the land, the air, the wildlife, the marine life, etc. This will require communities to adapt to the changes occurring now and allow Indigenous Leadership to work collaboratively as equals to consider opportunities to restore the environment for future generations. Tribes are not going anywhere, and co-management and stewardship will lead to better outcomes for sustainability.

For more information, check out the following resources:

- Indigenous Climate Action: <https://www.indigenousclimateaction.com/>
- Indigenous Climate Resilience Network: <https://www.icrn.us/about>
- U.S. Geological Survey: <https://www.usgs.gov/>
- Natural Resources Defense Council: <https://www.nrdc.org/>



Here to Help

Patient Experience

Monday - Friday • 8:00am - 5:00pm

907-451-6682 ext. 1918

patient.concerns@tananachiefs.org

All complaints & concerns will receive a response within 14 days.

We hear you!

Minto School Students Reign Victorious in Vocabulary Bowl for Second Consecutive Year

Minto School students have once again emerged victorious in the State-wide Vocabulary Bowl, showcasing their academic excellence for the second consecutive semester. Mastering an impressive 1,400 vocabulary words, these dedicated learners have outperformed schools across Alaska in the nationwide competition organized by vocabulary.com.

Located approximately 50 miles northwest of Fairbanks, Minto School boasts a modest student body, primarily comprised of Alaska Native students. Despite its remote location, Minto's success reflects the commitment and diligence of its students and faculty.

Dana Romano, a teacher at Minto, expressed her pride in her students' achievement, emphasizing the importance of vocabulary in literacy development. Utilizing vocabulary.com's educational resources, Romano ensures that her students have access to enriching learning experiences across all subjects.

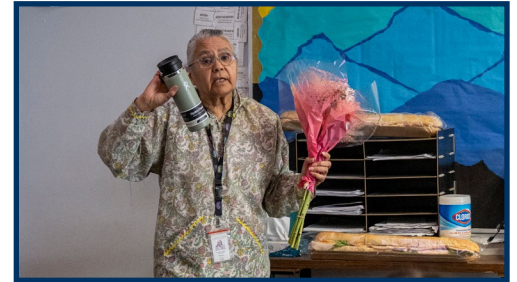
Beyond the competition, Romano hopes that her students' newfound

vocabulary skills will foster a love for reading, empowering them to stay informed and engaged with the world around them.

Tanana Chiefs Conference's Education Division honored the students' achievement by gifting them a Hydro Flask and a lunch of sub sandwiches and chips. TCC wants the students and the community of Minto to know how proud they should be of this accomplishment. A strong vocabulary is a solid foundation for all learning and many life skills. The dedication of Ms. Romano shows in the efforts put forth by the students and deserves recognition as well. Ms. Romano says she has used the Vocabulary.com program in other schools and has seen it have a positive impact on the students' reading and learning over time.

Minto School's triumph in the Vocabulary Bowl not only highlights their academic prowess but also underscores the transformative impact of education in their community.

Keep up the good work! You are leaders in this effort and may encourage other schools to join in!



Haiku

俳句

the waters wind
By: GZMO

Unforgiving tidal wave
water cold like winters peak
Rooted tree stands strong

Haiku by Minto student, GZMO (Jacob Titus)

Do You Have Your
Alaska Real ID Card?

Starting May 7th, 2025, all Alaska Residents will need a Real ID to fly on commercial airlines, visit or work on a military base or other federal property.

For more information on REAL ID, visit www.dhs.gov/real-id

Adventures in Seed Starting

By Heidi Rader, Professor of Extension at the University of Alaska Fairbanks

Embarrassingly, given my job title, I'm terrible at starting seeds indoors. I blame it partially on my travel schedule and not being able to give the little seedlings the love and attention they deserve. It could also be because I have not been willing to buy the proper setup to start seeds. Maybe it is because I am not a perfectionist, and some indoor seed starting can be a bit tedious. Or it could be because I'm short on time.

I do pretty well throwing seeds in the ground (direct seeding) once the soil is warm. But my direct seeding technique would also benefit from more precision in that I would need to do less thinning and would likely have more productive crops overall as well. I'm looking at you carrots!

I am also a good customer at our local greenhouses and happily (mostly) pay for the cost of transplants, knowing it has saved me a lot of time, effort and failed attempts.

But this year, I wanted to give pre-season seed starting my best effort. I tried four ways of starting seeds, first planting them on April 3 because that's when I had time.

1. Traditional seed-starting soil with a heat mat
2. Peat pellets
3. Hydroponically (Aerogarden)
4. Winter sowing



Traditional seed-starting soil with a heat mat

I am somewhat new to using a heat mat, but this worked really well. I should have parsed out the seeds according to their ideal germination requirements as well as according to their ideal timing, but again, back to my lack of perfectionism, who has time to [plant seeds at the ideal time](#) all spring long? That is definitely what you should do. I am already paying for it because I am giving plants like cosmos and sunflowers far too much space.

In any case, I put a greenhouse cover over my seedlings and turned the heat mat up to close to 80 degrees F. It was a virtual rainforest in the flat. A few seedlings looked a bit moldy and were germinating so I took off the greenhouse cover. Unfortunately, I did not turn the heat mat off at that point

and I should have. In exactly one day when I did not get around to checking on the seedlings, it went from tropical rainforest to desert. I killed a few seedlings, but luckily most of them survived and the mold seemed to disappear.

Some of the seedlings needed to be transplanted on April 10. One of my first jobs was transplanting tiny seedlings into six-packs, so this step was fun and easy. On April 21, I again put some of these seedlings into larger pots. I've moved the seedlings to a table next to a sunny, south-facing window.

Peat pellets

I planted a bunch of basil in these. I did not put them on a heat mat because I only have one. At first, I thought none of the seeds sprouted, but they were just very far behind the other seeds I'd planted. One thing I struggle with with peat pellets is that they dry out much more quickly than plastic planting trays. If you were only using peat pellets, you could probably be more in tune with their moisture requirements. The nice thing about peat pellets is that you have one fewer transplant stage. Squash and cucumbers, for instance, prefer not to be transplanted, so you should start them directly in a 4-inch pot.

Hydroponic seed starter

One of the assignments in the [Growing a Productive, Sustainable Garden in Alaska](#) class that I teach every spring is to keep a seed-starting and cutting journal. I find the failures in these journals to be most instructive and heartening, as I know I am not the only one struggling with seed-starting. I also get some great ideas for starting seeds from my students.

A former Alaska Master Gardener student wrote a blog post about [starting seeds in an aerogarden](#). Partially inspired by his success with this method, I purchased an aerogarden last fall and grew lettuce over the winter. I switched trays on April 3 to start seedlings.

Instead of only six spots for growing larger plants, the seed starting tray has 23 spots. I have the Harvest mod-

Scan for Article's Resources



<https://tinyurl.com/SeedStarting24>

el, which is ideal for me because I can put it on my kitchen counter and easily monitor the plants. I enjoy watching the plants and the added light in the winter. This method has worked very well for me and buys me a few days of flexibility where I do not have to worry at all about my seedlings except perhaps filling the water tank if I am gone more than a week. I had nearly 100% germination and these seedlings are the largest of the three indoor methods. They are ahead of all of the other methods. As of April 22, I have transplanted these to six packs, 1-inch pots or 4-inch pots.

Winter sowing

I heard about winter sowing last year from one of my colleagues and was intrigued by it, so I thought I would give it a try. It is supposed to be the easy, breezy way to start hardy seedlings, so of course I was sold on that. I am trying the classic winter sowing method of growing seedlings in milk jugs. Here is a helpful tutorial on [winter sowing](#). So far several of the seeds have come up! I am excited to see how they do in the garden.

Quick seed starting tips

1. Use sterile soil and pots (peat pots are sterile.)
2. Use a heat mat to speed germination. Look at seed packets to identify the ideal temperature for germination. Remove it when the seeds germinate!
3. Put plastic over germinating seeds, and remove it when about half germinate.
4. Place lights 2-4 inches above the plants after they germinate. Use a timer so that the lights are on for 12 to 16 hours a day. You can use a sunny window but it's not quite as effective.
5. Fertilize at a quarter strength when the seedlings have their second set of true leaves.
6. Use a fan to increase airflow (reduce damping off) and strengthen your seedlings. You can set it on

low 24/7. Make sure you water the seedlings as needed — they will need more water with a fan blowing on them!

7. Don't forget to harden off your plants. This entails bringing your seedlings outdoors for increasingly longer periods during calm, cloudy, and warm weather. Start at about an hour or two and increase from there. You don't have to do this with winter-sowed seeds. Make sure temperatures are at least 55 degrees F, it is not overly windy, and it is not intensely hot. Bring them in each night and if the weather is no longer favorable. Last year, it snowed on June 4 and many people lost their transplants. I also got really tired of taking the seeds in and out. But some people simply open their garage for the day.



8. Transplant your seedlings on a cloudy, warm, calm day. Plant your cool-season crops first and be extra cautious with transplanting warm-season crops outdoors like squash or basil. Use frost cloth or old sheets to protect your plants in the case of an unexpected cold snap. To see when the average last frost date is, go to the [Alaska Garden Helper](#). Even if there is no frost forecast, it will help speed up germination for direct-seeded crops.

If you want to start your own seeds, it's late for some things, but this is an almost ideal time for many things, including squash, cucumbers, lettuce, Swiss chard and sunflowers. Try one

or more of these methods and find one that works for you — and buying them from your local greenhouse is a tried-and-true method!

For more in-depth seed-starting instructions, consult UAF Extension's [Seed Starting guide](#).

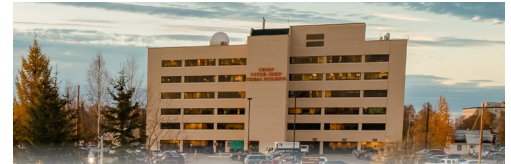
Good luck and chances are, you will be a better seed starter than I am. If you're not able to start seeds this year, there are several greenhouses that will ship transplants to your village.

If you have never gardened before in Alaska, then read this: <https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/2023/05/25/never-ever-gardened-before-in-alaska-keep-reading/>

Questions about gardening or the Tribes Extension Program? Visit www.uaf.edu/ces/tribes. Contact Heidi at hbrader@alaska.edu or 907-474-6620. For more articles like this, go to: <https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/>

Heidi Rader is a professor of Extension and Project director for the Alaska Tribes Extension Project. This work is supported by the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program Project 2022-41580-37957. It is a partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

UA is an AA/EEO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination.



TCC Awarded A+ for Strong Financial Profile

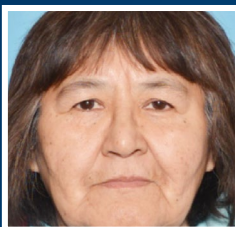
Fitch Ratings, America's leading credit analysis company, has issued Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) an A+ Issuer Default Rating (IDR) for the fiscal year 2024.

Although TCC has received an A+ IDR for the past several years, this year's Rating Outlook has been upgraded from "Stable" to "Positive," a reflection of TCC's strong financial profile. The bond-financed expansion of Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) and construction of the new ambulatory surgery center are additional causes for the upgraded Rating Outlook.

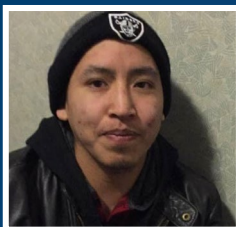
Chief/Chairman Brian Ridley commented on the achievement, saying, "We are thrilled with the A+ rating and the upgrade to a positive outlook by Fitch Ratings. This reflects our ongoing commitment to making sound investment decisions that ensure we have the capacity to provide essential services to our Tribes and Tribal Members. It's a testament to our strong governance and financial stewardship."

This recognition by Fitch Ratings not only serves as a validation of TCC's current financial strategies but also plays a crucial role in enhancing the confidence of investors and stakeholders in the stability and growth potential of the organization.

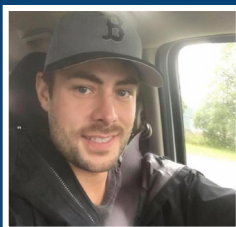
MISSING



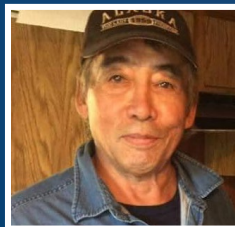
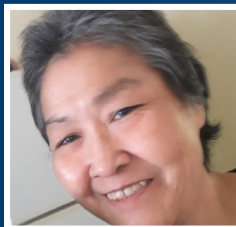
Lorraine Ginnis



Willis Derendoff



Doren Sanford



SUBMIT TIPS ANONYMOUSLY:

Text AKTIPS followed by your tip to 84711

or visit

<https://dps.alaska.gov/ast/tips>



Call the Alaska State Troopers at 907-451-5100, Fairbanks Police Department at 907-450-6500 or TCC Public Safety at 907-452-8251 ext.3269. Visit www.tananachiefs.org/missing for more information.



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

The Council Newsletter

(907) 452-8251 ext. 3424
communications_dept@tananachiefs.org
www.tananachiefs.org

Communications Division
122 First Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701



Sign-Up to receive
our E-Newsletter!
Get important
updates straight
to your inbox.



FIND YOUR PURPOSE

Join Our Team!

New Vacancies

Eagle	Home Care Provider
Fairbanks	Administrative Assistant II - Tribal Development
Fairbanks	Environmental Services CAIHC Supervisor
Fairbanks	Administrative Assistant II - Dental
Fairbanks	Patient Experience Manager
Fairbanks	Native Connections Project Coordinator
Fairbanks	Pharmacy Technician I
Fairbanks	Clinical Support Staff/Medical Assistant
Fairbanks	Wellness & Prevention Deputy Director
Fairbanks	Administrative Assistant II - ASC
Fairbanks	Behavioral Health Clinician II - Graf Rheenerhaanjii
Fairbanks	Infrastructure Project Manager
Fairbanks	Youth Engagement Specialist
Fairbanks	Coordinator Instructor - Mid-Level Practitioner
Fairbanks	Manager - Community Health Aide Training Center
Fairbanks	Infrastructure Project Manager
Fairbanks	Youth Engagement Specialist
Fairbanks	Coordinator Instructor - Mid-Level Practitioner
Fairbanks	Manager - Community Health Aide Training Center
Fairbanks	TRS Outreach Coordinator
Fairbanks	Natural Resource Policy Analyst
Fairbanks	Paul Williams House Program Manager
Fairbanks	Registration & Admissions Specialist
Fairbanks	Certified Medical Assistant
Fairbanks	Solar Project Supervisor
Fairbanks	Surgical Environmental Service Technician I
Fairbanks	Physician - Women's Health
Hughes	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
McGrath	Village Public Safety Officer
Nikolai	Tribal Administrator - Onsite Supervisor
Telida	Tribal Administrator - Onsite Supervisor



Apply Online or Learn About Our Benefits!

Visit our website at www.tananachiefs.org/careers to see a full list of open positions and learn more about the benefits available through Tanana Chiefs Conference.

JOBS LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF MAY 16, 2024



Do You Have Medicaid?
Don't Miss This Letter!

Medicaid Renewal Letters



Medicaid renewal has started the annual renewal process, and the Division of Public Assistance will be reaching out to households to verify information to renew Medicaid coverage.

Questions?

Contact Alternate Resources at
907-451-6682 ext. 3100

UPCOMING EVENTS

**JUNE
1-6**

NCAI Mid-Year Convention
Cherokee, NC

**JUNE
14**

TCC Staff Picnic
Limited Services Available 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

**JUNE
19**

TCC Offices Closed
Juneteenth

**JUNE
21**

Behavioral Health Job Fair
Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall • Fairbanks, AK

**JULY
4-5**

TCC Offices Closed
Independence Day