



The Council

Incorporated as Dena' Nena' Henash
Vol. 50 No. 4 • April 2025



Guided By Culture, Focused on Tomorrow: The 2025 TCC Annual Convention and Full Board of Directors Meeting

The 2025 Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Annual Convention and Full Board of Directors Meeting was held March 10–13 in Fairbanks, bringing together Tribal leaders, delegates, and community members from across the region to address pressing issues, hear updates from leadership, pass resolutions, and elect key Executive Board members.

This year's theme, "Guided by Culture, Focused on Tomorrow," underscored the organization's commitment to strengthening services and oppor-

tunities for Tribal members while remaining rooted in Alaska Native culture, values, and traditions.

During his address to the Full Board of Directors, Chief Brian Ridley emphasized that TCC's cultural foundation is a source of strength and direction during challenging times. He acknowledged growing concerns over potential federal and Medicaid funding cuts and their possible impact on TCC services. Chief Ridley stressed the importance of preparing now to safeguard essential services.

"We don't know how long these funding cuts will last or how deep their impacts will be. This means we can't afford to wait and see—we have to take a proactive approach now," Ridley said. "Our commitment is clear: We will navigate these challenges together, with transparency, resilience, and the determination to protect the services our communities rely on."

Delegates expressed similar concerns throughout the convention, particularly around the sustainability of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4.

Wear Red on May 5th

Join us in wearing red on May 5th to honor Missing and Murdered Indigenous People. This day is a time to remember our loved ones, raise awareness, and stand in solidarity with families seeking justice. Every person we've lost is cherished and never forgotten. Together we can amplify voices, demand action, and remember those who are still missing.



IN THIS ISSUE...

- PAGE 3:** Keynote Urges Cultural Renewal
- PAGE 5:** 2025 Election Results
- PAGE 6:** 2025 Resolutions
- PAGE 8:** 2025 TCC Award Winners
- PAGE 12:** Indigenous Healing Gathering



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 Tribal Leaders and Tribal Members,
Last month, we gathered for our Annual Convention and Full Board of Directors meeting under the theme "Guided by Culture, Focused on Tomorrow." This theme reflected our commitment to honoring our traditions while working toward a stronger future for our people.

We were honored to have Taa'ajj Ch'igiiontà' as our keynote speaker, accompanied by his daughters, Na'ni'eezh and Ch'eelil, as well as First Traditional Chief Trimble Gilbert. Their speech, delivered in Dinjii Zhuh K'yàa (the Gwich'in language) and translated into English on stage, was a powerful reminder of the importance of preserving our languages and traditions. It was an incredible moment that highlighted the strength of our culture and the responsibility we have to pass it on to future generations. If you missed it, I encourage you to watch the full keynote on our YouTube page or by scanning the QR code on the next page.



In addition to powerful speeches, our convention featured several insightful panels on key topics identified as priorities by the Full Board during our convention last November. These panels covered Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP), Housing, Lands, Health, Federal Updates, and even a Youth Panel. Each discussion highlighted critical issues impacting our Tribes and provided valuable perspectives on the challenges and opportunities ahead.

During the final days of our convention, we passed 28 resolutions that will guide our work in the coming year. These resolutions are listed on page 8 of this newsletter, and additional details can be found on our website at www.tananachiefs.org/about/resolutions. These decisions reflect the priorities and voices of our Tribes, and we remain committed to carrying them forward.

I also want to extend my congratulations to several of our leaders who were re-elected to the Executive Board of Directors:

- Sharon Hildebrand – Vice-President
- Chief Lori Baker – Yukon Tanana Representative
- Chief Nancy James – Yukon Flats Representative

Additionally, we congratulate our re-elected Health Board directors:

- Agnes Tony – Upper Kuskokwim Representative
- Sylvia Pitka – Upper Tanana Representative

Their dedication and leadership continue to strengthen our organization and the services we provide to our people.

I encourage you to learn more about the discussions and outcomes of our annual convention throughout this newsletter. As always, we remain committed to working together, guided by our culture, to build a better tomorrow for our communities.

Mahsi' Choo
Brian Ridley

MISSING



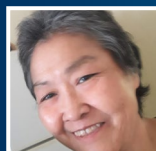
Lorraine Ginnis



Willis Derendoff



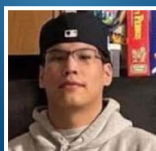
Doren Sanford



Debbie Nictune



Frank Minano



Devin Standifer

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.

Keynote Speakers Urge Cultural Renewal Through Language and Tradition

The theme of the 2025 Tanana Chiefs Conference Annual Convention, “Guided by Culture, Focused on Tomorrow,” resonated powerfully during this year’s keynote address.

The speech was delivered by Taa’ajj Ch’igiiontà of Arctic Village, along with his daughters, Na’ni’eezh and Ch’eelil, and First Traditional Chief Trimble Gilbert. Much of the address was spoken in Dinjii Zhuh K’yàa, the Gwich’in language, and translated on stage into English. The speakers emphasized the strength of Indigenous identity, the urgency of language preservation and the shared responsibility we all have to carry these values into the future.

Taa’ajj, a Neets’aii Gwich’in leader and advocate for Indigenous languages and rights, focused on healing through language and living in alignment with ancestral values.

“We need to teach the young how to be Native people,” he said through his daughters, who have been studying Gwich’in for two years. “It is good to make time to learn how to survive from the land — to hunt and harvest, to tan hides and sew our own clothing.”

Their family’s commitment to cultural preservation was clear in both words and example. Ch’eelil shared her experience of living in Arctic Village and learning to live from the land — hunting caribou, drying meat and finding peace in those practices. Na’ni’eezh reflected on how learning

to speak the language, sing, bead and sew has grounded her identity and renewed her spirit.

“Learning who we are is healing,” Na’ni’eezh said. “When we live our ways of life, we heal and respect all our relations.”

Gilbert, who has lived traditionally in Arctic Village for more than 75 years, shared reflections on the enduring strength of Gwich’in communities.

“For thousands of years, we’ve been taking care of each other,” Gilbert said.

“And I’m so happy that we still take care of each other.”

He spoke about Elders who only spoke Gwich’in, communities sustained by Native foods, and the importance of continuing cultural practices through song, dance and storytelling.

The keynote concluded with traditional songs, including one written after the historic 1915 gathering of Alaska Native leaders, and the Caribou Skin Hut Song, composed by Louie Silas Williams of Tanana. As people gathered to drum and sing, the moment became both a tribute to the past and a declaration of unity and strength.

At a time when Indigenous languages face rapid loss and traditional food systems are under threat, the keynote served as a call to action.

“Now is the time,” Taa’ajj said. “While we still have knowledgeable Elders in

Scan here to watch the keynote address



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUIzeeF3YU8>

our communities.”

He went on to speak about the importance of unity and healing as essential steps toward moving forward.

“For us to work together — we need to heal together,” he said. “Our parents and grandparents were told not to speak our language and to be who they were as Native people. This caused a lot of pain and confusion. Now we have to recover from this hurt and become strong people, as our ancestors were long ago.

“As Native people, we know it is right for us to be who we are. It is good to speak with an Indigenous mindset. Learning our language is healing. Learning the skills and knowledge from our ancestors is healing. Learning who we are is healing.

“As we heal, let us learn to forgive ourselves and others. A single arrow can be easily broken. However, a bundle of arrows is unbreakable.”

Their voices — carrying the strength of generations — served as a reminder that when people are rooted in language, culture and community, the knowledge and spirit of their ancestors live on.



“For us to work together, we need to heal together.”
Taa’ajj Ch’igiiontà



2025 TCC Annual Convention and Full Board of Directors Meeting

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

healthcare, social services, and other critical programs that rely heavily on federal and Medicaid funding.

Three Executive Board members were re-elected to serve three-year terms: Sharon Hildebrand, Vice-President, Chief Lori Baker, Yukon Tanana Representative and Chief Nancy James, Yukon Flats Representative.

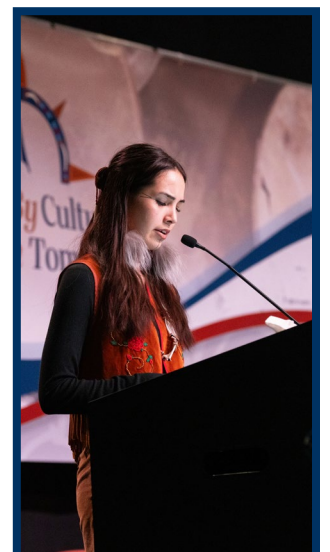
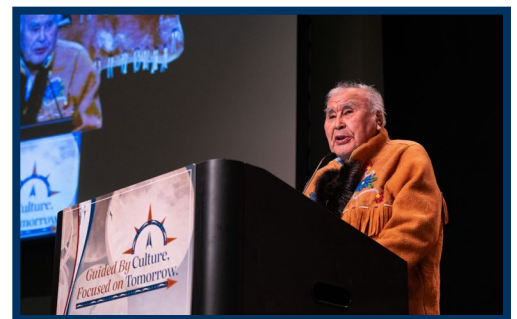
A major highlight of the event was the keynote address by Taa'ajj Ch'igiiiontà', joined by his daughters Na'ni'eezh and Ch'eelil, and First Traditional Chief Trimble Gilbert. Delivered in Dinjii Zhuh K'yàa (the Gwich'in language) and translated into English, their speech emphasized the importance of language revitalization and intergenerational knowledge.

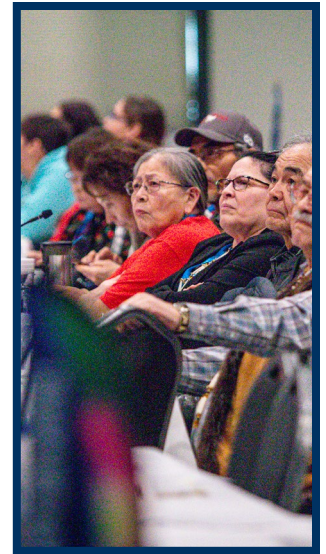
Throughout the week, attendees participated in panels focused on re-

gional priorities, including Prevention and Healthy Lifestyles, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, Tribal Land Stewardship, Building Our Future – Housing Opportunities and an Addressing Violence Against Youth – led by TCC's Emerging Leaders.

Each session provided valuable insight into ongoing challenges and highlighted innovative, community-driven approaches to addressing them.

The 2025 Convention concluded with the passage of resolutions to guide TCC's priorities in the coming year, reinforcing the organization's focus on protecting Tribal sovereignty, enhancing wellness, and building a strong foundation for future generations.





Tanana Chiefs Conference 2025 Election Results

Executive Board of Directors



VICE-PRESIDENT
Sharon Hildebrand,
Nulato
Term: 2025-2028



YUKON FLATS REPRESENTATIVE
Nancy James,
Gwichyaa Zhee
Term: 2025-2028



YUKON TANANA REPRESENTATIVE
Lori Baker, Minto
Term: 2025-2028

Regional Health Board of Directors



UPPER TANANA
Sylvia Pitka
Term: 2025-2028



UPPER KUSKOKWIM
Agnes Tony
Term: 2025-2028

Interior Regional Housing Authority

Seat C - Kimberly Carlo, Gwichyaa Zhee
Seat D - Leah Woods, Tanana/Rampart

Interior Athabaskan Tribal College

LOWER YUKON SUBREGION - Chief Matthew Burkett
UPPER TANANA SUBREGION - Tanisha Moses

Education Council

UPPER KUSKOKWIM SUBREGION - Chief Alice Dale
UPPER TANANA SUBREGION - Rebecca Gallen



TCC Full Board of Directors Passes 28 Resolutions at the 2025 Annual Convention

Each year, resolutions are submitted for review by the TCC Full Board of Directors. These resolutions guide the direction of Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and its employees throughout the coming year and beyond. At the 2025 TCC Annual Convention & Full Board of Directors Meeting, 31 resolutions were submitted, with 28 resolutions passing after thorough discussion and debate.

Among the resolutions passed was one directing TCC to initiate a Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) Arming Pilot Project. This resolution allows TCC to develop policies, procedures,

and training for a program that would give Tribes the option to have an armed VPSO stationed in their community. Delegates expressed concerns about the safety of residents, the safety of the VPSOs themselves, and potential liability. After extensive discussion, the resolution passed, allowing TCC to move forward with planning.

Another key resolution was an emergency resolution submitted by Denakanaaga, calling for TCC to work with Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) leadership to renew its membership before the Fall Convention in October 2025. The resolution also requires an

annual review to determine whether continued membership remains in the best interest of TCC. With impending budget cuts and federal uncertainty, the Full Board determined that now is the time for unified advocacy across Alaska to ensure a stronger voice for Tribal interests.

Resolutions passed by the Full Board set the course for TCC's work and priorities moving forward. Updates on resolution implementation will be provided in the coming months at www.tananachiefs.org/resolutions.

2025 Proposed Resolutions

#	Title	Status
2025-01	Addressing the Epidemic of Obesity	PASSED
2025-02	Amend the Alaska Native Vietnam Era Veterans Allotment Act to Include All Alaska Native Vietnam Era Veterans Who Served Between 01/01/1972 through 05/07/1975	PASSED
2025-03	Addressing BIA Funding Equity for Tribal Governments	PASSED
2025-04	Conducting A Feasibility Analysis to Create an Independent Business to Support TCC's Re-Entry Program and Create Jobs for Alaska Native Peoples with Criminal Convictions	PASSED
2025-05	Day of Peaceful Protest for the Survival of the Salmon on the Yukon River	PASSED
2025-06	Educating Youth & TCC Communities on Hunting and Gun Safety to Reduce Gun Violence and Preventable Deaths	PASSED
2025-07	Fishwheel Access and Education	PASSED
2025-08	Inclusion of Traplines in Full Protection Status for Wildland Fire Land Management Classifications	PASSED
2025-09	Request to TCC to Increase Number of Employees in the LIHEAP Department to Ensure Timely Application Processing	PASSED

Act Fast, Save a Life!

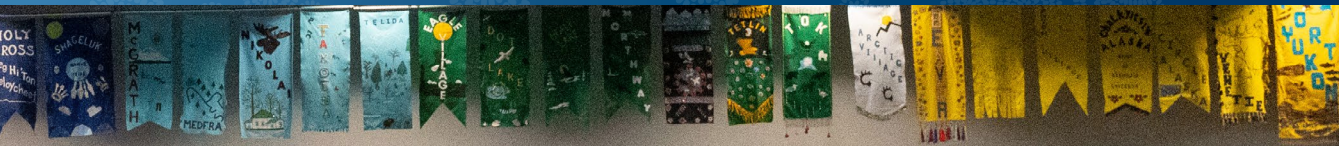
Get **FREE** Narcan Spray

Questions? Call (907) 452-8251 ext. 3941

To place your order, visit:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TCCNARCAN>



Available through
TCC Wellness &
Prevention!



2025 Proposed Resolutions

#	Title	Status
2025-10	Resolution Condemning Jeffrey Amherst Mass Murderer Who Introduced Biological Warfare to the Indigenous of America	TABLED
2025-11	Resolution Demanding the City of Fairbanks and State of Alaska Make a Formal Apology to the Fairbanks Four, For Unlawfully Imprisoning Them for the Murder of John Hartman, While One of the Killers of John Hartman was Free to Murder Again	PASSED
2025-12	Resolution Demanding the Vatican, European Governments, and American Government, Rescind the Doctrine of Discovery	TABLED
2025-13	Resolution for Mandatory Indigenous Orientation Course for All Elected, Appointed and Hired Officials, Politicians and Staff of State and Federal Governments and Territorial Possessions	PASSED
2025-14	Resolution Requesting Tanana Chiefs Conference Advocate on Behalf of Tribes to Address Office of Children's Services Improvement Plans and Compliance with Quality Assurance Standards	PASSED
2025-15	Resolution to Amend and Rename Resolution 2018-29 to Apply to All Waters in Alaska	PASSED
2025-16	Resolution to Amend Bylaws Removing Alaska Residency Requirement for Board Members	FAILED
2025-17	Resolution to Demand to Stop All Bottom Trawling Until the Yukon Subsistence Fisherman, and Fisherwomen, are Allowed to Fish for Chinook Salmon	PASSED
2025-18	Resolution to Explore the Need and Feasibility of Group Homes for Tribal Children in Foster Care	PASSED
2025-19	Resolution to Increase Youth Engagement in Cultural Activities and Tribal Governance	PASSED
2025-20	Resolution to Oppose Hilcorp Development	PASSED
2025-21	Resolution to Recognize Kenneth Newman Sr.	PASSED
2025-22	Resolution to Research Funding Opportunities to Build New Sanitation Facilities in Villages	PASSED
2025-23	Resolution to Revert the Name of Mt. Foraker Back to Denali B'ot	PASSED
2025-24	Resolution to Sign onto the Declaration of the International Indigenous Salmon Peoples	PASSED
2025-25	Resubmitting Resolution 2023-13 Patient Medical Lodging and Meals	PASSED
2025-26	Retaining the US Bureau of Land Management ANCSA 17 D-1 Public Land Orders for the Conservation of Wild Food Economy Resources	PASSED
2025-27	Support for Conveyance of Duck House / Geese House Site to Doyon, Limited	PASSED
2025-28	TCC Initiate a Village Public Safety Officer Arming Pilot Project	PASSED
2025-29	Resolution to Consider the Feasibility of a Traditional Youth Program – Healing through Culture and Wellness	PASSED
2025-30	Wellness & Healing Center	PASSED
2025-31	Resolution to Rejoin the Alaska Federation of Natives	PASSED

Get Your Alaska REAL ID Now!

TCC has partnered with Turbo Tags & Titles to ensure that our Tribal members have their REAL IDs by May 7, 2025. Turbo Tags and Titles hosted a booth at the 2025 Annual Convention, and 187 Tribal members received their REAL IDs during the four day event. This successful event assisted Tribal members with becoming compliant with approaching regulations and removing barriers to building job skills and employment as well as travel for medical needs.

If any Tribe is interested in hosting Turbo Tags and Titles in their community using their BIA Job Placement and Training Funds, they can reach out to Patrick Turner at (907) 455-TAGS (8247) or by visiting 3413 Airport Way in Fairbanks.

To obtain your REAL ID, you will need specific documentation verifying your identity, including (1) a document showing your identity and lawful status as a US citizen, (2) your social security number, (3) your residential address, and (4) documentation of any name change(s) you may have had if applicable. Visit <https://dmv.alaska.gov/media/ozwhxz3e/ak-real-id-checklist.pdf> for specific information.



2025 TCC Award Winners

2025 TCC Urban Employee of the Year Samantha Arbuckle

Dedication, innovation, and compassion define this year's Tanana Chiefs Urban Employee of the Year—Samantha Arbuckle of Health Services. With six nominations, Samantha's impact on Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center and the patient community is undeniable.



empowering patients often means going the extra mile to ensure they feel supported. Beyond patient care, she excels in problem-solving and process improvement, bringing innovative solutions that enhance efficiency.

Samantha demonstrates Ch'egh-wtsen' through exceptional communication and care. Her dedication to

Her contributions strengthen both the team and the mission of Tanana Chiefs Conference. Congratulations, Samantha, on this well-deserved honor!

2025 TCC Rural Employee of the Year Rosalie Egrass

This year's Rural Employee of the Year Award was given to Rosalie Egrass of McGrath. Rosalie has been a beloved Head Start teacher in her community for many years. She is known for her classroom leadership and for her dedication to her community. She inspires learning through creativity and play, infusing Indigenous culture into classroom activities. Her students have learned how to process moose meat, make plastic ulus, and



design pretend boat motors. Rosalie is heralded by the children, parents, and her peers in the community for going above and beyond to ensure future generations are strong in educational knowledge, culture, and family and community bonds.

TCC is so proud to have Rosalie as part of our Head Start team. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to her and thank her for her dedication to the children of McGrath!

VPSO of the Year Nate Becker

The 2025 Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) of the Year is Sergeant Nate Becker, of Eagle. Sgt. Becker is commemorated for demonstrating unwavering service to his community and beyond, providing exemplary public safety and earning statewide recognition for his professionalism and quick thinking. He has shown an ability to de-escalate critical situations and was notably honored for his consistent willingness to go above and beyond his call of duty,



becoming the VPSO Program's first Fire Investigator in the state. You can find Sgt. Becker volunteering to assist other villages in need and acting as a dedicated Training Officer, facilitating essential trainings which act to reinforce the high standards of the VPSO Program.

Join us in congratulating Sgt. Becker for his exemplary service as a VPSO. Thank you for your dedication and support to your community and to our VPSO program!



Foster Parents of the Year Warren & Audrey George

The 2025 Foster Parent of the Year Award proudly goes to Warren and Audrey George of Tanana! Nominated by the Tanana Tribal Council, Warren and Audrey have dedicated over 15 years to providing a loving, stable home for children in need.

Warren, a Nulato Tribal member, and Audrey, a Tanana Tribal member, first became foster parents when the Tribe reached out for urgent placements. Without hesitation, they stepped up, and today, they are raising four thriving children in their home. Despite their busy careers—Warren working on the North Slope and Audrey running her own accounting firm—they ensure their children's needs are met with unwavering love and care.

They never ask for extra support, yet their generosity and kindness shine through in everything they do. Their humility, warmth, and humor make them beloved members of the community, and the TCC region is truly fortunate to have foster parents like Warren and Audrey. Join us in thanking them for their commitment to our youngest Tribal members.

Interested in becoming a foster parent?

Our Tribal communities need caring families to provide safe, loving homes. Contact Niisha Walsh, TCC's Tribal Social Services Manager, at (907) 452-8251 ext. 3372 to learn more.

Tribal Administrators of the Year Rachel Freireich & Karma Ulvi

Strong leadership and unwavering dedication are the foundation of a thriving Tribal community. This year, two outstanding individuals are recognized as Tribal Administrators of the Year: Rachel Freireich of Grayling and Karma Ulvi of Eagle. Their commitment, resilience, and tireless advocacy for their communities make them truly deserving of this honor.



Rachel Freireich – Grayling

Rachel Freireich is known for her resilience, strength, and dedication to her community. She goes above and beyond, advocating for youth, fostering strong partnerships with neighboring Tribes, and even volunteering on a fire assignment to ensure the sub-regional contract crew received their wages. Her reliability and compassion are deeply valued.



Karma Ulvi – Eagle

In Eagle, Karma Ulvi's deep-rooted commitment to her community has long been evident. She has served in many roles, including Community Health Aide, emergency responder, and Chief, always stepping up when her village needs her. With professionalism, discernment, and strong leadership, Karma turns challenges into opportunities, making a lasting impact on her community.

Rachel and Karma embody the spirit of service and leadership, working tirelessly to support and uplift their communities. Their hard work does not go unnoticed, and their dedication is deeply appreciated.

Congratulations to Rachel Freireich and Karma Ulvi on this well-earned recognition.



Patti L. Hyslop Leadership in Sobriety Award Jamey Titus

Jamey Titus of Northway was given the 2025 Patti Hyslop Leadership in Sobriety Award. Jamey is deeply involved in his community, sharing his time and knowledge to uplift others. From drumming at potlatches to working as Northway's Youth Worker Supervisor, his dedication to fostering wellness, culture, and growth is recognized.

Jamey volunteers at Culture Camp, coaches students, and serves as a mentor for all ages. As a father, he instills values in his children, passing down skills in hunting, culture, and athleticism. His leadership has made a lasting impact. Congratulations, Jamey, and thank you for your dedication to sobriety and mentorship!

Make a Difference

Become a Foster Parent

Help Us Find Safe Homes!

Help us reach our goal of having readily available foster parents in Fairbanks and across the TCC region to provide safe, loving homes at a crucial time in a child's life. Our Tribal communities have a need for caring, supportive families to care for our Tribal children who are in foster care.

Questions? Contact:

Niisha Walsh | Tribal Social Services Manager
valeen.walsh@tananachiefs.org | 907-452-8251 ext. 3372





MMIP Panel Calls for Action and Awareness at the 2025 Annual Convention

The ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) took center stage during the 2025 Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Annual Convention, where a panel of advocates, leaders, and public safety officials shared their insights and personal experiences. The discussion highlighted the urgent need for awareness, policy change, and continued community support.

The panel featured Elizabeth Webb, mother of missing person Doren Sanford and MMIP advocate; Mackenzie Englishoe, Chair of the Emerging Leaders Youth Advisory Council; Tami Jerue, Executive Director of the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center; David Atteberry, TCC Public Safety Manager; Michael Gho, TCC Tribal Protection and Safety Director; and Shirley Lee, Deputy Director of the Fairbanks Native Association.

Webb opened the discussion with a powerful moment, inviting family members of missing loved ones to stand. "Look around this room. How many of us have somebody missing? Keep these people in prayer. We're all waiting for some answers." She shared the overwhelming and paralyzing emotions that come when a loved one goes missing, reflecting on her own experience after her son's disappearance in 2020. "The silence—it's terrible," she said. "We have to remember

their voices, the way they walked, the way they were, their favorite food. Keep in mind, they're somewhere—it's just, they're not at home."

Englishoe spoke about the impact of MMIP on Indigenous youth, acknowledging that this crisis is deeply personal. "We grow up with this knowledge that this could happen to anyone within our community. It could happen to us," she stated. "Every missing person is a daughter, a mother, a cousin, an uncle, an auntie, or a friend. Every time someone goes missing, it's a current part of our history." She called for stronger safety education and proactive policy changes to better protect Native communities.

Jerue highlighted the work of the *Not Invisible Act Commission*, established in 2019 to address MMIP issues through a coalition of family members, survivors, advocates, Tribal courts, and law enforcement. She emphasized the disparities in national attention between Native and non-Native missing persons, stating, "We feel invisible. Our family members are constantly pleading for recognition, for information."

Lee and Atteberry presented a one-page MMIP Response Checklist, aiming to improve the immediate response when a person goes missing. Lee dispelled the myth that families must wait 24 hours to report someone missing and shared that TCC is work-

ing to establish a call number to ensure immediate advocacy. Atteberry addressed challenges such as jurisdictional confusion, poor data collection, and distrust in law enforcement, all of which delay response efforts. "If something's unusual—if the person is not where they should be—report them immediately so we can start," he urged.

Lee underscored the need for a Justice Center and a dedicated private investigator to assist in MMIP cases. She called upon Tribes to pass resolutions supporting these efforts and emphasized that collective advocacy is crucial. "Every single one of you has a voice. Every single one of you can start something," she said. "We can't remain silent. We know from other cases that when you raise your voice in public constantly, it gets attention."

She closed the panel by recalling the words of MMIP advocate Shirley Demientieff, who ended every conversation by saying, "I love you." Lee echoed that sentiment, reminding the audience that MMIP advocacy is rooted in love: "Every step at a rally, every tear that is shed, every cry that is uttered is a prayer. Keep praying. I love you."

The panel served as both a call to action and a message of solidarity, urging Tribal leaders, organizations, and individuals to continue searching for answers and pushing for meaningful change. The fight for justice and the memories of the missing must remain front and center until every family finds the answers they deserve.



Village Visits: Holy Cross & McGrath

On Tuesday, March 3rd, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Leadership visited the communities of Holy Cross and McGrath. The visit allowed leaders to meet with Tribal leadership and community members, provide pertinent updates, and answer Tribal members pressing questions ahead of the 2025 annual convention.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the communities of Holy Cross and McGrath for welcoming us and taking the time to share your insights and concerns.



Denakkanaaga and Tanana Chiefs Conference Present

Coming Home The Alaskan Poetry of Mary TallMountain

Proudly Sponsored by the Nulato Tribal Council

Free Admission!

Saturday, April 26th, 2025 | 2:30 pm
Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center
Fairbanks, AK

Sunday, May 4th, 2025 | 3:00 pm
Nulato Multipurpose Building
Nulato, AK

Mary TallMountain (1918 -1994) was only six-years-old when she was adopted out of her village. Writing and a strong grounding in her Native culture helped her endure many traumas until she was finally able to come home to Nulato 50 years later. Hearing Mary's story will help people recognize the healing power of their own stories.

Script by Anne Hanley based on the writings of Mary TallMountain
Produced by Sharon McConnell
Directed by Frank Yaska

Indigenous Healing Gathering Brings Culture, Connection & Celebration

On March 8, 2025, the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center came alive with the spirit of healing, culture, and community at TCC's Indigenous Healing Gathering. This special event brought together TCC beneficiaries, traditional healers, Elders, and artisans for a day of connection, learning, and celebration.



From the opening prayer to the closing reflections, attendees experienced traditional healing through one-on-one sessions, talking circles, and plant medicine workshops. They learned from Indigenous healers, explored the benefits of plant medicine, and took part in Native arts and crafts. The event also featured

the Dene' Eslaanh Dance Group, highlighting the beauty and power of traditional song and dance.

One of the most meaningful moments was hearing wisdom shared by Elders, reminding us of the strength and resilience in our cultural roots. The event not only provided healing opportunities but also reinforced the importance of keeping traditions alive for future generations.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us in making this gathering a success! If you missed it and want to learn more about TCC's Indigenous Healing Program, reach out to Mara Becker at mara.becker@tananachiefs.org. We look forward to gathering again!



PBS's 'Molly of Denali' Wins First Emmy Awarded to Indigenous Creators

An episode of the animated PBS Kids show "Molly of Denali" won an Emmy award for *Writing for a Preschool Animated Series* at the third annual Children's and Family Emmy Awards on March 18.

It is the first Emmy for the series, which won a Peabody Award in 2020 and has been nominated for multiple Emmys since it began airing in 2019.

Rochelle Adams, a Gwich'in from the villages of Beaver and Fort Yukon, has helped create the world of Molly as an Alaska Native Cultural Advisor and writer for the show. Adams was in attendance for the reception of the award.

"It is history in the making, because this is the first Indigenous Emmy," she said, adding, "I hope that when children of all ages see the show, they'll feel represented. This Emmy reflects the beauty of Indigenous people, our amazing cultures and our ways of life. We honor our homelands and waters,

especially our connection to Denali, The Great One."

Adams said it has been an honor to work with talented creators that truly care about celebrating the diversity of Indigenous culture and the inclusion of it in mainstream television. "Growing up I didn't have shows like Molly of Denali to see myself represented in a real and accurate way," she said. "Now that we are in an industry where we are able to tell our own stories and educate people about who we are, it's amazing!"

The episode "Not a Mascot" that premiered March 27, 2024, won the best writing award among five other nominees. Adams says she is looking forward to where the show and its creators can go from here. "I encourage all young Indigenous children to know that they can dream big and create things that have not been created yet, to always be proud of who they are



Red Carpet photo with the Emmy Award after the win for Best Writing of a Preschool Animated Series goes to Du Aaní Kawdinook Xh'unei and Molly of Denali!

and to be encouraged to speak their languages, live their traditional ways of life and honor their ancestors in ways that are special to them."

Tanana Chiefs Conference is proud of the work of contributors like Rochelle Adams, and of the inspiration she provides for our future generations.

April 29th George Attla Jr. Day

“You’re trying to beat time and then eventually time catches up with you. You can try your best; you may beat the competitors but you can’t beat time.”

-George Attla Jr.-
In Attla’s Tracks

George Attla Jr. Day is a special occasion in Alaska, dedicated to honoring the memory of a remarkable individual. George Attla Jr., known for his extraordinary talent in dog mushing, was not just a sports hero but also a symbol of strength and cultural identity.

Born in 1933 near Koyukuk on the Yukon River, George grew up in a traditional lifestyle, learning essential skills like fishing and hunting from his family. However, it was his love for dog mushing that made him famous. By the 1950s, he had already gained a reputation as a legendary sprint dog racer, earning the nickname “Huslia Hustler.”

George’s accomplishments in the world of dog mushing were exceptional. He won numerous races world-

wide and received recognition for his achievements, including induction into the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame. His talent and dedication earned him the title of the Best Musher of the 20th Century.

In 1988, Governor Steve Cowper declared April 29th as “George Attla Day” in honor of his contributions.

In 2015, the Beaver Village Council submitted a resolution to officially recognize April 29th as George Attla Jr. Day, a decision supported by the TCC Full Board of Directors. This day serves as a time to remember and appreciate Attla’s legacy, celebrating his impact on Alaskan culture and sports.

George Attla Jr. Day is not just about commemorating a sports legend but also about honoring a man who in-

spired others through his skill, determination, and cultural pride. Though George may no longer be with us, his spirit continues to inspire generations of Alaskans.

TCC Spring Job Fair

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

11:00 am - 6:00 pm

Westmark Hotel, Gold Room
Fairbanks, AK

Infrastructure

Find Your Purpose. Join Our Team!

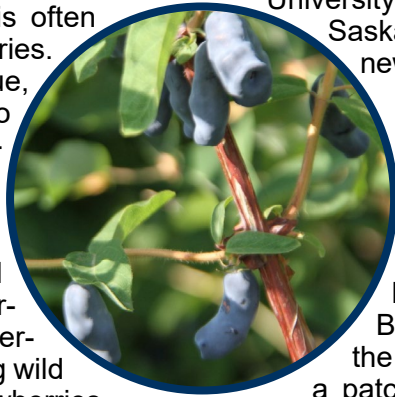
Growing Honeyberries or Haskaps in Alaska

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

Honeyberries or haskaps are a unique berry. Not only that, honeyberries have a huge range in shape, size, productivity, taste, timing and evenness in how they ripen, as well as in how easy they come off the bush. The taste of honeyberries is often compared to other berries. I think the taste is unique, and you should try it to make your own comparisons with other berries.

I have written several articles on berries, and they are roughly in order of my personal preference: first, on cultivating wild blueberries, next strawberries, then raspberries, and then currants. So now I'm tackling honeyberries or haskaps so they are my fifth favorite berry. They would be 6th if you include cloudberrries. I'm not going to write about cloudberrries since they are generally not cultivated, although there may be ways to [protect and promote their growth in the wild](#).

Some berries require full sun, a narrow pH range, and well-drained soils. Honeyberries on the other hand tolerate partial shade, wet soils, and a wide pH range. Their pruning requirements are more manageable than other types of berries, and they won't take over your backyard with thorny bushes like raspberries tend to do. What's not to like about a berry that is easy to grow, cold hardy, highly productive, and ripens earlier than most berries?



History of Honeyberry

Lonicera caerulea (Honeyberry, Haskap, Blue Honeysuckle) was originally cultivated in Japan and Russia. Later, researchers at Oregon State University and the University of Saskatchewan bred many new varieties.

Choosing a variety

Close to 20 varieties of Honeyberries have been planted at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Georgeson Botanical Garden over the years, and there is quite a patch now that has started to grow together. Of these varieties, Borealis and Blue Belle are the only ones that I think are still widely available. Borealis was touted as the best tasting variety in the University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program in 2007, but Boreal Blizzard may have surpassed it. In 2021, the Boreal Series, ([Boreal Beauty](#), [Boreal Blizzard](#), and [Honey Bee](#) (Pollinator for Borealis, Tundra, and Indigo series)) developed at the University of Saskatchewan in 2017 were planted at the Georgeson Botanical Garden at UAF. Boreal Beauty matures about a month later than other honeyberries and Boreal Blizzard has large, very tasty berries. The plants all seem to be thriving at the Georgeson Botanical Garden according to manager Lacey Higham.

The Alaska Berry Farm has bred a number of haskap [varieties](#) that thrive in Alaska--they say they are somewhat similar to each other. [Utah State University Extension](#) recommends Tundra, Boreails, Indigo Gem, Blue Lightning and Kamchatka.

Pollination

Along with choosing varieties for taste or other characteristics, you need to choose at least two varieties that will pollinate each other. For haskaps to set fruit, each variety must be pollinated by a variety that is compatible and that bloom at the same time. This [chart](#) delineates which varieties are compatible for cross pollination. It was created by Dr. Bob Bors who was [haskap researcher and breeder](#) extraordinaire at the University of Saskatchewan. A so-called pollinator plant is one that is usually not as tasty as the primary variety you are growing. [One Green World](#) has 28 honeyberry varieties. Descriptions include timing of maturity and which varieties are compatible pollinizers.

Planting and Growing

If a pollinator plant is less desirable, you can plant as few as you can in as few as a 1:24 ratio (see this [diagram](#)

Scan for Cloudberrries



Scan for University of Saskatchewan Haskap Resources



Scan for Alaskan Varieties



Scan for Chart



for how you would lay it out). However, if the pollinator variety is as desirable as the other variety, you can simply plant them in alternating rows. To maintain individual plants, plant 4 to 4.5 feet apart with rows 8 to 10 feet apart. For a hedge, plant 3 feet apart. Haskaps tolerate a wider range of soil acidity or pH than many other types of berries—up to nearly 8. Also, unlike many berries, they thrive in wetter soils. Ideally, the pH would be between 5-7 and somewhat well-drained soil. Soil should be fertilized before planting as well as each spring. Newly established plants need to be regularly watered but established plants can be watered less. Weeding is also important for establishment.

Pruning

After plants are about three-years-old, dead or damaged branches should be pruned as well as up to about 25% of the older branches. This will help maintain adequate air flow and productivity of the plants.

Pests

Birds will eat the honeyberries before they're even ripe, so you'll need to cover the berries with netting with a mesh smaller than half an inch. You can float the netting over the berries or put it over poles so that you can harvest the berries easily with the netting on. You can view the bird netting and layout that is used at the Alaska Berry Farm [on YouTube](#). Some vari-

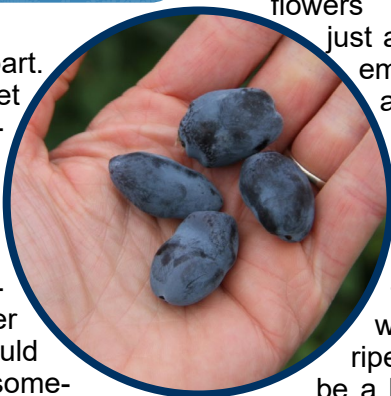
Scan for Diagram



eties hide their berries from the birds a little better than others. Powdery mildew may be an issue as well.

Harvest

Honeyberry flowers are



just about the first flowers to emerge in the spring and are frost and cold hardy. Bumblebees or honeybees may pollinate these early flowers. Honeyberries may appear to be ripe before they are truly ripe but won't taste as good as ripe berries and will still be a little green inside. You'll want to wait 5 to 10 days from when they are first blue on the outside to be fully ripe on the inside. Before you harvest en masse, taste a few—don't we always do this anyways? There is a range depending on the variety of earliness to ripen, even ripening, and how quickly they ripen. Some varieties hold onto their berries better while others tend to drop them sooner. According to the [University of Saskatchewan](#), mature haskap plants can produce 5 to 10 pounds of fruit each year (or more!).

If you don't have space or don't want to grow your own haskaps, find a local U-pick near you: [Market Spread](#) or [Alaska Frontier Berry Picking](#).

Eating

I haven't personally tried many honeyberry recipes but [these](#) look good

Scan for Video



to me, particularly the Haskap Meringue Pie. I am always looking for a non-lemon/lime meringue pie so this fits the bill. They also might make delicious sub for these [apricot pistachio bars](#). Or try them in a [scone](#) or muffin substituting the berry you would normally use.

Scan for Haskap Recipes



Scan here for complete article including all links.



<https://www.tananachiefs.org/growing-honeyberries-or-haskaps-in-alaska/>

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 professor of Extension in partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference. This work is supported by the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program Project 2022-41580-37957. 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/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination.



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.

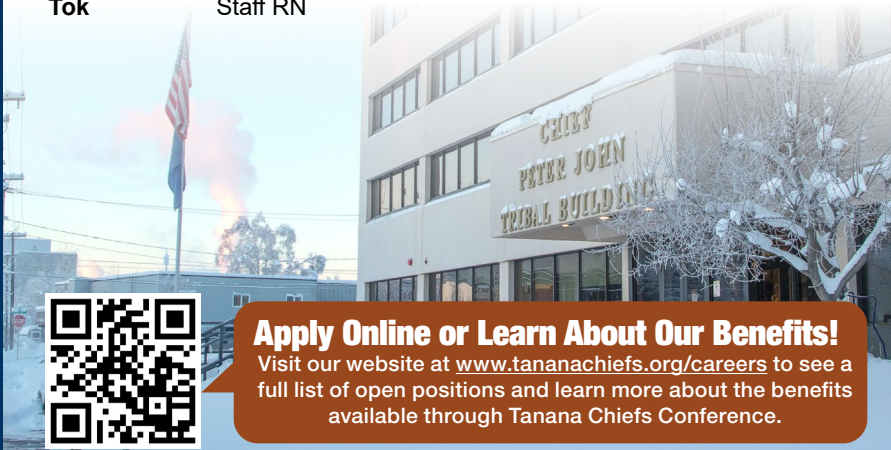


FIND YOUR PURPOSE

Join Our Team!

New Vacancies

Arctic Village	Village Public Safety Officer
Fairbanks	Patient Experience Coordinator
Fairbanks	Credentialing Technician I
Fairbanks	Environmental Services Technician I
Fairbanks	Behavioral Health Administrative Assistant
Fairbanks	Fund Accountant I
Fairbanks	Tribal Administrator - Onsite Supervisor
Fairbanks	Environmental Services Technician II
Fairbanks	Hospitality Support Staff
Fairbanks	Lead Behavioral Health Clinician
Fairbanks	Program Manager - Graf Rheeneerhaanjii
Fairbanks	Physician - Primary Care
Fairbanks	Certified Medical Assitant I
Fairbanks	Senior Medical Quality and Policy Analyst
Galena	Clinical RN
Hughes	Tribal Administrator - Onsite Supervisor
Huslia	Home Care Provider
Nenana	Staff RN
Nenana	Urgent Care RN
Nenana	Clinical RN
Tok	Urgent Care Technician
Tok	Lead RN
Tok	Lead Nurse
Tok	Staff RN



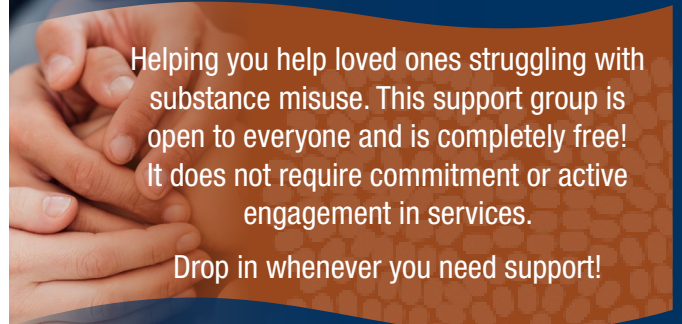
Apply Online or Learn About Our Benefits!

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 MARCH 27, 2025

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 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

UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAR 31
- APR 7**

North Pacific Fisheries Management Council Meeting

Virtual-Only Webconference
<https://www.npfmc.org/current-or-next-council-meeting/>

**APR
7-10**

Yukon River Panel 2025 Pre-Season Panel

Dawson City, Yukon Territory
<https://www.yukonriverpanel.com/meetings/>

**APR
10**

Board of Fish - Area M Proposals Deadline

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.main>

**APR
16**

TCC Spring Job Fair

Westmark Hotel, Gold Room | Fairbanks, AK
11:00 am - 6:00 pm

**MAY
2**

TCC All Staff Meeting

Limited Services Available

**MAY
26**

TCC Offices Closed

Memorial Day