



Gjoa Haven Trip Report (July 14 - August 24, 2013)

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Purpose of the trip:

- Our goal was to continue working with Elders, hunters, and youth to learn about the connections between caribou, community, and well-being in Gjoa Haven.
- We planned to continue collaborating with community organizations and interpreters to:
 - facilitate an Elder/youth land camp;
 - host pre- and post-camp workshops;
 - organize meetings to verify information from interviews and maps from July/August 2012, as well as conduct new interviews; and,
 - encourage Elder/youth knowledge exchange.
- For Sean this trip was a chance to follow up, verify, and build upon, the interviews he conducted with Simon Okpakok and Rebecca (Becky) Mearns in 2012, as well as to learn more about caribou and northern life through participation in the land camp.
- Stephanie was hired as a Research Assistant from fall 2012 to summer 2013, which included the transcription of all interviews from 2012. This trip was an opportunity for her to meet everyone involved in the project, help with land camp logistics (in town, and on the land), help with map verifications, and experience many aspects of northern life again (after having grown up in the Northwest Territories).
- For Gita this trip was a chance to meet with project partners again, and to help facilitate the organization and logistics of the land camp (in the first week of August).

Activities during this trip:

Land Camp Planning Committee

- Bob Konana was the previous leader of the camp planning group. Due to his unfortunate passing, David Siksik was nominated to fill the leadership role, and Elders, instructors, and staff from the 2012 land camp became members of a more formal Planning Committee, including: Simon Okpakok (Coordinator),

George Kamookak, Martha Pooyataq, Joseph Akoak, Susie Konana, Miriam Aglukkaq, Gerald Kogvik, Donald and Martha Kogvik, and Lorraine and Uriash Pukiqnak.

- The Planning Committee met 6 times between February and July 2013 to discuss camp location, travel safety, life in camp, and learning goals.

Pre-camp workshops

- **Planning workshop with Land Camp Planning Committee** - We discussed final logistics, learning goals, and safety considerations based on recommendations from earlier planning meetings.
- **Planning workshop with youth** - We talked about what youth hoped to learn at camp, and we provided some basic training about digital cameras, and audio and video recorders for documenting camp experiences.
- **Planning workshop with Land Camp Planning Committee, youth, and support staff** - We discussed logistics, learning goals, and travel safety as developed by the Planning Committee. We confirmed the camp location (Tikiranajuq, just west of the August 2012 camp) and completed waiver and consent forms.

Elder/youth Land Camp at Tikiranajuq (August 6 - 14)

- In total, 9 youth, 5 Elders, and 5 camp support staff, as well as 2 university researchers (Sean and Stephanie) participated in a 9-day land camp, and were joined by several other boat drivers & family members.
- Youth learned through experience about hunting, carrying, skinning, butchering, cooking, drying, caching, and eating caribou, as well as preparing and sewing caribou skins.
- Other camp activities included: storytelling, learning Inuktitut, catching and drying fish, making "nuna tea" from tundra plants, goose hunting, making toys from caribou leather/bones, traditional fire-making, helping out with camp chores, and playing "Inuit baseball."



Questions? Comments?

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- Youth were given notebooks, digital cameras, audio recorders, and a video recorder to document ideas and imagery that were of interest to them.
- Learning activities were suspended for one day near the end of camp out of respect for the untimely passing of a family member of one of the camp staff/participants.
- A professional film crew joined the camp for the last few days to record interviews and footage to be part of a documentary they were making called “The Polar Sea.”

Post-camp learning and celebrations in Gjoa Haven

- **In-town learning activities** - From August 16 - 19, 4 half days of learning activities were facilitated by the Planning Committee, both outdoors (at Swan Lake) and indoors (at the Elder's Qaggivik). Learning activities focused on caribou skin preparation and traditional-fire making skills, and provided opportunities for other Elders, youth, and/or community members to participate even if they were not part of the land camp.
- **Elder/youth land camp feast** - On August 19 a celebration of the 3-year partnership between researchers and Gjoa Haven community members/organizations was held at the Qaggivik, with country food, drum dancing, and the sharing of heart-felt thanks.

Interviews and Verification Meetings

- Sean completed 8 new interviews (to build on the 30 from 2012).
- The interviews (and participation at the land camp) helped to refine our understandings about caribou, Elder-youth knowledge sharing, and Inuit cultural values and skills.
- Sean hosted 4 workshops with people he interviewed in 2012 to verify maps and generate new ideas.

Collaboration meetings

- We met with Hamlet Officials, the Hunters and Trappers Organization Manager, the Kitikmeot Inuit Association Community Liaison Officer, the District Education Authority Secretary, the Tahiertiit (Justice) Committee Coordinator, and the Government of Nunavut Liaison Officer several times to provide project updates, and to coordinate camp planning, logistics, and follow-up.

Next steps:

- **Fall 2013** - Produce maps showing caribou herds and migrations, and hunting travel routes and camps, based on what was drawn by Elders and hunters in interviews.
- **Fall 2013** - Transcribe and/or review audio recordings from 2013 interviews, and camp planning and verification workshops.
- **Fall 2013** - Planning Committee meeting to provide feedback on land camps (2011 - 2013), to consider ways

of continuing to fund land camps, and to discuss ideas for possible future projects.

- **December 2013** - Gita, Sean, Simon, and Becky to present preliminary project results about the value of land camps for research and education at the ArcticNet conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- **2014** - Analyze transcripts and maps, prepare reports and publications, and plan for verification/reporting trip to Gjoa Haven in Winter, 2015.
- **March 2015 (Project funding ends)** - We will continue to share our results after funds run out.
- **Future collaborations in Gjoa Haven** - We welcome the opportunity to keep working in collaboration with community members and organizations. If you have ideas for new projects please send your feedback at any time and we will do our best to help.

Qujanaqqutit to all the Elders, youth, and community knowledge holders who were so generous with their time, and who taught us about caribou and the Inuit way of life during interviews and on the land. Many thanks to Simon Okpakok for his excellent work as local research coordinator, land camp coordinator, and interpreter. Thank you to the Land Camp Planning Committee for their dedication to developing learning opportunities for local youth. Thank you to camp support staff Salomie Qitsualik, and Terry Eleheetook, who helped the Planning Committee Elders and instructors ensure that the camp ran smoothly and safely.

We are also grateful for verification workshop translation provided by Leonie Aaluk, Willie Aglukkaq, Jacob Keanik, Andrea Carter, and Bernice Tavalok. Thank you to the Tahiertiit Committee for lending camping equipment, and to the DEA for so generously processing camp payments. We are indebted to Gord Dinney and Dave Stockley from the Hamlet Office, and to the Government of Nunavut, for meeting space. We thank Adam Malcolm and Qiqirtaq Ilihakvik for caring for digital media equipment. Thanks also to Kim Rowley for helping to arrange homestays. We are so grateful for the incredible generosity of residents in opening their homes to us. Rita Hummikuq hosted Sean for nearly 6 weeks, Noah Anakanerk and Sandra Kalalaq Nalungiaq hosted Stephanie for nearly 4 weeks, and once again Mary Aqilriaq welcomed Gita for 1 week. Thanks also to Andrea Carter, Julia Ogina, and Sarah Jancke for ongoing support from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association. We are so grateful to all who shared their stories with us, and invited us into their homes to chat over tea and coffee or wonderful home-cooked meals. We have learned so much from each and every person we have worked with, and we look forward to sharing our results in the months and years to come.

Report Date: October 21, 2013



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