



## Gjoa Haven Trip Report (February 7 - 13, 2016)

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We have been working with Elders, hunters, and youth in Gjoa Haven for the past five years to learn about the connections between caribou, community, and well-being. These research priorities came out of initial planning meetings in February 2010. This project included interviews, participatory mapping, land camps, and workshops over three summers (2011 - 2013), and ongoing communication with local researchers, planning committee members, and local organizations.

### Purpose of this trip to Gjoa Haven:

- To meet with a small group of Elders to share project results and receive feedback before finalizing any reports
- To re-connect and to verify our understandings of interviews and land camp learning before sharing results more broadly in Gjoa Haven, and with others outside the community.

### Activities during this trip:

#### Results Verification Workshop

- A three-day results verification workshop took place from February 9 - 11 in the boardroom of the Natilik Heritage Centre. These discussions helped to clarify parts of what was shared in interviews and land camps, so that results from this project represent as closely as possible the intended meanings.
- We continued to work closely with Simon Okpakok who has been the local researcher and coordinator of this project since the beginning.
- We were also glad to be working again with Lorraine Puqignak who was involved in the early land camps.
- Simon and Lorraine both provided valuable guidance in planning the workshops and suggesting the Elders to involve. They also took turns helping to facilitate and translate discussions during the meeting.
- The Elders who participated in the meetings included: Mary Aqilriak, David Siksik, Susie Konana, Salomie Qitsualik, and Donald Kogvik. Jimmy Qirqqut was also invited to the meeting, but was unfortunately unable to attend due to a loss in his family. Jimmy and his family remain in our thoughts.

### Summary of Key Points Discussed in the Workshop

#### • Day 1- Methodology

- the collaborative research process defined in February 2010 research planning meetings, and how this was carried out in the project
- the Qaggiq Model for knowledge renewal (developed by Tamalik McGrath and Aupilaarjuk) and how this relates to land camps
- the value of land camps for research and learning
- Inuit and scientific knowledge working together and being used in all stages of research
- benefits of being on the land for mental health and connections between Elders and youth
- concepts and meanings of *najurniq*, and other terminology depending on where Elders are from
- the importance of planning and follow-up meetings for the land camps
- preference for smaller groups and older youth at camp to make it easier to teach and learn

#### • Day 2 - Caribou

- compilation of interview results about caribou herds, movements, and changes over time
- compilation of maps drawn during interviews showing all caribou herds, hunting areas, migration routes, and important places together
- development of a seasonal caribou calendar
- long-term cycles of caribou being present or absent from King William Island
- completed individual interview transcript verification with each Elder in the workshop

### • Day 3 - Well-being

- concepts and meanings of *maligait*, *piquhiit*, and *illiquhiit*
- Inuit customs, leadership, and concepts of laws and rules (in the past and today)
- appropriate Inuktitut terminology for English concepts like “relationships”, “sharing”, “worldview”, “harmony” and “well-being”. This was challenging because Inuktitut terminology differs depending on the context in which these terms are used.
- *Inuit Qaujimaningit* was identified as the preferred terminology for Inuit knowledge and values that continue to have meaning today (as opposed to ancient knowledge, as in *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*)
- more discussion about the importance of being on the land to feel lighter and healthier (mentally and physically), a sense of freedom, stronger connections with family or between Elders and youth, and emphasis on using Inuktitut
- wanting project results to be shared broadly, especially in support of education, cultural activities, and with anyone interested in learning about caribou
- wanting to keep building and carrying on with the work, even if the funding has ended

### Community Updates

- **Nattilik Heritage Centre** - Informal updates were provided to Joseph Aglukkaq (Heritage Centre Manager) throughout the week as we worked in the Centre’s Boardroom. Preliminary maps were left for use in the Centre, and we will keep in touch on ideas for ongoing sharing of results through the Centre.
- **Hamlet Council** - We attended a Hamlet Council meeting on February 9 to provide an update on the project and progress to date, as well as goals of the verification workshops during our time in the community.
- **Hunters and Trappers Organization** - We provided a brief informal update to Molly Halluqtalik (HTO Manager), when visiting the HTO on February 8.
- **Qiqirtaq High School** - We provided a brief informal update to Paul Cipriano (High School Principal) when visiting the school on February 8.
- **Community Gathering** - We hosted a gathering open to the whole community at the Community Hall on February 11. We provided a project overview and posted maps, diagrams and photos of preliminary results. We had drum dancing, games, prizes, and snacks as a way to say thank you to the community and celebrate the work that so many people have put into this project.

### Next steps:

- The funding has now run out for this project. However, we will continue to work on finalizing and sharing results. By the end of this year (2016) we aim to complete the following:
  - revisions of interview transcripts and select quotations
  - map compilations in digital and printed forms
  - several journal articles submitted for publication
  - a Master’s thesis (Rebecca Mearns)
  - a results summary report sent to all project contributors, as well as to local and regional organizations who have supported this project
  - reports and photos updated on the project website ([straightupnorth.ca](http://straightupnorth.ca))
  - original audio, video, and photo recordings and summary results to be locally accessible in Gjoa Haven (likely through the Nattilik Heritage Centre)
  - explore ideas with the Nattilik Heritage Centre about contributions to cultural heritage programs, or links with other local projects, to have a more comprehensive picture of how caribou and community well-being are connected



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Questions? Comments?

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