



# after a long hiatus...

A very busy summer and fall prevented me from getting another edition of the On the Land Leaders Network Newsletter out the door until now. As a result, this edition is a bit of a catch-up. It includes information about the On the Land Stream at the NWTRPA Conference that happened at the end of September, lessons in risk management planning, and the recent launch of the new NWT On the Land Collaborative Fund website ([www.nwtontheland.ca](http://www.nwtontheland.ca)).

You'll notice that the newsletter has a bit of a different look. I was experimenting with a new poster-making program and

discovered that I could also make very swanky newsletters. Let me know what you think of the new format!

You'll also notice that this edition has a name: dè. dè is the Tłıchʔ word for the land. Each newsletter will feature the title (the land) in a different local language.

I am always looking for things to include in the newsletter. Events, workshops, cool programs, or beautiful photographs of land-based activities. Be in touch!

Jess (NWTRPA On the Land Programs Consultant)

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## happy birthday to the nwt on the land collaborative fund

The NWT On the Land Collaborative Fund is one-year old as of this fall. We are celebrating with a new website: [www.nwtontheland.ca](http://www.nwtontheland.ca). The website showcases the successful projects we supported in 2016. It is also a resource for individuals and organizations in need of support for land-based programs.

Once on the website, visit the Background and Approach pages to learn more about the history and administration of the Collaborative. The Partners page is the place to meet the people and organizations that make this Collaborative possible. Stop by the Stories pages to see the kinds of programs and initiatives that received grants in our inaugural year. Interested in applying for funding? The Grant Process & Cycle page explains how to do that and includes links to the application. See the next page for more information!

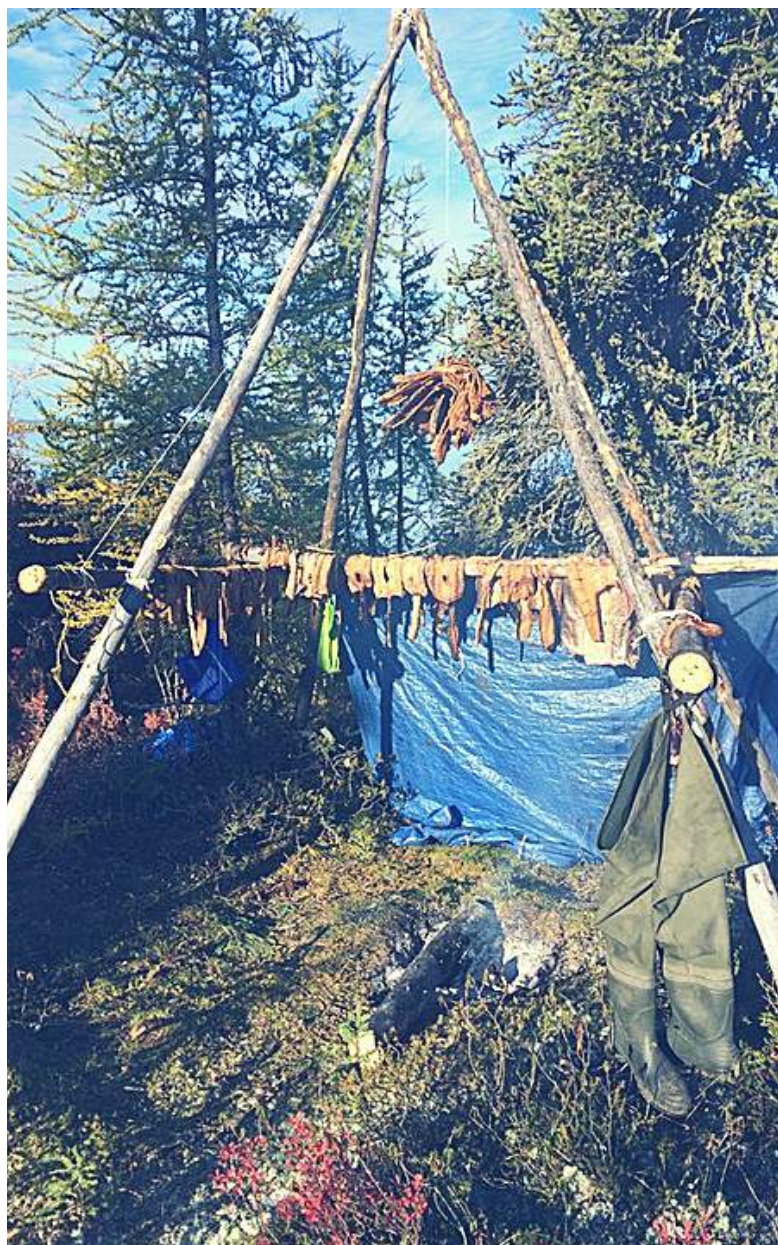
# funding for on the land programs

The NWT On The Land Collaborative Fund brings together government, charitable, corporate, and other partners to combine efforts and make it easier for communities to access money and resources for on the land projects. Applications are now available for the 2017 granting cycle. The deadline to apply is **December 9, 2016**.

The NWT On The Land Collaborative Fund provides funding for programs that centre land-based education and cultural revitalization. Youth engagement is a very important component of these programs as is the development of skills and knowledge that enhance community strength and resiliency. We support projects that restore traditional ways, foster justice, and build better economies. Grants also help with environmental research monitoring and stewardship programs that ensure the health of the land for future generations. Mental health, addictions, healing, and family wellness are concerns in communities across the NWT; they are also priorities for the On The Land Collaborative Fund.

## How to Apply

1. *Download an application.* These are available on the collaborative's website: [www.nwtontheland.ca](http://www.nwtontheland.ca).
2. *Make sure your project is eligible for funding.* The Collaborative is committed to supporting a diverse range of on the land activities in the NWT, but not all organizations and projects are eligible to receive funding. Review the information on the Approach and Grant Process & Cycle pages.
3. *Complete an application.* The application asks you to describe your community, the project, and the activities that you would like to do. It also includes a budget showing the money/resources you need and how they will be spent/used. Completed applications should be sent to your Community Advisor on or before December 9, 2016.
4. *Have questions about the application or the grant process?* Call or email your Community Advisor or the Collaborative Administrator. They can help guide you through the granting processing and support you in filling out the application form. See the next page for their contact information.



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# lessons in risk management planning



As on the land leaders encounter and respond to different environmental conditions and social situations, whether consciously or not, they are engaging in risk management. In other words, they are assessing the hazards facing their participants from weather to wild animals to terrain and making decisions about how to avoid or minimize the risk of illness or injury. A risk management plan formalizes these processes of assessment and management, making clear to leaders and participants their roles and responsibilities and providing direction for good decision making on the land.

In mid-October, I attended a two-day NOLS Risk Management Training workshop and the 23rd annual Wilderness Risk Management Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. This was invaluable experience for thinking about the different ways that we stay safe on the land and the various tools that can be used to support on the land leaders in making good decisions. In addition to risk management training, I attended eight workshops over two days that explored a range of subjects from

risk assessment to staff training to incident reporting to diversity and inclusion. For all of the variety, there were common themes and messages across these workshops. I have identified four themes that stood out for me:

**1. Risk assessment and planning are complex processes, but risk management plans should be simple.** A month-long mountaineering program will involve a variety of different hazards from rock falls and thunderstorms to river crossings and wild animals. These environmental factors intersect with human factors, such as health, behaviour, and decision-making, as well as equipment to create an ever-changing potential for illness or injury (the standard definition of risk). To navigate this complex set of hazards and keep their participants safe, program leaders need a plan that is easy to access, use, and execute. This plan should include policies and procedures to guide decision-making on a day-to-day basis, as well as emergency response plans.

**2. There is more to risk management than having a plan.** A risk management plan isn't a magic document. It doesn't implement itself. It doesn't stand in for proper training and good decision-making. It doesn't, by virtue of its existence, create a positive culture of risk management in your organization. To the contrary, a risk management plan is only as good as the people who implement it. It requires administrators and on the land leaders who are committed to its use. It provides well-trained and competent staff guidance as they make decisions in the field. The best risk managers work in organizations that hire competent staff, invest in the appropriate training, provide the necessary supports to make good decisions, and encourage open dialogue around incidents and near misses, so that improvements can be made.

**3. Risk management plans need to consider emotional, social, and mental risks, as well as physical ones.** I attended three sessions at the WRMC on the theme of diversity

and inclusion, all of which drove home the point that attending to physical risks such as weather and terrain is not enough. We also need to think about the mental, emotional, and social hazards that face participants from racism to mental illness to homophobia and transphobia. How is your program working to meet the needs of participants from diverse backgrounds? Do you have inclusion statements? Do your staff receive mental health first aid and cultural competency training? If we want land-based programs to be physically safe, they also need to be emotionally safe.

**4. Risk management plans are living documents.** Last year, your organization began the process of developing a risk management plan for the annual culture camps that you offer. This past month, you launched the completed plan as part of your staff training, offering your project team workshops on your risk management goals, field practices, and emergency response protocols. The response has been positive and you are hopeful about the implementation of the plan. Congratulations on taking this step, but don't assume you've arrived to the end of the road. Risk management is a journey, not a destination. Trip debriefs, incident and near miss reports, and more informal feedback from staff and participants will help you to keep the plan current and effective.

& & &

#### **What does a risk management plan look like?**

Every organization will have a unique risk management plan that reflects their programming, staff, and participants. A good starting point, though, is to walk through the steps of AML: Analyze, Manage, Inform.

**Analyze:** Every activity has an inherent risk. For example, cooking comes with the risk of burning yourself. Swimming comes with the risk of drowning. In this stage, we are asking: What are the things that could hurt people or property? What is the likelihood that these bad things will happen? If something does go wrong, what are the consequences?

Before moving onto the next stage, we need to ask ourselves, why are we doing this activity and is it worth the risk?

**Manage:** This stage has two components. The first, Risk Reduction, is focused on minimizing the chance of something bad happening. For example, to minimize the risk of head injuries while snowmobiling, we will require that our participants wear a helmet. For those things that are most likely to result in serious illness or injury, consider having written policies (rules), practices (guidelines), and procedures (step-by-step instructions). The second part of this stage, Emergency Response, looks at how we will respond if something does go wrong.

**Inform:** Inform is short for "information exchange." It asks us to consider what information we need from participants (e.g. health forms, waivers), what information we should provide to participants (e.g. activity descriptions, risks associated with the activity), and what information other staff or leaders should be sharing with each other and administrators (e.g. incident reports).

Based on the ideas and information generated during these three steps--Analyze, Manage, Inform--you will have the bare bones of your risk management plan, which might include:

- Participant Packages (Overview, Health Forms, Waivers)
- Policies, Practices, and Procedures
- Emergency Response Plans
- Evacuation Plans

As I noted above, these aren't static documents. As you encounter different situations in your programs, you may need to revise the content. For more information about risk management, contact me ([jdunkin@nwtrpa.org](mailto:jdunkin@nwtrpa.org) | 669.8376).



At February's On the Land Round Table, participants noted that the opportunity to spend time with others working in their field was an invaluable experience. To this end, we organized an On the Land Stream at the NWTRPA Annual Conference. We also experimented with Tea and Talks, informal biweekly gatherings, during the spring and summer. Poor attendance at the tea and talks suggested that this wasn't the best way to bring on the land leaders together.

In collaboration with Institute for Circumpolar Health Research, we're trying a new format this fall: Lunch and Learns. The broad theme for the lunchtime talks is Community Health and Wellbeing. We invite you to join us on occasional Tuesdays as researchers and practitioners from across the territory exploredifferent aspects of community-based wellness work from on the land activities to health programs to active living initiatives.

The Lunch and Learns will take place in the 3rd Floor Boardroom of the NWT Sport and Recreation Building (Don Cooper Building) from 12-1pm.

The first Lunch and Learn will take place on November 8. Norma French-Heslep will be giving a presentation entitled, "Yoga Bhind Bars." **(See the poster on the next page).**

# from tea and talk to lunch and learn



Join the NWTRPA, CPAWS, and the PWNHC for the fourth and final PechaKucha on December 8, 2016, titled #LovetheLand.

We are inviting people to give presentations about the different kinds of relationships they have with the land. We are hoping to feature a wide variety of land users, such as harvesters, gardeners, hide tanners, protectors, paddlers, dog sledders, and guardians.

The evening will also include a pop-up exhibit featuring images of land-based activities from NWT photographers.

photo credits:  
Pelex (top),  
Jess Dunkin (bottom) 08

JOIN ICHR AND THE NWTRPA  
FOR A SERIES OF

# LUNCH AND LEARNS

ON THE SUBJECT OF  
**COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

NOVEMBER 8  
NORMA FRENCH-HESLEP - YOGA BEHIND BARS

NOVEMBER 22  
MICHAEL MCCARTHY - ON THE LAND PROGRAMMING  
WITH YOUTH: CHALLENGES AND CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 6  
SHEENA TREMBLAY - KEEPING ELDERLY ACTIVE

**12-1 PM | NWTRPA BOARDROOM**

THIRD FLOOR, DON COOPER BUILDING  
4908 49TH STREET



Institute for Circumpolar  
Health Research



NWT  
**RECREATION  
& PARKS**  
ASSOCIATION

# continuing ed for on the land leaders



The 2016 NWTRPA Conference was a huge success. We had almost 200 attendees from across the territory and beyond. The program featured five streams, including one specifically for on the land (OTL) leaders.

The first OTL stream session, a panel discussion entitled *Other Stories from the Land*, was chaired by Steve Ellis of Tides Canada and featured Jenn Redvers, Peyton Straker, and Jimmy Ruttan. Each of the participants reflected on their very different and sometimes messy relationships to the land. Peyton spoke about being Anishnaabe, raised in Dene territory by a white family. Jenn talked about occupying a middle space between her Metis Chipewyan family and the largely white world of outdoor recreation. Jimmy shared his experiences as a white southerner living and working in Inuvialuit territory.

The second OTL session, *Linking Land and Language*, was delivered by Violet Jumbo and Dahti Tsetso. Violet is a language teacher, Dahti a language learner. Both are participating in the Dehcho Dene Zhatie Indigenous Language Revitalization Program. The

session was a primer on language learning, but more than this it explored how language learning and land-based activities are intimately linked because, as Dahti noted, Dene languages come from the land.

The third OTL session, entitled *Working In, but Outside the Box*, showcased people doing culturally relevant programming in Western institutions. In other words, how are on the land leaders who work in colonial spaces like schools and health centres contributing to decolonization and cultural revitalization and how are they using land-based programming to do it. The presenters were Michael McCarthy, who works in a treatment centre, Dr. Nicole Redvers, a naturopathic doctor, and Arvin Landry, cultural coordinator at a correctional facility.

The fourth OTL session, entitled *Caring and Supportive Programming* explored how on the land program leaders can create emotionally safe spaces for participants. The session, which was chaired by Shauna Morgan, was delivered by Maggie

Mercredi and Wendy Lahey. Maggie and Wendy gave participants a number of practical strategies for promoting the wellbeing of participants, including using the medicine wheel to ensure that programming is holistic.

The final OTL session of the conference, *Evaluating On the Land Programs*, explored different ways to determine the efficacy of land-based programs. The session, which was chaired by Kyla Kakfwi-Scott, included presentations by William Trousdale and Stephanie Young. William spoke about values-based evaluation work that he is doing with the Coastal Guardians program in British Columbia. Stephanie introduced participants to PhotoVoice, a participatory research methodology that can also be used for evaluation.

Thanks to all of the presenters, chairs, and participants for a great conference and a wonderful learning opportunity. If you are interested in a more detailed account of the on the land stream sessions, visit [www.storify.com/nwtrpa](http://www.storify.com/nwtrpa).



# launching the nature playbook

October 24 marked the official launch of The Nature Playbook, an initiative of the Canadian Parks Council (CPC) intended to inspire Canadians to spend time in the out of doors, reconnecting with Nature.

The Nature Playbook is an action-oriented follow-up to Connecting Canadians with Nature: An Investment in the Well-Being of Our Citizens (2014). The report documents a growing disconnection between Canadians and the natural world. It attributes this disconnection to urbanization and uneven access to green spaces, competition for leisure time, changing demographics, a more sedentary lifestyle, and concerns about safety. The report also details

the many benefits of spending time in nature, not the least of which are improvements in health and wellbeing, from lower blood pressure and stronger immune systems to reductions in stress levels and improved sleep quality.

"The Nature Playbook is an invitation to discover your unique way to connect with Nature, and help others do the same." Like a coach's playbook, The Nature Playbook is intended to bring "the team" together and inspire movement. To this end, the Playbook urges Canadians to participate in Nature plays, "actions that get you or other people outside." Nature plays range from "quick plays," like splashing in a puddle or identifying plants and animals, to "signature plays," organized and inspiring initiatives that can be adapted to your local context, such as forest schools or geocaching. The

NWT's Dechinta Bush University is recognized as one of seven Signature Plays, a model for connecting with the land and also with cultural heritage. (The NWT is represented in another way in The Nature PlaybookChloe Dragon-Smith, of Fort Smith and Yellowknife, is the Project Co-Chair.)

The Nature Playbook is meant to inspire and generate ideas, but how you play is up to you: "You can plan a play on your own, with friends, with a parent, with colleagues, in a classroom. Use whatever skills and means you have—it should reflect you!"

Plan a play today using the handy template on the next page, but most importantly, get outside!



**A Nature play** is an action that gets yourself or other people outside. It can be as easy as taking a kid to the park, or as ambitious as starting a new Nature school. Anything goes.

You can plan a play on your own, with friends, with a parent, with colleagues, in a classroom. Use whatever skills and means you have—it should reflect you. Through all our actions, a new generation will be more connected with Nature than ever. **It's up to YOU! Go play!**

**NAME YOUR PLAY:**

**DESCRIBE YOUR PLAY— A REALISTIC ACTION FOR YOU:**

**WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?**

- ✕ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✕ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✕ \_\_\_\_\_

**SKETCH OUT YOUR PLAY. SERIOUSLY, SKETCH IT OUT!**

**GAME PLAN: WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP TO PUT YOUR PLAY IN MOTION?**



Want to know more about awesome plays happening across Canada?  
Check out *The Nature Playbook* at: <http://www.parks-parcs.ca/english/nature-playbook.php>