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Voices of the Caribou People

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In partnership with six local communities



Documenting local knowledge about change:

We initiated a videography project to transcend the problems of knowledge integration and bring local voices into biological research on caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*). We worked with the Indigenous Peoples to document local knowledge about caribou and observations about changes taking place in village homelands. This project aims to portray the caribou people, northern communities who have a close relationship with caribou, as they view it. Six communities across North America participated in the Voices project in 2008.

Objectives:

- Capture local perspectives on global change and its implications to caribou and caribou people;
- Document community strategies for responding to change;
- Share knowledge & information:
 - Among other northern communities
 - With IPY researchers
 - With the greater public
- Provide a snapshot of conditions during the IPY as a legacy for communities and future researchers.

Method:

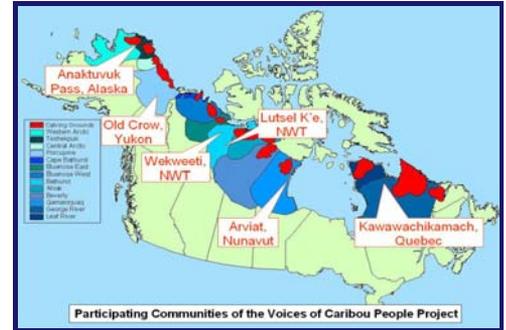
- Working in partnership with communities to document 'Voices'
- 97 interviewed; 4 groups of people focusing on 4 threads of conversations:
 - Elders (long-term changes in climate, caribou, people)
 - Local leaders (resilience of communities and adaptive capacity)
 - Active hunters (current harvesting and ecological conditions)
 - Youth (future of the Caribou-People)

Output:

- All interviews to be made available in public domain via internet for educational and awareness purposes
- A short-film on each of the participating community
- A consolidated documentary to provide an overview of all conditions

Project update:

- Voices film is a work-in-progress
- Now working with communities to create their 'video-sketches'
- Communities see the videos as a useful tool for three reasons:
 - Elders want their voices to be retained as the communities' legacy and repository of traditional ways in the changing times
 - Political leaders see visual images as a powerful medium to communicate with policy makers and the greater public
 - A way of connecting with other communities to build a social network of caribou people across the North



"Time and time again, we [the Gwitchin] have tried to say that what's on top of the land is much more precious than what's underneath it"
— Darius Elias, MLA
OldCrow, YK.



"The ice unthawed too early this year and we couldn't get enough caribou. Not enough to feed our elders"
— Mark Enish, Hunter,
Kawawachikamach QC.



Acknowledgements:

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Online Resources: Voices of the Caribou People

Short Film: <http://www.carmanetwork.com/pages/view.asp?groupID=111428>

Webpage: http://www.uaf.edu/voices_of_caribou.html

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