



Council of Yukon First Nations

# Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation **Cultural Orientation** **and Protocols Toolkit**



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## **TR'ONDĚK HWĚCH'IN SPECIFIC CULTURAL ORIENTATION AND PROTOCOLS**

### ***1.0 History***

The word Hän signifies “river” in the Han language. Han Hwëch'in translates into English as “River People” (Mishler and Simone 2003). This name has recently replaced by the term Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, which means, the people of the Klondike River. Before the 1840's the Han lived at the confluence of Tr'ochëk River, which is a beautiful river that meanders through the mountains of the Tombstone Mountain Range. Today it is known as the Klondike River. Dawson City is situated at the confluence, where the Klondike reaches the Yukon River.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH) are part of the Han Nation, which is centred along the Yukon River drainage covering western Yukon and eastern Alaska including Eagle and Charley's village, situated just across the Alaska-Yukon border along the Yukon River.

Before contact, the lifestyle of the Han flowed with the cycles of the seasons and animals. They were great hunters and gatherers of birch bark, plants and berries. Each season brought traditional activities for the families, as they relied on the land for food, clothing, shelter and tools. The Han were known to be great salmon fishers along the Yukon River. “As well as being an important fishing camp, Tr'ochëk was a base for moose hunting expeditions up the Klondike Valley, a bountiful game area. Hunters also moved up into the high country on either side of the Yukon River valley to hunt sheep and caribou.” (Dobrowolsky, 2003)

People travelled in the Ogilvie Mountains, north of the Yukon River to hunt. During the fall migration of the Forty-mile caribou herd, several First Nations met at a caribou fence in the mountains near Chicken, Alaska southwest of the Tr'ochëk to do a fall harvest and prepare for the cold winter months. Caribou fences were made of willows creatively woven together and managed by a group of Han, but shared with neighbouring villages.

In the early 1800's the fur traders arrived in the north, bringing manufactured goods, which blended with the goods provided by the aboriginal traders. As the economy grew, posts were built and trading became widely available. The Han lifestyle changed, still harvesting traditional foods from the land, trading became very prominent between the outside traders and northern peoples.

In 1898 the Gold Rush began after word reached southern Canada and into the United States. Dawson City sprang up almost overnight in response to the rapid influx of gold seekers. It grew to a population of 40,000 and was back down to about 5,000 by 1902. The gold rush was a very short lived phenomenon, however it's impacts enormous and long lasting on First Nations people.

The gold rush had greater impact on TH than other First Nations as the gold was found in their traditional territory and it was here that the gold seekers flocked. The big gold discovery was found on the Klondike River at Rabbit Creek in 1896 (later renamed Bonanza Creek).

The gold rush changed life forever for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. They did not see the economic prosperity one would expect, instead they saw the degradation to their lands and waters and a displacement of their people.

## **Residential School**

Han children were taken from Moosehide, the traditional village of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, as young as five years old and were sent to St. Paul's school in Dawson or one of the other residential schools. This process deeply traumatized the children and their families.

In recent years, individuals known as 'trail blazers', men from different communities began the process of challenging the government and churches for the abuse they endured while they were at residential school. The trail blazers were successful and are credited for beginning the healing process in the Yukon.

Residential School survivors have been on their healing journey for many years with the assistance of a counselor and the TH Health & Social Department. Over time the survivors have found for themselves a way through that has worked for them. The process has always been led by the survivors.

This journey developed into the residential school scrapbook project. The purpose was to bring individuals, families and the community together to create a scrapbook to share the stories of their experiences. It has been a long, terribly difficult process that followed the pace of people's readiness. Their resilience is astounding. Dealing with so much grief and pain and yet they have been able to walk forward and face the challenges of today.

The DVD, "Finding Our Way Home" follows the development of the scrapbook. It is included in Tab 6 with the Written/DVD Resources and copies of the scrapbook are available at Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Heritage Department.

## ***2.0 Current Status in Land Claims, Self Government or Other***

Land claim and self government agreements were signed on July 16, 1998 and came into effect on September 15, 1998. Implementation of the agreements is a major priority for the TH government and requires ongoing negotiations with the Yukon and Government of Canada. Agreements are available at [www.trondek.ca](http://www.trondek.ca)

## **Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Governance and Structure**

Chief and Council are elected by citizens every 4 years. There is an Elders Council that meets on a monthly basis to discuss self government topics and community

issues and concerns. There is a spokesperson for each family, normally the eldest family member.

The First Nation governance structure includes:

- Chief and Council
- Elders Council
- Youth Council, made up of all citizens between 14 – 24 years of age
- General Assembly – made up of all TH citizens and all citizens over 18 years

The structure of the TH government includes the following departments:

Administration	Human Resources & Education
Heritage Department	Implementation
Natural Resources	Housing & Capital
Health and Social Services	Tr'inke Zho Childcare Centre

### ***3.0 Communication and Relationships***

A deep connection to the land is vital to the health of the people. The authority and identity of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people comes from and is tied to the land. It is the land that provides a deep sense of place and sense of self. The relationship exists at both the physical and the spiritual level. This relationship gives purpose to the people – to protect the land, which in turn ensures their well-being.

Communication is extensive among family members, which includes relatives. This is demonstrated at family gatherings for birthdays and other special family events. During the summer it is common to see family barbeques, picnics and spending social time at traditional family sites. Moosehide is one special place with rich history where families gather for holiday times.

In a small community, relationships are close and everyone knows one another. It means the community is able to come together in times of need and work toward the common good. It also can mean personal disagreements or conflicts are felt on many levels in the community. Being aware of and understanding the family networks and dynamics is critical.

### ***4.0 Specific Cultural Values and Beliefs***

Cultural practices continue to play an important role in the lives of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people. Fishing, hunting, trapping and gathering berries and medicinal plants are important cultural activities. They provide not only healthy food, medicines and valuable resource materials for the community members, but also connect the people to the land, to their history, and through the sharing of such bounty, to each other. Sharing is an important dimension of First Nations harvesting; food is provided not only for one's immediate and extended family, but also for Elders of the community.

Danaja Zho Cultural Center, located in a prominent place on the Yukon River in the centre of Dawson City is an important resource in restoring the connection to culture and traditions. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have been impacted by many different events since the early 1800's, and therefore traditions, values and beliefs were almost lost. Through leadership, the potlatches, ceremonies for weddings, funerals and gatherings, the Han ways are becoming stronger and richer again.

As part of skill development among the youth, the First Nation has taken the lead role in hosting First Hunt and First Fish. At these special times, the youth are able to work beside Elders and leaders of the community to learn how to catch their first salmon and get their first caribou or moose, using their traditional values.

At each public meeting or gathering, an Elder is invited to offer an opening prayer and welcome.

### **5.0 Birth and Death**

Birth of a new baby is an exciting time for community members. A baby is welcomed by all community members, especially the Elders.

Death is also a sacred time for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens. The First Nation assists the family with the funeral arrangements and initiates the legal aspects of the process. The family takes the lead with the decisions for a potlatch. Community members help with the actual funeral. The Anglican church also helps with most funerals and with burials at Moosehide or at the community grave site. After the funeral and potlatch, extended family and friends show support to the family and the First Nation provides additional services, ie. counseling and home visits.

### **6.0 Potlatch Traditions**

The family with support of community members holds a potlatch after the funeral; this includes a huge meal, acknowledgements to the deceased, and a closing prayer and hugs or handshakes for the family members. There is support cross-culturally where other members in the community attend the church service and some attend the potlatch.

Potlatches are for all special events and times when the community needs to come together. Potlatches are a shared time as a First Nation and as a community. It provides a closure for a time of grieving for the community. This is time to spend time together and there are noticeable interactions between the older people and youth. Children and youth receive special attention by older people within the First Nation.

Community members and resource people are welcome and encouraged to attend potlatches. It is best to contact a staff member at H & S department or the family that is hosting the potlatch. People dress casually and one can expect to meet and be among many people. It is an honour to attend and an opportunity to get to know people at these special times.



## **7.0 Marriage**

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in is made up of many family groups with inter-marriage relationships. Like most other First Nation communities, there are extended family members, of whom in history, a grandparent married into the community that came from another northern community.

## **8.0 Traditional Laws**

There were many traditional laws that were strictly followed for many generations. These laws were modeled by the people and passed down through stories and legends. The laws covered family structure and behaviour, food harvesting and how to show respect to other members of the clan and community.

## **9.0 Traditional Health and Healing**

Seasonal activities such as fishing, hunting and berry harvesting are of high importance to the community and the First Nation supports people's ability to participate in these traditional activities.

TH has shown commitment to healing and recovery, by investing in land-based healing program infrastructure and providing staff to implement wellness programs.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has several accessible, traditional sites (R-22 Healing Camp, Cache Creek, Moosehide Reserve) with developed infrastructure that are used for cultural activities. As well Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in often uses the great space in their Community Hall to host activities and the Health and Social Department have used their furnished and comfortable communal spaces for all kinds of Circles and learning forums.

Not only does Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in utilize traditional healers and Elders in all their healing programs, but they regularly partner with local and Whitehorse agencies such as RCMP, Victim Services, Mental Health, Many Rivers Counselling, City of Dawson, ADS Whitehorse, Child Abuse Treatment Services, Family Violence Prevention, DCCGC, Robert Service School, CPNP to ensure that a wealth of knowledge and expertise are available.

Traditional knowledge and teachings of local, health, TH Elders, TH professionals and citizens ensure that 'quality results will be provided.'

## **10.0 Protocols**

### **10.1 Approaching Elders for advice or teachings**

When an Elder speaks, it is respectful to be patient and listen carefully. Often there is a pause, so wait until the speaker shows they have made their point. It is too common for people to not allow an Elder to have enough time to get their message across.



## ***10.2 Accessing and sharing traditional knowledge***

First Nations use the term traditional knowledge to describe information passed from generation to generation. This information may be rooted in: storytelling, ceremonies, traditions, ideologies, medicines, dances, arts and crafts or a combination of all these.

First Nations culture has developed over many generations - through traditional knowledge of the land, natural resources and environment. Traditional knowledge is known to communities as the foundation or base of all key information from the past and can be blended into all departments within the First Nation. Elders are getting older and their wisdom has been documented to pass on to the community.

There are policies to protect this knowledge as it must be treated with high respect as this wisdom is sacred. The Heritage department has put in place an application process. Anyone looking to access any traditional knowledge must complete this application.

## ***10.3 Home visiting & invitations***

Home visits are normally done with a TH staff member and/or a family member(s) included. It is protocol to call the appropriate staff in the Health & Social department prior to home visits.

Each person reacts differently to people that they do not see on a daily basis. To show respect, especially to the male gender, it is important to explain your plan and process so they are clear on what will happen.

## ***10.4 Speaking/meeting with individuals of the other gender***

When meeting with individuals of the other gender have a staff member from the H & S department attend with you. This would be protocol when dealing with children as well.

It is disrespectful to touch anything that belongs to the men of the community, particularly hunting tools unless they give you permission.

## ***10.5 Dealing with conflict and confrontation***

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has developed protocols with the partnering agencies on how to handle potential conflict situations. It is recommended that a person checks first with their supervisor or director to ensure the protocols are being followed. If there is no written protocol, it is wise to check in with the Director of Health & Social before meeting on issues or concerns that are contentious or could be misunderstood.

When a conflict or a confrontation occurs with a member of the community, it is important to contact and involve the Director or Manager of the Health & Social department. Allow them to assist in further discussions with the person(s) until a resolution plan is arranged and agreed upon. Inviting an Elder to assist with finding resolution is an option.

When a conflict or confrontation occurs between two First Nation government employees, an attempt should be made to resolve the situation between the two staff members with their immediate supervisor. If that doesn't work, then the Human Resources Department would be brought in. Having effective communication amongst the staff is critical for the First Nation to be able to effectively serve the community. Inviting an Elder to assist with finding resolution is an option.

### ***10.6 Meetings***

The community has regular public meetings on a variety of subjects. Public posters are usually posted around the community. If a meeting is posted publicly, any public member can attend. If the meeting is for First Nation members only, it will be noted.

An interagency team meets on a monthly basis, to discuss community issues and concerns.

During meetings it is fine to ask for clarification or for more information.

### ***10.7 Expected Behaviour***

The most important rule for resource workers to follow is treat all people with respect and dignity, this includes demonstrating self respect and holding yourself in high regard at all times, including after hours - be a positive role model.

As a professional, alcohol and drug abuse is not accepted, nor is having intimate or perceived intimate relationships with clients. Dawson has a variety of public venues, where the public gathers and how resource people conduct themselves in these circumstances is very important.

Resource people must be willing to put in the time that is required to gain respect and trust from the people. The advice is to go slow, be patient, be observant and be aware of things happening in the community.

Resource people are hired and brought in to work with people who have been deeply traumatized and so resource people should always be aware that they hold people's lives in their hands. Remember this community is very small and when a resource person oversteps the rules, a trust is broken and communication will likely come to a close. Communication is vital – when either giving or receiving information.

The TH Health and Social department and Elders are willing to spend time with resource people and work closely until the resource person feels confident and has an understanding of community dynamics and how they can fit in.

Staff is expected to be appropriately dressed. The dress code is modest, slightly higher than casual. When doing home visits don't over dress.

### ***10.8 "No Touch" Rules***

In the early 1980's the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in made it a priority to reclaim their songs, dances and language. They have made major progress with Elders teaching the youth. The Traditional regalia worn by citizens are all homemade and are very beautiful. This is evident at Moosehide Gathering and other public events. Traditional rules are practiced where no one touches sacred drums, clothing or items unless approval is given by the owner.

### ***11.0 Community People, Health and Social Well-being***

#### ***11.1 Population and Demographics***

The population of Dawson City was 1,904 in June, 2009 (Yukon Bureau of Statistics). Dawson City is the third largest community to in the Yukon. The population has significant seasonal variation and is at a peak in June as people are hired for the tourism season.

#### ***11.2 Education***

The Robert Service School offers grades K -12 in Dawson. There are two Community Education Liaison Coordinators (CELC) who work closely with First Nations students at the school. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has made education a very high priority for the community. The CELC's have support from the Director Health & Social Department and an education team. The Director works very closely with the school administration and the School Council to ensure that the best interests of the TH citizens are being served.

The local school boasts an active Han language program that is adding additional classes yearly.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in also supports a Co-op program that allows students to work part time in their chosen field while studying part time. This allows a student to learn theory and hands on training in real life situations. The Co-op program has been running at full capacity and currently has a waiting list.

There is a Yukon College campus where continuing education programs are offered, with some special programs that are developed together with the First Nation. Some students attend the main Yukon College campus in Whitehorse or other institutions for more specialized education.

### ***11.3 Health and Social Status and Well-being***

The First Nation government is growing and evolving to support its citizens by ensuring a strong and healthy future while maintaining connections to traditional knowledge and the land. Promoting awareness about current health and safety issues, learning traditional teachings and skills from the Elders, and investing in youth have all strengthened Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in development. This respect for heritage and dedication to the future is reflected in a variety of ways including traditional arts, language, dancing, community gatherings and harvesting which is rooted in the deep connection to the land.

### ***11.4 Health and Social Strengths***

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in departments have a strong voice and presence within Dawson and are open to working cross-culturally with all members of the community.

The Health and Social department are continuously strategizing and designing projects to enhance the wellness among their people. A five year strategic plan is in process. The department mandate comes from Chief and Council as directed by the community at each Annual General Assembly, where the community raises concerns and issues. Work plans are developed from there.

The Health & Social department has direct contact with citizens, as the support centre is located right in the midst of them. There are regular community meetings and dinners where people can connect.

The TH Health & Social department has been very active in finding outside resources to help them build a safe place in a wilderness setting for their members to do healing work. TH has secured most of their traditional sites as part of their land selection and is actively using these sites for traditional activities and healing. Currently these special sites are included in the Health and Social department service planning.

TH has undertaken a project called the Residential School Scrapbook Kanacha. It is a scrapbook that tells the stories of Han members that attended residential school. It has shown the resilience and strength of a people who endured much pain and yet walk forward to the future. The creation of the scrapbook was a healing journey and will be shared with youth and others.

Moosehide is a beautiful place, down the Yukon River from Dawson that is designated as a TH reserve. The Han people moved and built their homes there soon after the gold seekers came. Today, the citizens feel Moosehide is their place of comfort, peacefulness, a place where they feel proud, united and connected with history. They describe this as a spiritual place, where they gain strength to carry forward. It is a place where they feel safe, without worries. The original cabins have been restored and are lived in by descendants. The area is well maintained and during the summer months there are boats along the shore with fishnets to

catch chinook salmon. Moosehide has a mayor who takes care of the village during active times of the year.

Every two years, TH members host one of the biggest Yukon Community Gatherings at Moosehide. It is a time where they welcome people from all walks of life and share their culture and traditions. To ensure people have access, they offer boat rides to and from the gathering.

Tr'ochek is in the heart of the Han nation. It is a prime location for hunting, fishing and living along the Klondike and Yukon rivers. The people were pushed out by newcomers during the gold rush but it has been recovered as a historic site and people use it as an active fish camp.

Another important site on Han lands is R22 (site specific in TH land selection). It is a beautiful, peaceful place where resource people and citizens gather for workshops and retreats located 10 kilometres down the Dempster Highway northeast from the Junction and about two kilometres off the highway along the Klondike River. There are log cabins, with kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Forty Mile is at the confluence of Yukon River and Forty Mile River. It is known as the oldest town in Canada's Yukon. In 1886, the town was established by prospectors and gold seekers and was abandoned during the gold rush. This site was used before the big rush and afterwards, mainly as a fishing camp and hunting place. It is also known as a river crossing for the Forty Mile caribou herd. It is co-owned by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Government of Yukon. As part of the partnership, a TH citizen is hired seasonally to be the caretaker of the site. It is visited by tourists who access it by a remote road or by canoe.

The two churches provide help for newcomers and provide free lunches. They also sponsor the Thrift Store and some counselling programs.

Since self government began, it is common for the City of Dawson, Klondike Visitor's Association and TH to join in partnership on various community projects and events.

Community strength are shown by coming together during difficult times and also for times of celebration.

There is community support for the leadership, where cross-culturally, people work together. Skills are shared in fundraising for seasonal projects. This is demonstrated by decision makers working together on joint venture projects.

### ***11.5 Community Challenges and Issues***

Funding for long-term programs and capacity is the number one challenge. It's very difficult to meet the needs of the community when program funding is inadequate as well as tied to program use that is not necessarily suited to the needs and priorities of TH.

Other challenges center around political dynamics. There is never enough time to thoroughly discuss differences and find resolution. Community meetings have full agendas with limited time to discuss issues. Therefore, getting to the bottom of any given issue is very difficult.

### ***11.6 Community Uniqueness and Spirit***

The staff of the Health and Social department describe their uniqueness as a nation that survived the gold rush and residential school. The Han culture is a living, breathing culture, with strength shared from the Elders.

The community works together to get citizens out on the land, particularly in the Blackstone area and along the Yukon and Klondike Rivers. Oral history has been a way where Elders work with the staff and people in the community.

Community Volunteers are both First Nation and non-First Nation community members. The volunteers accomplish a great deal within strong cross-cultural relationships. Community members help one another and collaborate on projects. Community voluntary groups include the dog sledding community, Salmon Committee, Free Store / Recycling Depot and Animal Shelter.

## 11.7 TH Government Telephone Directory

<b>993-7153</b>	International Polar Year Project Facilitator	<b>993-7100</b>	Receptionist
<b>993-7125</b>	Finance Clerk	<b>993-7139</b>	Payroll & Benefit Clerk
<b>993-7157</b>	Language Programmer	<b>993-7155</b>	Community Health Worker
<b>993-7129</b> <b>993.6495</b>	CELC Cell:993.3724 RS School 993-5435 Ext # 27	<b>993-7164</b>	Cell: 993.3629 Elders Driver
<b>993-7105</b>	Lands & Resources Officer	<b>993-7101</b>	Citizenship Registrar
<b>993-7126</b>	Executive Secretary Trainee	<b>993-7141</b>	Staff Training & Development Officer
<b>993-7136</b>	Implementation Assistant	<b>993-7156</b>	Finance Administration & Service Clerk
<b>993-7135</b>	Finance Assistant	<b>993-7166</b>	Social Assistance Administrator
<b>993-7112</b>	Human Resources Assistant	<b>993-7124</b>	Executive Director
<b>993-5927</b>	Aboriginal Headstart Coordinator/Teacher	<b>993-7160</b>	Lands & Resources Officer
<b>993.7155</b>	Community Health Worker	<b>993-7146</b>	Youth & Elder Council Coordinator
<b>993-7119</b>	Housing/Property Manager	<b>993-7134</b>	Executive Assistant
<b>993-7145</b>	Director of Natural Resources & Lands	<b>993-7121</b>	Heritage Assistant
<b>993-7149</b>	Manager of Social Programs	<b>993-7144</b>	Collections Manager
<b>993-7151</b>	Elders Support Worker	<b>993-7107</b>	Fish & Wildlife Coordinator
<b>993.7140</b>	Administration Assistant	<b>993-7159</b>	Fish & Wildlife Steward
<b>993-7132</b>	Hähkè/ Chief	<b>993-7113</b>	Heritage Officer
<b>993-7133</b>	Manager HR & Community training	<b>993-7122</b>	Director of Finance- Capital & Housing
<b>993-5907</b>	trinke@gov.trondek.com Director of Trinke Zho Fax: 993-5497	<b>993-7169</b>	Fax : 993.2347 Maintenance Crew Cell: 993-3708
<b>993-7150</b>	Cultural Education Coordinator	<b>993-7110</b>	Implementation Manager
<b>993-7120</b>	Director of Business Development	<b>993-7108</b>	Geometrics Technician
<b>993.7137</b>	Traditional Knowledge Specialist	<b>993-7165</b>	Director of Education /Health & Social
<b>993-7148</b>	Adult & Community Support Facilitator	<b>993-7129</b>	Youth Enhancement Coordinator
<b>993-7106</b>	Lands & Resources Manager	<b>993-7158</b>	Director of Communication
<b>993-6768</b>	Dänojà Zho Manager	<b>993-7147</b>	Network Technician
<b>993-7123</b>	Accounts Payables Clerk	<b>993-7104</b>	Network Administrator
<b>993-7114</b>	Heritage Director	<b>993-7167</b>	Tutor- Teaching Assistance
<b>993-7164</b>	CS Receptionist/Adm. Assistant-	<b>993-5521</b>	Coop Education Room > CS



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## Websites

[www.trondek.ca](http://www.trondek.ca)

[www.trondekheritage.com](http://www.trondekheritage.com)

[www.yukoncommunities.yk.ca](http://www.yukoncommunities.yk.ca)

[www.cyfn.ca](http://www.cyfn.ca)

[www.eco.gov.yk.ca](http://www.eco.gov.yk.ca)

[www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca)

[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/index-eng.asp](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/index-eng.asp)

# Appendix 1: TR'ONDĚK HWĚCH'IN AND DAWSON CITY COMMUNITY PROFILE



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This community profile is for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH), a Yukon First Nation located in and around Dawson City, Yukon. The purpose of the community profile is to provide some background information on the community.

## 2.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

### 2.1 Yukon Context

#### Geography

Yukon Territory is in the extreme northwest corner of Canada. It is bordered by the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alaska and the Arctic Ocean. The territory is 483,450 square km (186,661 square miles), about one third the size of Alaska. Landforms in the Yukon are mainly plateaus bordered and crossed by mountains. The highest range is the Elias Mountains in the southwest where the highest peak in Canada, Mount Logan rises 5,951 metres (19,524 feet) above sea level. The Yukon and Peel rivers drain virtually all of the territory and in the far north, the tundra stretches 160 km southward from the Arctic ocean.

#### Economy and Transportation

Mining has historically been Yukon's chief industry and remains important along with tourism. Gold, along with zinc, lead and silver are the mineral of interest and exploration and mining contribute significantly to the Yukon economy. Air travel is used to access Whitehorse and flights are also available to Dawson City and Old Crow (the only fly in community). The Alaska Highway and Klondike Highways are heavily used and all communities other than Old Crow are situated along these highways.

#### Population / Demographics

The population of the Yukon was 28,674 in 2001 (Census 2001) and has risen to 34,157 by June, 2009 (Yukon Bureau of Statistics Monthly Statistical Review August 2009). This is the highest population on record. The overall population increased 2.6% from June 2008 to June 2009. Thirteen of seventeen communities in the territory showed population increases during the same period. Whitehorse has 71% of the population with 25,636 people with the remaining people distributed throughout 16 other communities. There are slightly fewer women than men – males 17,407 and females 16,750. Persons under the age of 15 years accounted for 16.7% of the population, while 8.2% of the population was aged 65 or over. The 2006 Census recorded 7,580 Yukoners (23%) as being of Aboriginal identity. According to Statistics Canada, 3,665 of that total were aboriginal males

and 3,915 females. The percentage of the aboriginal population aged 15 and over was 72.8% and 18.2% under the age of 15.

## **Health and Social Status**

The overall life expectancy has risen from 73.4 years in 1994 to 75.7 years in 2006. Yukon female's life expectancy is 77.7 years and for males, it is 74.0 years. Life expectancy at birth is lowest for Aboriginal males in the Yukon with an average of 8.8 years less life expectancy than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Aboriginal males also had the highest increase in life expectancy of 7.3% or 4.6 years from 1994 to 2006. Aboriginal females had the second highest increase of 4.5% or 3.2 years.

The Canadian Community Health Survey (2006) for Yukon aboriginal people reported that 47.4% of self-rated their health as very good or excellent (2396 responses) and 65.7% self-rated their mental health as very or excellent (3319 responses). 21.5% of people over 18 years reported that they had quite a lot of life stress (978 responses). 69.4% felt a strong sense of belonging to their local community (3509 responses).

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics reported the Yukon labour force at 17,500 in October 2009 and of that 16,400 were employed with an unemployment rate of 6.3%. Federal, territorial, municipal and First Nation governments employed a total of 7,000. Private Sector employed 7,300 and 2,100 reported as self-employed.

## **2.2 Dawson City Location and Infrastructure**

Dawson City, the former capital of Yukon Territory is about 80 km (50 miles) east of the Alaska border. Whitehorse, the capital is 450 km (280 miles) to the southeast. The city was established in 1896 after gold was discovered on nearby Bonanza Creek. In 1898, Dawson's population reached a peak of 40,000 people. The Han people have occupied the region for thousands of years.

Access to Dawson City is by the North Klondike Highway, a well paved road that travels north from Whitehorse or air service is provided by Air North (5 days per week). The Dempster Highway is open year round, which goes north to Tombstone Park and on to Inuvik, NWT. During the summer months, the Top of the World Highway is open which provides road access from Dawson to Alaska. Dawson is a full service community.

TH owns its administration building, the Danoja Zho Cultural Centre, Tr'inke Zho Childcare Centre, TH Community Support building and the Youth Centre. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has several accessible, traditional sites (R-22 Healing Camp, Cache Creek, Moosehide Reserve) with developed infrastructure that are used for cultural activities.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in owns and maintains housing units for its members. It has expanded its housing in recent years by creating a subdivision one kilometre from

Dawson City. The First Nation owned Han Construction has built many modern homes locally and throughout the Yukon.

## **2.3 Business and Government Services**

### **Business**

Dawson is a community with a lot of history that continues to attract people of all ages from all around the world. There are a significant number of private businesses to serve the community and region. In addition, there are a number of tourism related businesses, some of which are only open in the summer including local markets that sell products along the riverfront. As well, mining remains an important contributor to the local economy. In the 2008 Business Survey conducted by Yukon Stats Bureau, Dawson reported a total of 218 businesses with 688 employees.

The community has a hardware store, clothing store, drug store, grocery stores, gas stations, convenient store, hotels, motels and laundry facilities; it has banks and a liquor store as well as restaurants including a specialty coffee shop, a video rental business, a bakery and an ice cream parlor.

Mining still provides important local employment. There are companies who come to the Yukon and hire local people for exploration and working the claims, mainly in placer mining. A current example is with Underworld Resources, an exploration company from Vancouver who purchased the White Gold properties about 100 km south of Dawson which were staked by a small, local company. Drilling results to date have been very promising and will likely result in longer term local employment opportunities.

Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy as people come to see the natural beauty and history of this area.

Historical features include:

- Pierre Burton House – a famous poet who lived in Dawson City and wrote poetry about the area
- Entrance to Tombstone Park and magnificent territorial park popular for backcountry hikers, bird watchers and photographers
- Diamond Tooth Gerties - a seasonal gambling establishment in Dawson
- Dawson City as a Historic Site - preservation of buildings and historic areas with an assortment of activities related to the Klondike Gold Rush attract up to 60,000 visitors each year

### **First Nation Business**

Yukon First Nations have continued to increase their economic development activities. First Nation consortiums have invested in businesses as diverse as major hotels, office buildings, and a manufacturing company. In 2008, Yukon First Nations owned 12 businesses and Yukon First Nation Development Corps owned an additional 19. As well, many individual First Nations people own and operate small

businesses. In 2008 they made up 5.7% of sole proprietor and partnership businesses in the Yukon (Yukon Bureau of Statistics Business Survey 2008).

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in carries out its economic development activities through its development corporation - Chief Isaac Inc. TH also has two subsidiaries, Mackenzie Petroleum and Han Construction. In addition, the development corporation has a number of joint ventures with other First Nations, including the Yukon Inn located in Whitehorse. As well, Chief Isaac Inc. is an investor in Great River Journey, which provides a luxury 8-day Wilderness Tour on the Yukon River (Whitehorse to Dawson City). The owners of 'Great River Journey' are Great Northern Journeys Inc. and FNIC Development Corporation which is a consortium of Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Selkirk First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

The Yukon Stats Bureau, 2008 Business Survey reported 11 of the 218 businesses in Dawson were owned and operated by Tr'ondëk citizens.

### **Yukon Government Services**

The Yukon Government provides a number of services to Dawson. In the past, it operated the Health Centre, however the responsibility for local acute care services has been delegated to the Yukon Hospital Corporation and plans are underway (2011) to build a small hospital in the community. Public health and home care services continue to be provided by Health and Social Services. There are 3 full time and 2 half time nurses and 1 full time and 1 locum physician with more during the summer season as well as a pharmacist in the community. Social Services provide income assistance and child and family services (1 social worker and 2 social services staff) and mental health services are provided by a full time position in Dawson. Ambulance services are provided by fully trained paramedics supported by volunteers through Emergency Medical Services. Dawson also has a community library.

### **Government of Canada**

Dawson City is a National Historic Site and therefore has a strong presence of Parks Canada, a separate operating agency funded by the Government of Canada. The RCMP provides coverage to the community under a contract with the Department of Justice with two officers stationed in the community and additional staff during the summer months.

### **Non Government Services**

***Dawson Women's Shelter*** - provides 24 hour services to women dealing with abuse

***Many Rivers Counselling Services*** – is a Whitehorse based organization that offers non-emergency counselling for individuals, couples, families and groups in Dawson. A counsellor is assigned to Dawson and makes regular visits to the community.

***Alcohol Anonymous*** – regular meetings are held in Dawson

**Two churches** - provide help for newcomers and provide free lunches. They also sponsor the Thrift Store and some counselling programs.

### **First Nation Services**

The self governing First Nation provides a range of services to the community including social, health, heritage, lands and resources and others. The services are funded directly by the federal government or through financial transfer agreements linked to programs and services transfer arrangements that are the method for implementing self government. However, it needs to be mentioned that they are not adequately funded and money is not allocated to meet the specific TH service needs.

The TH Health and Social Department is a key strength in the community. The Support Centre, where all the programs are administered is also a drop in centre for citizens of all ages and is open during the week. The team describes their approach: "Health and wellness are an important part of our spirit. The TH Health and Social team uses a traditional approach to help our citizens. We focus on all parts of the person: the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional. We offer many different programs for citizens of all ages aimed at empowerment and healthy living."

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Health and Social Department consists of 10 full-time employees. The combination of skills, experience and education that the staff bring to the table equip them to address the many health and social programs and services that are delivered through the department. These include, but are not limited to:

- Delivery of social assistance
- Home and community care
- Health and wellness support and education
- Parenting programs
- Referral to Drug Treatment Centres
- Pre-treatment and aftercare services
- Counselling
- Support for residential school survivors
- Elders Coordination

Part of the services TH offers includes putting on certain events at critical times within the community. There are many community events, celebrations and feasts for graduations, funerals and potlatches.



## Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government Phone List

<b>993-7153</b>	International Polar Year Project Facilitator	<b>993-7100</b>	Receptionist
<b>993-7125</b>	Finance Clerk	<b>993-7139</b>	Payroll & Benefit Clerk
<b>993-7157</b>	Language Programmer	<b>993-7155</b>	Community Health Worker
<b>993-7129</b> <b>993-6495</b>	CELC Cell:993.3724 RS School 993-5435 Ext # 27	<b>993-7164</b>	Cell: 993.3629 Elders Driver
<b>993-7105</b>	Lands & Resources Officer	<b>993-7101</b>	Citizenship Registrar
<b>993-7126</b>	Executive Secretary Trainee	<b>993-7141</b>	Staff Training & Development Officer
<b>993-7136</b>	Implementation Assistant	<b>993-7156</b>	Finance Administration & Service Clerk
<b>993-7135</b>	Finance Assistant	<b>993-7166</b>	Social Assistance Administrator
<b>993-7112</b>	Human Resources Assistant	<b>993-7124</b>	Executive Director
<b>993-5927</b>	Aboriginal Headstart Coordinator/Teacher	<b>993-7160</b>	Lands & Resources Officer
<b>993-7155</b>	Community Health Worker	<b>993-7146</b>	Youth & Elder Council Coordinator
<b>993-7119</b>	Housing/Property Manager	<b>993-7134</b>	Executive Assistant
<b>993-7145</b>	Director of Natural Resources & Lands	<b>993-7121</b>	Heritage Assistant
<b>993-7149</b>	Manager of Social Programs	<b>993-7144</b>	Collections Manager
<b>993-7151</b>	Elders Support Worker	<b>993-7107</b>	Fish & Wildlife Coordinator
<b>993.7140</b>	Administration Assistant	<b>993-7159</b>	Fish & Wildlife Steward
<b>993-7132</b>	Hähkè/ Chief	<b>993-7113</b>	Heritage Officer
<b>993-7133</b>	Manager HR & Community training	<b>993-7122</b>	Director of Finance- Capital & Housing
<b>993-5907</b>	trinke@gov.trondek.com Director of Tr'inke Zho Fax: 993-5497	<b>993-7169</b>	Fax : 993.2347 Maintenance Crew Cell: 993-3708
<b>993-7150</b>	Cultural Education Coordinator	<b>993-7110</b>	Implementation Manager
<b>993-7120</b>	Director of Business Development	<b>993-7108</b>	Geometrics Technician
<b>993-7137</b>	Traditional Knowledge Specialist	<b>993-7165</b>	Director of Education /Health & Social
<b>993-7148</b>	Adult & Community Support Facilitator	<b>993-7129</b>	Youth Enhancement Coordinator
<b>993-7106</b>	Lands & Resources Manager	<b>993-7158</b>	Director of Communication
<b>993-6768</b>	Dänojà Zho Manager	<b>993-7147</b>	Network Technician
<b>993-7123</b>	Accounts Payables Clerk	<b>993-7104</b>	Network Administrator
<b>993-7114</b>	Heritage Director	<b>993-7167</b>	Tutor- Teaching Assistance
<b>993-7164</b>	CS Receptionist/ Adm. Assistant-	<b>993-5521</b>	Coop Education Room > CS