

# 20 Annual 23 Report



**NunatuKavut**  
our ancient land

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# VISION

Our vision is to govern ourselves, providing and caring for one another, our families and our communities while nurturing our relationship with the land, ice, and waters.

Imminik aulatsiluta, sakKititsiKattavugut amma ikKasotiKatigeKattavugut, ilagijattinut, amma nunagijattinut piguvalliaKullugit ilagennigjavut nunattinut, sikumut amma imannut.

# AREAS OF GOVERNANCE

<p><b>Nunak amma Avatik</b> <i>Land and Environment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We live in harmony with our environment and share in nature’s generosity while ensuring the conservation and preservation of the land, ice, and waters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Kaujisannik Aulatsinik</b> <i>Research Governance</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We ensure that all research carried out in NunatuKavut be useful, relevant, and beneficial to our people and communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ilinnianik amma Ilukkusik</b> <i>Education and Culture</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We share and learn by honouring our past, embracing our present, and reclaiming our future.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inositsiagittotitsigasuannimut amma Kanuittailigiamut</b> <i>Health and Wellness</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We nurture and support our physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health, to ensure the wellbeing of our families and communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suliatsanut amma kenaujaliugutiliunnimut</b> <i>Business and the Economy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We facilitate opportunities and platforms for meaningful employment, business development, capacity building, and growth to foster sustainable communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tungavitsait</b> <i>Infrastructure</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We meet community-specific infrastructure needs, through an equity-based approach that fosters robust communities.</li> </ul>



# GOVERNING COUNCIL



**Todd Russell**  
President



**James W. Holwell**  
Vice President &  
Councillor for Area 5  
(Central/Northern Labrador)



**Boyce Turnbull**  
Executive Member at  
Large & Councillor for Area 3  
(Bolsters Rock to Spear Point)



**Levi Snook**  
Councillor for Area 1  
(Straits)



**Roy Mangrove**  
Councillor for Area 2  
(Battle Harbour)



**Cyril Campbell**  
Councillor for Area 3  
(Bolsters Rock to Spear Point)



**Crystal Dyson**  
Councillor for Area 4  
(Sandwich Bay/Island of Ponds)



**Hughlett Williams**  
Councillor for Area 5  
(Central/Northern Labrador)



**Jessie Tobin**  
Councillor for Area 6  
(Western Labrador)



**Anna Thistle**  
Councillor for Area 7  
(Outside NunatuKavut)



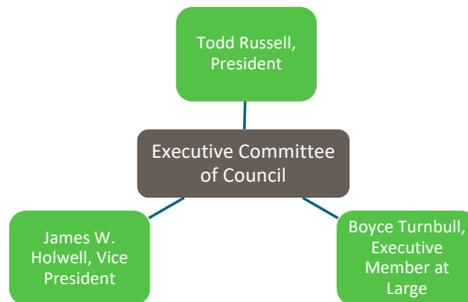
**Harrison Campbell**  
Elder Councillor



**Richard Michelin**  
Special Elder  
Advisor to Council



**Zoey Russell**  
Youth Councillor



# NCC'S NEW LEADERSHIP MODEL



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Good day my friends - ullukut ilanâka,

This has been another tremendous year for NCC and our people and communities! While we have experienced some obstacles and challenges, more importantly, it was full of growth, learning, and affirmation of our resilience and strength.

As always, our team have worked really hard to advance our priorities and ensure that NunatuKavut Inuit are supported and have what they need. This annual report provides you an overview of that important work.

As you read through, you will notice some of the organizational changes that are happening as a result of our transition to a strengthened Inuit governance structure. This has included adopting a collaborative and shared leadership model reflective of our communities. This means that we have increased capacity and ability to effectively deal with the issues that we face and can better represent our people.

We also engaged with our people on the development of a new Constitution and citizenship code that is built on our Inuit Identity, values, practices, and traditions. The new Constitution was shared with our members in December for discussion and potential adoption at our Annual General Assembly (AGA), February 2024.

NCC has worked to ensure our rights recognition process with the Government of Canada is honoured. We are pushing to implement our MOU so that we can pursue negotiating agreements that help address the

priorities identified by our people. With the assistance of federal funds, we are also advancing energy sovereignty that tackles the real impacts of climate change. The development of our Inuit Food, Social and Ceremonial Law will set the stage for an NCC-managed food fishery. And we recently received funds that will greatly contribute to Inuttitut revitalization in NunatuKavut.

NCC has a strong and respectful relationship with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. This was deeply felt when Premier Furey, on behalf of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, apologized to former residential school students from NunatuKavut for its role in the residential school system in this province. This has been another step in the journey of healing and reconciliation for many. NCC was also pleased to receive provincial funding to enable us to continue providing much needed housing and health and wellness supports.

NCC has continued to build and bolster relationships with various partners, and to develop and improve agreements which aim to ensure that NunatuKavut Inuit are the primary beneficiary from our lands and resources. NCC must be consulted and consent must be sought from our people for projects happening in our territory.

While we have seen much progress and advancement, there have been challenges. There has been a continuing campaign of misinformation, falsehoods and baseless allegations by some fellow Inuit and other Indigenous groups in Labrador to deny NunatuKavut Inuit our rights and our very identity. While it has caused hurt and harm, I applaud our people for demonstrating such resilience and strength. We will persist and grow stronger, just as our ancestors have done before us.

I thoroughly enjoy all the events, meetings, and gatherings throughout the year especially those in our communities and throughout NunatuKavut. And I am



especially excited for the upcoming AGA. This year’s theme is *illaget*, which means ‘family’ in Inuttitut. It will be an incredible gathering with lots of opportunity to engage with our people and take part in activities that celebrate who we are as Inuit.

I thank our Governing Council for their leadership, dedication, and sound guidance. As we head into the last AGA of our term, we are reminded of how much we have accomplished at NCC. I thank our staff, an ever growing and diverse group of people who effectively, and proudly, carry out their work to serve NunatuKavut Inuit. And this year, I give a special thanks to our Leadership Secretariat, and to all of those who have

supported the transition to our new governance structure. We also thank our friends and allies for their support and partnership.

I am so proud to be your President, and I look forward to continuing to walk this path together, toward self-government and self-determination.

Nakummesuak – a very big thank you!



Todd Russell, President

## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President and Governing Council are responsible for the overall governance of NCC. There are a number of files and issues handled directly through the President’s Office. Support is provided by various departments within NCC and, in some cases, our business development arm Nunacor.

### *Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination and Federal Relationship*

NCC was recognized by the Government of Canada as an Indigenous collective in 2018 and subsequently entered into a Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD) process with Canada. NCC and Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2019 that outlined the general principles of negotiations and set the stage for next steps.

NCC is very committed to our rights recognition process with the Government of Canada. We continue to meet with federal officials to ensure that Canada lives up to its commitments and what has been committed to NunatuKavut Inuit. Consistent with the letters of commitment from Prime Minister Trudeau, we are

pushing for the federal government to implement our MOU so that we can advance negotiations on agreements that help address the priorities identified by our people.

In May, NCC was pleased to welcome then Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister, Marc Miller, to our head office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. He met with some members of Council, senior leadership, and Elders. We discussed the importance of our nation-to-nation relationship with Canada in helping advance the rights and well-being of our people through agreements that address key priorities. A meeting with the new CIRNAC Minister Gary Anandasangaree and other relevant ministers has also taken place.



Figure 1: Visit from Minister Miller in May



NCC has longstanding relationships with many federal departments on many different files that complement our rights recognition process. We are also involved in consultations and engagements, negotiations and other legal processes with Canada.

For example, NCC has also submitted a substantial health proposal to relevant federal departments in 2023. The proposal, which asks for \$21 million over three years, outlines the dire need for health supports in NunatuKavut. Specifically, in the areas of medical transportation, mental wellness and Elder care.

### Provincial Relationship

NCC continues to build on our strong relationship with the provincial government. This work is focussed on the recognition of our rights and the priorities of NunatuKavut Inuit. President Russell participates in regular meetings with the Premier and other Indigenous leaders in the province to discuss items of common interest. This is in addition to numerous other meetings on various matters.



Figure 2: Premier Indigenous Leaders' Roundtable

On September 29, and on the eve of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Premier Furey apologized to former residential school students from NunatuKavut for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's role in the residential school system in this province. It was

another step in the journey of healing and reconciliation for NunatuKavut Inuit.

While NCC is pleased about such a positive relationship with the Province, there continues to be advocacy for improvements in health delivery, infrastructure and resource developments that impacts our communities.

### Industry Relationships

NCC has continued to build and bolster relationships with various partners, and to develop and improve agreements which aim to ensure that NunatuKavut Inuit are the primary beneficiaries from our lands and resources. NCC must be consulted and consent sought regarding development happening in our territory.

NCC have been in discussions with NL Hydro about negotiating a successor agreement to the Community Development Agreement. We have also continued talks around NL Hydro's application to the Public Utilities Board for approval of the Construction of Phase 1 of Hydro's Long-term Supply Plan for Southern Labrador. NCC wants to ensure that any project of this nature considers the energy security and sustainability needs expressed by our people and communities.

NCC also has a long-standing harvesting agreement with the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company (LFUSC). The LFUSC is an a very important partner to the NCC, our fishers and communities in NunatuKavut.

### Academic Relationships

For decades, and particularly in the last 10 years, NCC has worked to develop strong relationships with academic institutions in Canada and specifically with Memorial University. Together, we have created diverse research and partnership opportunities that have had positive impacts in our communities. We have also been participatory to informing the development of university programs, ensuring that NunatuKavut Inuit are accurately and appropriately reflected in our university. NunatuKavut Inuit, for example, are represented on the governing constitution of the School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies (SASS), Labrador Campus.



Despite our progress, and the many positive and strength-based relationships with academic partners across the country, matters of Indigenous identity have crept into university administration and operations. While we are all aware of the important national conversations taking place relating to individuals who may fraudulently claim Indigenous identity, this is not a circumstance that applies to NunatuKavut Inuit. Yet, some universities are falsely equating self-identification with fraud and are creating policies that seek to exclude those who are outside of the Indian Act or without a settled land claim.

This has already precipitated questions around the identity of NunatuKavut Inuit at some universities, leading to negative impacts on some of our people. We are fully engaged and are pushing back on universities and consequential policy development, including at Memorial, to ensure the rightful recognition and treatment of our people in these institutions.

### *Relationships with Indigenous Groups and Governments*

As an affiliate under the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), NCC sits on the Board. We are engaged and are working with our national organization on common interests and priorities. CAP also supports NCC nationally.

In 2023, NCC was granted special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UN). This status grants NCC access to the various human rights mechanisms of the UN and participation in events like the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.



Figure 3: NCC addresses UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues assembly in May 2023.

There have been ongoing efforts by some other Inuit organizations and other Indigenous groups in Labrador to deny NunatuKavut Inuit our rights and our very identity. While it has caused hurt and harm, we applaud our people for demonstrating such resilience and strength. NCC will continue to take a stand against such false allegations and misinformation campaigns. We can let nothing stand in the way of the full recognition and affirmation of our Inuit rights.

NCC is an equal participant of the annual Premier-Indigenous Leaders Roundtable and participates in frequent meetings with the Province and other Indigenous leaders. We have positive and respectful working relationships with other Indigenous groups in the province namely the Miawpukek First Nation and Qalipu First Nation and, in more recent years, the Newfoundland Indigenous Peoples Alliance. NCC also has positive relationship with many Indigenous groups across Canada.

### *Search and Rescue*

The President’s Office works closely with the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Department to coordinate NCC’s efforts around improvements to Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in Labrador. Over the years, NunatuKavut Inuit families and communities have witnessed heart-wrenching losses, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced SAR structures and infrastructure both on the water, the land and in the air. Additionally, the emergence of significant global trends, such as the impacts of climate change, signals the necessity for better and more resilient SAR preparedness.

NCC has been engaged directly with the Province and federal Ministers to push for action for improved SAR related to air, marine and ground. Meetings with federal ministers, MPs, and provincial colleagues have taken place with a focus on Department of National Defense, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Public Safety Canada and Transport Canada.

We are very pleased that there are now three Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) teams in southern Labrador

and the Province has continued to make critical investments in SAR within its jurisdiction.

In May, we helped advocate for an important search and rescue resolution that was passed at the Liberal Party's 2023 National Convention. The resolution was titled "5-Wing Goose Bay be designated primary Search & Rescue base with dedicated air resources."



Figure 4: President Russell addresses SARScene participants

At SARScene 2023, held in St. John's this past September, President Russell delivered a powerful statement during the session entitled "The Public Inquiry Respecting Ground Search and Rescue for Lost and Missing Persons." He offered key recommendations, including establishing 5-Wing Goose Bay as a primary SAR base with dedicated air resources and trained crews, and a minimum of two Lifeboat stations on the coast of Labrador and increased GSAR assets. These efforts are making a difference.

Thanks to the many people who are contributing to this life-saving work, including Jeanette Russell, the head of the Labrador Coalition for Search and Rescue.

## Commercial Fisheries

The fishery is core to our identity and always a priority.

It was a tumultuous and challenging 2023 commercial fishery for NunatuKavut-based fishing enterprises with crab prices having fallen significantly. Yet, we witnessed some very strong fishing activity for northern cod. For example, catches of cod by NunatuKavut harvesters increased for the fourth consecutive year. These increased landings signify not only growing reliance on cod, a changing marine environment and an expanding

resource, but a further transition to groundfish species that will need to occur in the coming years.

NCC and NDC Fisheries will continue their ongoing efforts to secure greater access and allocations of these species as they recover in the coming years so that members, harvesters and communities can maximize the economic and social benefits from their own resources.

## Bill S-14

Bill S-14, the *Protecting Canada's Natural Wonders Act*, is a Bill introduced in the Senate of Canada in Fall 2023. Among other things, it will formally establish Mealy Mountains National Park as a National Park Reserve governed under the Canada National Parks Act.



Figure 5: President Russell appearing before the Senate of Canada committee on Bill S-14

The Bill as originally tabled, recognizes NCC members as "traditional land users; entitled to carry on certain traditional activities in the Park. This was intended to implement the provisions of NCC's Shared Understanding Agreement with Parks Canada, and to allow our members to exercise their rights until such time as s.35 agreements can be negotiated.

Despite efforts from NCC to educate Senators about the longstanding connection and rights that NunatuKavut Inuit have to the Park, the Senate chose to amend the Bill to remove NCC members from the category of traditional land users. This was done based on defamatory statements and misrepresentations made to the Senate committee by the Innu Nation and their representatives. The amended Bill was passed by the Senate in December. It is set to move to the House of Commons this year.



NCC will be working hard to ensure the Government of Canada respects the rights of NunatuKavut Inuit and reverses the Senate's amendment to remove NCC members as traditional land users from Bill S-14 when it goes through the House of Commons process.

## Nakummesuak Awards

Nakummesuak, which means "thank you very much" or "a big acknowledgement," is a prestigious award established by NCC. It is awarded annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding support for NunatuKavut Inuit and communities and have given unselfishly of their time and energy to make a difference.

At the 2023 AGA, the following well-deserving recipients were presented with a Nakummesuak Award:



Figure 6: President Russell presenting Judy Pardy with her Nakummesuak Award

Judy is a huge support for seniors, youth, women, residential school survivors, and all Inuit in our communities. Judy has an unconditional love for her family, friends and her community. She is full of knowledge and is firm in her faith – a hard working woman and a leader among her peers with a strong voice... who doesn't mind using it!

**Judy Pardy,** Cartwright, for her tremendous volunteer work in her community, for advancing the priorities and needs in her community and working toward positive change. Judy is a huge



Figure 7: Marilyn Bridle

foster parents to many children from Labrador, up and down the coast for decades. In so doing, the foster children are able to stay in Labrador, close to their home and connected to their culture. Marilyn is an entrepreneur, and she has promoted her culture and her area through the Whalers Restaurant and Craft store to countless tours, visitors and friends. Her delicious traditional food brings many people back every year.

**Marilyn Bridle,** Red Bay, is a proud member of NunatuKavut. She is a great crafter. She has contributed to keeping the traditional 'Dickie' coat alive. She has made many and gifted many. Marilyn, along with her husband, have been



Figure 8: Jeanette Russell

deficiencies of search and rescue services in Labrador. There is no doubt that her work has and will lead to increased safety for many generations of fishers and for safer travel around and between communities in NunatuKavut and in Labrador.

**Jeanette Russell,** Mary's Harbour, for her efforts to raise awareness and improve search and rescue in Labrador. Since the tragic loss of her son Marc Russell and crewmate Joey Jenkins in September 2021, Jeanette has dedicated an extraordinary amount of time and effort to address the very serious inadequacies and

## MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP SECRETARIAT

ullukut – good day,

We are pleased to share that, as of July 2023, we have a fully staffed Leadership Secretariat (LS) team at NCC! The LS serves as a shared, consensus-based decision-making body that provides advisory and direction to the Governing Council and to NCC Departments.

Collectively, we work to ensure that the work we do at NCC is guided by our own Inuit laws, policies, and community priorities.

Since July, we have been actively implementing newly developed processes that will continue to strengthen the organizational and governance capability of NCC.

We look forward to continuing our work with and for each of you to ensure new opportunities and outcomes that will see positive impacts to all NunatuKavut Inuit.

On behalf of the LS team, nakummek for your commitment to our communities, families, and culture.

Sincerely,

*Alyssa Paul, Chief Administration Officer*  
*Amy Hudson, Chief Governance Officer*  
*Bonnie Allen, Chief Financial Officer*  
*Kelly Broomfield, Chief Communications Officer*  
*Shaun McLean, Chief Operations Officer*

## LEADERSHIP SECRETARIAT

### Office of Communications

This office is led by the Chief Communications Officer and provides both internal and external communications support to the President's Office and other departments within NCC.

### Online Presence

The Office of Communications administers and monitors NCC's website and social media platforms to ensure consistent messaging and branding. They also work to increase NCC's reach on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to ensure members are kept informed about the work that NCC does and to help tell the story of NunatuKavut Inuit.

This year, with dedicated staff, our reach has grown tremendously, especially on Instagram. Communications is also working on a website overhaul, which will be completed in the new year.

### Design and Production

Communications is also involved in the design and production of a number of publications and products. This office takes the lead on the coordination, design and printing of this annual report and helps arrange the design and printing of NCC's annual Christmas card. We also handle all promotional material orders and design posters and presentations for departments.



Figure 9: 2023 NCC Christmas Card cover



In 2023, Communications helped the Research, Education and Culture department with the design of an early reader book teaching basic Inuttitut words called “omajuit ukiumi - Animals in NunatuKavut.” It will be released in 2024.

### Media Relations

Media relations is managed through Communications, which includes drafting and finalizing news releases and statements. Communications also coordinates responses to all media enquiries, in collaboration with the President’s Office. In 2023, a considerable number of news releases and statements were prepared on various issues, funding approvals and donations.

### Event Management

Communications helps to organize a variety of events, from news conferences to community meetings. This includes our Annual General Assembly process, which starts with a series of community meetings and ends with a closing assembly, a premiere event that is attended by well over 200 members.

This past year, Communications helped with the planning of an energy forum, an Inuit history and governance gathering, a Stewardship Resource Workshop, an event to celebrate the British-Inuit Treaty of 1765 and the residential schools apology event in Cartwright. We also assisted the Employment and Skills Development department with organizing a career fair for youth.

### NunatuKavut Youth Community Engagement Project

The NunatuKavut Youth Community Engagement Project (NYCEP), which was led by the Office of Communications since late 2022, ended in March after four years of amazing work. NYCEP was originally developed by the Health and Community Services department for youth living in NunatuKavut between the ages of 15 and 30. Youth learned a variety of multi-media skills to help tell stories about community life and Inuit culture, traditions and history through photography, videography and journalism.

Over the past four years, over 60 youth were trained in storytelling and videography and they volunteered over

12,000 hours. NYCEP participants also produced more than 70 videos, highlighting traditional activities like dog sledding, fishing, and hunting while other videos showcase NCC communities and local businesses. Many of these videos are on NCC’s YouTube for the world to view. In addition, 10 multimedia labs were set up in schools in NunatuKavut.



Figure 10: NunatuKavut youth and NCC Vice President Jim Holwell in Port Hope Simpson for NYCEP’s final gathering.

It is hoped that the Office of Communications is successful in applying for future funds to continue this type of project for youth in NunatuKavut.

### Mental Wellness

Communications staff is involved with the NunatuKavut Wellness Initiative, providing overall communications advice and support, design of materials and report writing. Our office was involved in the writing of an extensive health proposal, which includes mental wellness supports that was submitted to the federal government. We were also engaged in the development of a proposal to the province for the continuation of virtual mental and physical wellness services for NunatuKavut Inuit, which was successfully funded.

### Office of Operations

The Office of Operations, under the Chief Operations Officer (COO), was staffed in July 2023. The COO’s role is to work alongside the Leadership Secretariat (LS) as the lead Officer responsible for overseeing and supporting day-to-day administrative and operational

functions of NCC in close collaboration with the team of departmental Directors. NCC has over 75 staff across 10 Departments and Offices in 14 different locations throughout NunatuKavut.

NCC's new governance model was put in place to guide the change and development of NCC as we work to secure the resources and tools that will allow us to meet our strategic goals.

The COO is responsible for introducing Annual Departmental Workplans that are guided by NCC's overall Strategic Plan and presented at the Annual General Assembly each year.



Figure 11: Internal strategic planning session

These new workplans will be completed by the many capable staff in communities throughout the territory.

The LS will facilitate this work by ensuring that staff have the proper education, training, and skills to carry out their roles effectively. NCC has an exceptional team of community leaders that are working hard for NunatuKavut Inuit.

## Office of Finance

This year has been an exciting and challenging one for the Office of Finance. It has also been a year of transition and growth. As NCC has grown, so too have the complexities related to maintaining our financial records. To ensure NCC's books and records are maintained at the highest possible standard, the Office of Finance has added several new roles during the year.

In July of 2023, NCC was successful in hiring a Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The CFO is responsible for directing the accounting policies, procedures and internal controls of NCC. The CFO is also responsible for recommending improvements to ensure the integrity of

the organization's financial information and managing the relationship with our independent auditors.

In addition to this, in the fall, the Office of Finance added a Contribution Agreements Coordinator and a Finance Team Lead to our team.

The Contribution Agreements Coordinator (CAC) reports directly to the CFO and is responsible for designing and developing effective and efficient internal processes for the management of NCC's contribution agreements. The addition of this role to the finance department provides NCC with an additional layer of oversight as it pertains to contribution agreements. This ensures NCC is fully apprised of all reporting requirements as well as identifying opportunities for added resources to support NCC.

The Finance Team Lead works closely with the Finance Manager and the CFO and is responsible for implementing process improvements to enhance the efficiency, accuracy and overall productivity of the Office of Finance.

NCC continues its strong financial position. To this end, the Office of Finance had a successful year in meeting our financial reporting requirements. The audited financial statements, including the Auditor's Report for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2023, can be found on NCC's website at [www.nunatukavut.ca](http://www.nunatukavut.ca).

As we look forward to 2024 and the challenges and opportunities it will bring, the Office will continue to evaluate the needs of NCC from a financial reporting perspective to ensure the skills and requisites within the finance department meets the requirements of NCC and our membership.

## Office of Governance

The Chief Governance Officer (CGO) leads this office and is responsible for providing strategic advisory around governance matters like education, health, environment, economic development and research to the President, the Leadership Secretariat (LS) and NunatuKavut Governing Council (NGC), while supporting the work of NCC departments across these priority areas.



The CGO works closely with the Office of the President on matters of self-governance, including related negotiations with various levels of government at the provincial and federal level. Under the direction of President and Council, the CGO also co-leads the Rights Recognition Process with Canada (land claim work).

### Executive Manager of Governance and Rights Secretariat

Over the past year, this office has collaboratively led the development and implementation of important milestones like the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Education, the transition and implementation of NCC’s internal governance structure, and the creation of a new strategic planning process for NCC, among others.

The position of Executive Manager of the Office of Governance is a new and exciting addition to the Office of Governance. This executive function manages the day-to-day administration and operations of the Office which includes providing a supervisory role to the Membership department (housed within the Office of Governance as of February 2023) and management of NCC’s Rights Recognition Process.

### Membership

The membership office is now located in the Office of Governance. This is a change that will see exciting developments soon, including opportunities for community-engaged family history and geology tours. In the meantime, the membership office continues to process new applications and membership card renewal forms.

Members are reminded that you will need a current card to participate in the communal fishery and to avail of programs and services. Please check the expiry date on your card and complete a card renewal form if your card has expired or is near expiring.

Renewal Forms can be found at [www.nunatukavut.ca](http://www.nunatukavut.ca) or requested from your local NCC office. Members are required to provide NCC with a current residential address and the appropriate documentation to complete your card renewal.

Please contact membership staff at [mgroves@nunatukavut.ca](mailto:mgroves@nunatukavut.ca) if you have changes to information in the membership registry, such as the spelling of names, name change due marriage or divorce, notification of a family member’s death or a change of address/telephone number.

### Internal Governance Restructuring

NCC’s new governance model was implemented as of March 1 and a full Leadership Secretariat (LS) team has been in place since July 2023.

NCC is already seeing the positive impacts to the organization’s leadership through the sharing of important responsibilities. The LS meets weekly to review processes and continues to add to the restructuring efforts that have been underway. The Office of Governance thanks the team for its tireless contributions to this important work.

### Next Steps in Strengthening our Inuit Governance

The work of internal governance restructuring creates opportunities to further strengthen NCC’s governance. As NCC represents Inuit rights-holders, you (full-members) are vitally important to this growth and governance building. NCC’s growth and successes mean positive change, and this includes acknowledging and privileging NCC’s own ways of knowing (NCC’s own laws).



Figure 12: Inuit History and Governance Gathering in Upper Lake Melville.

This year, the Governance Office has been reviewing NCC’s constitution and membership policies as part of our governance restructuring. The Governance Office held numerous community engagements in September

and heard from members from all areas of the territory. The feedback collected has contributed to NCC's internal review processes. This review process will ensure NCC's constitution and membership processes are reflective and inclusive of Inuit values and communities across NunatuKavut.



Figure 13: Engagement with Charlottetown

The next steps in this process will be to present the new drafted laws to members at the upcoming AGA in February 2024. Your feedback and ongoing input is valuable as the Governance Office continues to update our governance laws into Inuit Law.

The next reviews taking place in 2024 will be (1) Elections process/guidelines; (2) Community Consultation and Engagement protocol and (3) Inuit food, social and ceremonial law. Strengthening NCC's Laws for future membership is vital in positioning NCC for self-governance and recognition of NCC's Indigenous rights.

The Office of Governance will keep members informed about community engagement opportunities so that they are well informed, and that their voices are wholly a part of this exciting process of Inuit law building.

### United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

During winter 2022, the Office of Governance submitted a proposal to the federal Department of Justice and received funding to participate in the consultation, cooperation, and engagement on an action plan to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. As a result, the Office of Governance engaged NunatuKavut Inuit across

NunatuKavut and Inuit voices informed NCC's report to Canada.

The purpose of this work was to strengthen awareness about UNDRIP among NunatuKavut Inuit, including its status in Canada and what this means for Inuit in NunatuKavut. The Office of Governance will be working to ensure the values highlighted in our submission are reflected in NCC's policies and overall governance structure.

### Strategic Planning and Project Thrive

The Office of Governance has been working on NCC's Strategic Planning process and new strategic plan that will guide us over the next four years.

### Innovative and Transformative Education in NunatuKavut: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Education

NCC, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District signed an MOU on Education in the fall of 2022. This marked one of the many great efforts of NCC and NunatuKavut communities as NCC works to advance reconciliation through education so that NunatuKavut Inuit can see meaningful impacts for their children and families.



Figure 14: Mitt-making course at St. Mary's Allgrade School in Mary's Harbour

The spirit and intent of this MOU, and of this relationship, is another opportunity to ensure that NunatuKavut children see themselves, their culture, and values reflected in what they learn, in how they learn,



and in the world around them. NCC believes that when children see themselves in the classroom, outcomes are improved, and opportunities are endless.

This work will help to ensure an educational system that fosters and nurtures healing, growth, and mutual respect between all peoples. The knowledge and experiences of NunatuKavut Inuit are required to help make all of this happen. NCC is currently working collaboratively with all parties on the implementation of the MOU.

### Inuit History Research

In collaboration with colleagues, Dr. Amy Hudson has been delving into Inuit history and culture in Labrador for the past number of years. Most recently, she has been co-leading research with Inuit in the Sandwich Bay and Island of Ponds region of NunatuKavut.

Given the state of literature about Inuit, this is timely and important work. Currently, the academic literature about NunatuKavut history does not reflect the perspectives, stories or lives of NunatuKavut Inuit themselves.

Many writers have insisted on imposing their own judgements about Indigeneity, replicating colonial narratives, and ignoring the importance of relationships and accountability in Inuit history and society. This work, on the other hand, is centered on engagement on traditional Inuit lands in NunatuKavut.

The project will provide NunatuKavut Inuit with the opportunity to narrate their own perspectives and realities about local life, community, family, history, and relationships. The end goal is to create a book in which NunatuKavut Inuit see themselves reflected and hear their stories told in a way that is meaningful and accessible for future generations.

### Community Hub Partnership

In the fall of 2022, under the direction and leadership of the Office of Governance, NCC proudly announced a tremendous partnership among the NunatuKavut Community Council, Memorial University, and the Sandwich Bay 50+ club. This partnership has since

greatly enhanced community access to research and education in Cartwright.

Serving as a community research and education center, the hub is accessible to people of all ages. Hub coordinators facilitate outreach within the community and assist in identifying and further advancing community priorities in areas of research and education.



Figure 15: Kayak safety course hosted by the Hub in September

The Office of Governance is very excited about the hub's potential for climate change knowledge exchange and skills building. The hub will create opportunities for youth participation in climate change activities with learning experiences in their own community. It is administered by the Research, Education and Culture Department.

### Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self Determination (RIRSD)

RIRSD process and negotiations are shared between the Office of Governance and President's Office. The negotiation team meets regularly with Canada to advance NCC's RIRSD agreement. While this process can take some time, NCC is hopeful that each time the team meets, progress is made towards successful partnerships for the benefit of NunatuKavut citizens and territory.

### Office of Administration

The Office of Administration is led by the Chief Administration Officer (CAO), which was staffed in July 2023. The CAO maintains overall responsibility for the efficient administration of the NCC and the Leadership Secretariat.

Since NCC's new governance restructuring, the front desk reception office and administrative assistant has moved under the Office of Administration. Together they work to ensure the effective management and implementation of administrative processes and support services to improve the overall performance and efficiency of NCC's day-to-day organizational operations.

### Review of Administrative Processes

The Office of Administration has been reviewing and evaluating our current administrative tasks and processes to identify areas of strength, weakness and improvement. Using this data, the CAO has and continues to amend, establish and implement new processes and structure in hopes of improving the daily elements of our operations.

### Document Management and Control

The CAO is responsible for the management and safekeeping of all the books, records and documents of the NCC. This past fall, the Office of Administration has completed an internal review and has been working to

develop and implement guidelines and procedures for access, management, and control of documents across the organization. We have also been leading the management of NCC's library and archives, working to ensure tracking, accessibility and preservation of all NCC's archives and records. By next fall, we hope to have a fully functioning library established in NCC's main office, located at 200 Kelland Drive.

### Governance Framework

The CAO safeguards the integrity of NCC's new Governance framework, ensuring that actions and decisions adhere to NCC's Governance Laws and related policies. Since this new shift in Governance, there has been great change throughout the organization. The CAO and the Leadership Secretariat has been implementing and defining new processes and expectations for all of NCC and its employees. We will be helping teams to understand these new changes and expectations while providing the necessary support.



## HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources (HR) Department has undertaken a great deal of work this year, particularly as it relates to recruitment and retention, strategic staffing, HR planning and development, and policy work.

The HR department is continuously building on the framework of policy development and staff training to ensure compliance with all acts and regulations of the Canada Labour Code and to address any gaps and underlying employee relations issues and concerns. This will continue to be a prominent piece of work in HR, ensuring that as new Bills come into effect, and that staff are aware of those changes and trained as needed.

HR released a new Policy and Procedure Manual in 2023, which is reflective of the Canada Labour Code and NCC's guiding documents. It is the guiding document for all employees in their employment relationship with NCC as an organization. Many hours were spent developing this document from a labour relations perspective, with a lens on building a foundation of growth, understanding, trust, and confidence in the employer-employee relationship.

The HR Department supports the Office of Governance with strategic planning advice, and assists with reviewing current staffing models and helping implement staffing plans, from an operational and staffing perspective. HR advises and works to ensure that we have the right human capital and the correct tools (people, systems, and processes) to align our HR capabilities with our organizational goals, and effectively carry out the work of our organization.

HR acts as the change agent to lead the implementation of HR organizational change, while ensuring that legislative requirements, such as Human Rights, OHS, and Duty to Accommodate are present in decision-making.

Strategic staffing is continuously evolving. HR works to ensure that NCC is in the best position to attract, recruit, develop and retain employees, allowing NCC to strengthen its position as they move towards self-governance. This includes ensuring that NCC has solid compensation strategies that are reflective of labour

market conditions, that NCC has a strong benefits package that includes being able to strike the proper work/life balance, and that there are policies that support employees and the families in their lives.

HR is involved in assessing and evaluating position alignment to ensure that they are strategically aligned with the vision of the organization. And to ensure that NCC has the right people in the right positions.

Recruitment continues to be a challenge, particularly in today's global labour market. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the supply of talent is significantly reduced. Workers re-evaluated their priorities and many chose to retire or stay home and became part of the "gig economy," creating a shift to a job seekers market. Employers across the board are struggling to find available talent.

These are exciting times at NCC, as the organization continues to grow staffing to complement, to strengthen and strategically position ourselves to meet the needs of the people we represent.

HR is committed to providing expertise and advice on creating a positive, healthy, and safe workplace for all staff. A proactive approach to developing policies that support the well-being of employees is key to a healthy and productive workplace that contributes to the greater good of the organization. HR is committed to ensuring the development and engagement of a diverse workforce and establishing organizational culture that incorporates NunatuKavut Inuit values of caring, fairness, respect, and inclusion.

Human Resource Management (HRM) is an integral part of a successful organization and serves many roles. As strategic partner and advisor, employee advocate and change manager, HRM contributes to the development and the accomplishments of the organization's strategic plan. HR leads recruitment, development, and engagement of staff to ensure the organization is poised to move forward with a positive, dynamic workforce that meets our objectives and serves our people.

# EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Employment and Skills Development department works to help NunatuKavut Inuit gain employment. It oversees NCC’s employment and skills development-related agreements, provides resources for unemployed and underemployed individuals, and continuously builds partnerships with employers to help NCC members secure full-time employment.

NCC has two programs that provide funding for unemployed and underemployed members. The primary program is the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program (ISETP), funded directly through Service Canada, and the other is the CAP-ISETP agreement, funded by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP). Both provided training and employment assistance to thousands of members over the years.

## Indigenous Skills Employment and Training Program Agreement (ISETP)

The 2022-2023 ISETP agreement has concluded and fully utilized its budget, providing funding assistance for:



## Outline of Programs under ISETP

### Skills Development – University

This program provides a bursary/grant-type payment to eligible university students who are in their final two years of an undergraduate program. If a client was funded for their undergraduate degree, they will only

be eligible for their final year of the graduate program. The amount is determined annually, based on approved budget.

### Skills Development – Other

This program provides clients with assistance to complete certificate/diploma programs, short term industry-specific programs, and health/safety training programs. This program can provide financial assistance with course cost, living allowance, travel allowance and childcare if applicable.

### Employment Transition Fund

This program is designed to assist clients with career growth, such as moving them from a minimum wage job into a career that meets their interest, salary expectations and labour market priorities. This program follows the Skills Development – Other guidelines.

### Work Experience Program

These can be exploratory in nature, to assist clients in determining if a particular employment field is suitable for them. This can involve the client gaining direct work experience in a field for which they have studied or trained.

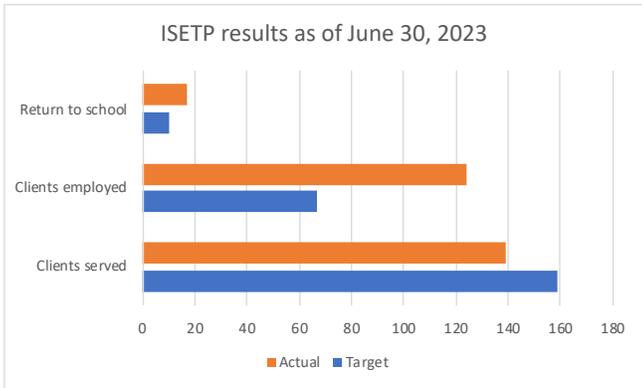
### Summer Career Placement

This program is meant to provide meaningful summer work experiences for students 15-29 years of age. The objective is to link students with work experience related to their field of study or an area in which they have an interest in studying, wherever possible.

### Self-Employment Benefit

This program provides income support and funding for business planning services for members wishing to start their own business.

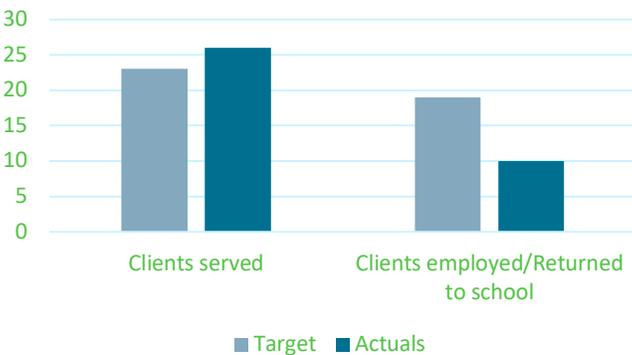




### CAP-USETP Agreement Update

The 2022-2023 CAP-ISETP agreement, which supports certificate/diploma programs, has concluded with the budget being fully utilized. We were able to provide financial assistance to approximately 32 clients in various trades programs. Results, as listed below, will vary depending on if the client is unreachable or hasn't responded in a timely manner, their results may not be captured.

#### CAP-ISETP results as of June 30, 2023 – Overall Target vs. Actuals:



### Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS)

This three-year program started September 1, 2020, and has been extended to March 29, 2024. It assists students with overcoming barriers to enrollment in accredited skills training programs, giving them the opportunity to benefit from interventions such as academic upgrading, entry level apprenticeship programs and career exposure, that will enable them to

develop their skills and employability status, preparing them for employment.

Overall, ESD assisted 63 clients since the agreement began, with 53 becoming employed or returned to school.

Clients served 2022-2023:  
Target: 20  
Actual: 18

Clients employed/Returned to school 2022-2023:  
14

### Youth Career Fair

ESD held a youth career fair on October 27-28, 2023, in Happy Valley – Goose Bay, NL. The career fair was well attended by youth, various employers, and post-secondary institutions in the province.

There were 30 youth and 20 speakers, with representation from various fields such as mining, fisheries, the Canadian Forces, and various trades. Attendees were taken on tour of Serco, one of central Labrador's largest employers.

NCC's Governing Council joined youth for a meet and greet on the first night. There was great interaction and participation by all. It was the second year for this event, and ESD are in discussions to make this a bi-annual event.



Figure 16: NCC Career Fair

## Community Employment Agreement (Employment Assistance Services)

This agreement is with the province and funds two Community Employment Officer positions that serve all NunatuKavut communities in southern Labrador out of the offices located in Mary's Harbour and Cartwright. Their work includes:

- Assisting clients in job searches, resume writing, completing applications and other labour market services.
- Making the public aware of job opportunities by advertising through the NunatuKavut Employment Opportunities Facebook Page, which has a following of approximately 2,400 people.
- Helping employers fill job vacancies with qualified candidates.
- Searching job lines and reaching out to employers about upcoming opportunities.
- Working with various companies recruiting Indigenous people and gauging future opportunities for NCC clients.

## How to Apply for Programs

To be eligible for assistance under the Skills Development programs ran by NCC, one must be:

- A current member of NCC, no matter where they reside in Canada.
- Unemployed or underemployed (working less than 20 hours a week).
- Attending an accredited school within Canada, full time.
- Enrolled in the final two years of a program.

### Selection Criteria:

- Program applied for meets labour market demand
- Academic performance
- Training history
- Cost of training
- Budget considerations

## Memorial Bursaries

NCC administers two annual memorial bursaries for post-secondary students who are members.



**Cassandra Campbell from Charlottetown, NL.**

The **Bernie Heard Memorial Bursary**, valued at \$1000, was named in honor of Bernie Heard. Bernie was an active member of NCC who contributed greatly to the foundation of our membership system. **The 2023 recipient, pictured here, was**



**Natalie Fequet from L'Anse au Loup, NL.**

The **Raymond Turnbull Memorial Bursary**, valued at \$2000, was named in honor of Raymond Turnbull. Raymond worked with NCC as an Education Officer, where he dedicated his life to helping youth. The scholarship is awarded annually to an NCC member who is graduating from

Grade 12 and has demonstrated admirable community and school involvement, as well as academic achievement. **The 2023 recipient, pictured here, was**

## Merit Award



**Michaela Keefe from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL.**

NCC provides an annual Merit Award, valued at \$500, to a member attending College of the North Atlantic (CNA) Happy Valley-Goose Bay Campus. The award is in recognition of the student's

commitment to academic achievement. Nominations are put forward by CNA and the winner is chosen by NCC. **The 2023 recipient, pictured here, was**

## Other highlights and activities

ESD staff attended several conferences that benefit both the staff and our membership. They include



Cannexus, AFOA Canada, Expo Labrador, and Northern Lights. These conferences help upskill ESD career counselling and job development services and provide valuable information on various trades and the future labour market.

ESD signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Aboriginal Employment Services – Apprenticeship program, to work closely with NCC apprentices, helping them secure employment as new recruits in their fields. This is a wage subsidy-type program that encourages employers to hire NCC graduates.

ESD has formed an employment committee with the Iron Ore Company of Canada/Rio Tinto to create opportunities to work together and find employment for NunatuKavut Inuit. ESD also works very closely with other organizations such as the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership, Trades NL, and Nunacor.

### Labrador West Indigenous Service Centre

The Labrador West Indigenous Service Centre (LWISC) delivers effective, culturally appropriate programs and services to assist all Indigenous peoples living in, or transitioning to, Labrador west. It operates like a friendship centre and receives funding and sponsorship from various sources. The centre has been operated by NCC since it opened in 2015 and moved to the ESD department mid-year.

Over the past year, the LWISC has offered cultural programming, events and services that include:

- Seal and moose hide slipper-making sessions
- Cossacks and quilt-making sessions
- Weekly Inuttitug bingo sessions
- Bi-weekly pop-up craft sessions
- Weekly Women’s Circle Crafting and Wellness sessions
- Weekly Drumming sessions
- Jam making and bottling sessions
- Drop-in services for resume writing, job searching and applying on jobs and scholarships

- Orange Shirt Day events
- World Suicide Prevention Day events
- National Indigenous People’s Day celebrations

LWISC held an NCC “Out on the Land Day” at a local campground in June where they cooked a delicious jiggs dinner outside. Drummers performed and encouraged participants to try the drum, and youth made survival kits.



Figure 17: Out on the land day

The centre started an Inuit drumming group in the fall of 2019 with six youth. This year, the same youth are teaching a group of younger youth what they have learned.

The centre now has two Inuit drumming groups. They like to share what they have learned with others. Recently, the senior drumming girls hosted a supper for the Sandwich Bay Residential School Drummers when they visited Labrador west. LWISC drummers enjoyed meeting them, learning and sharing experiences. The evening ended with a game of Inuttitug Bingo.

LWISC staff are fully trained to facilitate Applied Suicide Invention Skills Training (ASIST). This year, the centre offered training in Labrador west, Happy Valley - Goose Bay, Cartwright and Mary’s Harbour.

## ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) department, on behalf of our Governing Council, acts as the stewards of our resources, safeguarding not just the land, water, and natural resources but also preserving harvesting practices and traditional ecological knowledge. It plays a pivotal role in preserving protected areas, biodiversity, and ensuring the continuity of customary practices crucial for community identity and future generations.

Moreover, the department helps bridge the gap between modern conservation methods and Indigenous knowledge systems, fostering a holistic approach that respects the environment while addressing contemporary environmental challenges. By empowering and involving Indigenous voices in conservation efforts, it not only promotes environmental stewardship but also upholds the rights, dignity, and self-determination of NunatuKavut Inuit in managing our lands and resources sustainably for future generations.

The ENR department continues to work closely with communities, Governing Council and leadership, to ensure our core values, Indigenous knowledge, and sustainable practices are incorporated into all facets of ENR operations.

### *Monitoring and Health Management Oversight Committee*

NCC remains highly engaged in the monitoring and mitigation of potential methylmercury impacts from the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project, primarily through its active participation on the Monitoring and Health Management Oversight Committee (MHMOC). It was established through funding from Health Canada. NCC is active in both the Health and Education Working Group and the Communications Working Group.

The MHMOC now has experts to help the committee evaluate human health risks from mercury. The expert firm, Intrinsik, along with Health Canada, has reviewed

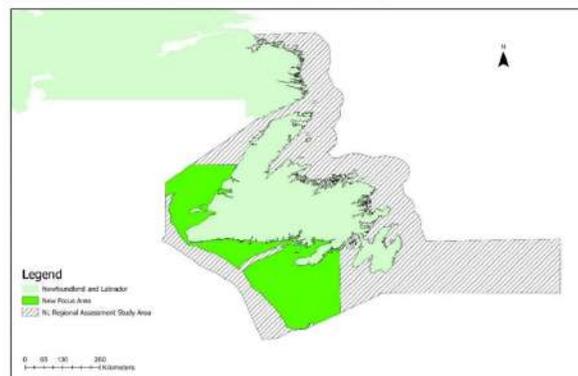
the Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) for mercury. NCC is currently waiting to review a consolidated draft of Health Canada's and Intrinsik's comments on the HHRA. In addition, the MHMOC is currently working on the design and implementation of dietary surveys specific to the three Indigenous groups in Labrador.

### *Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador*

Since the fall of 2022, ENR has been engaging on a federal-provincial regional assessment of offshore wind development for offshore NL.

ENR has provided input on the Terms of Reference, and the text of the federal-provincial agreement to conduct the Regional Assessment (RA), which included a map of the proposed study area. Following the feedback they collected throughout August – October of 2023, the RA Committee decided to proceed with their Focus Area approach, which excludes Labrador for now.

**Proposed Focus Area for The Regional Assessment**



NCC has appointed representatives on the RA's Scientific Information & Community Knowledge Advisory Group and Fisheries and Other Ocean Users Advisory Group, where they can monitor discussions and offer views from their area of expertise. The RA Committee is now working on some material to



circulate to all advisory groups, for review and comment by the anticipated date of February 2024.

## Impact Assessments and other Consultations

### Strange Lake Rare Earth Mine

ENR is currently preparing comments on the first step in this assessment - the analysis of Torngat Metals' "Initial Project Description." Comments will include various items of concern, such as disruptions to the George River caribou herd from mining and associated transportation and impacts to NCC commercial fishing during shipping.



### Joyce Lake Direct Shipping Iron Ore Project

ENR sent extensive comments to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in March. Information requirements were then issued to the proponent from the Agency. The company has since expressed interest in meeting with NCC to discuss its concerns.

In July of 2022, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada extended the three-year time limit for Joyce Direct Iron Inc. to provide the information or studies required for the project's environmental assessment.

The proponent now has until December of 2025 to submit their final Environmental Impact Statement.

### Churchill Falls/Transport Canada

Transport Canada received two applications for regulatory approval along the 735 kV transmission line in Churchill Falls and sent an offer to consult with NCC. ENR will be participating in a call to discuss this with Transport Canada in the near future.

## Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Ocean Management

The Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Ocean Management (AAROM) program provides NCC with the capacity and resources to create and continue to deliver ocean and aquatic initiatives and research. We have been focusing on enhancing watershed management plans within NunatuKavut. This program also supports NCC partnerships and engagements with stakeholders in relation to fish and fish habitat.

In addition, the AAROM program supported NCC in purchasing a house and land in Port Hope Simpson. The program supported the renovation of the house into an Aquatic Resource Centre during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

## Gilbert Bay Marine Protected Area Management Plan

NCC and DFO have spent the past couple of years drafting the newest management plan for the Gilbert Bay Marine Protected Area (GBMPA), which will be published in 2024. It will be the third management plan developed for the area and will focus on:

- improving our knowledge of the Gilbert Bay ecosystem;
- continuing long-term monitoring;
- exploring potential sources of mortality of Golden cod; and
- increasing the involvement of NCC and local harvesters in monitoring and conservation initiatives.

NCC has been working hard towards co-management of the MPA and aims to be the drivers of science and conservation in the MPA, led by NunatuKavut Inuit-identified priorities.



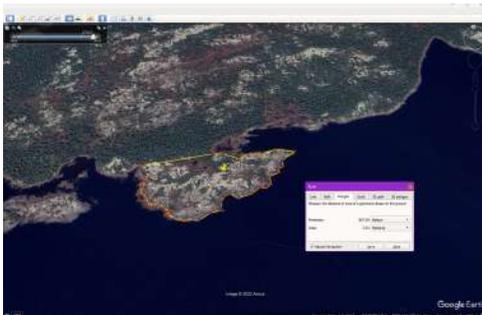
Figure 18: Gilbert Bay Marine Protected Area

### Story Map

A new webpage about Gilbert Bay is in the final stages of review and will be published on the NCC website in 2024. This webpage will tell the story of Gilbert Bay, the communities and history around the bay, how the GBMPA began and was led by community members, and ongoing science initiatives in the MPA.

### Oceans Management GBMPA

The Oceans Management GBMPA project is a new multi-year agreement which supports NCC's initiatives and efforts within the GBMPA. The goal is to revitalize the Gilbert Bay Advisory Committee for a co-management and co-delivery approach of the GBMPA, hiring staff for guardianship and science monitoring and research.



To implement these initiatives on the ground, NCC will purchase a boat and build a self-sustaining cabin within the GBMPA for NCC to have the ability to extend initiatives and monitoring within the area.

## Other Oceans Management Work

The Oceans Management initiative significantly contributes to capacity building and various endeavors related to marine management. It actively engages in ocean-related working groups and marine spatial planning. It also collaborates on the co-management and co-delivery of resources, facilitates capacity-building activities, monitors and conducts research on native species and invasive species, to name a few.

## Indigenous Habitat Contribution Program

This project focuses on fish and fish habitat data monitoring and collection. Funding for this program was used to hire two Seasonal Technicians in addition to supporting existing ENR staff. This program supported microplastic sampling, where samples will be analyzed by an external laboratory. It also supported water sampling to monitor various water characteristics and potential changes and help complete culvert assessments to identify potential fish barriers.

## Community-based Coastal Resource Inventory (CCRI)

The Community-Based Coastal Inventory (CCRI) program began at the end of 2023 and focused on collecting information such as local names and species diversity which will feed into a nation-wide map. Additionally, funding from this federal program provides NCC the opportunity to collect and preserve Indigenous traditional knowledge.

## Aboriginal Funding for Species at Risk (DFO funded)

The Aboriginal Funding for Species at Risk (AFSAR) project focuses on eDNA sampling of major salmonid-producing tributaries and different habitat types in NunatuKavut, to identify striped bass and American eel overwintering locations. The winter sampling was quite challenging due to a late freeze-up of targeted tributaries. A summary report of the findings will be presented at the 2024 Annual Resource Stewardship



Workshop. NCC hopes to continue running programs like this upcoming and future years.

## Striped Bass

The ENR Department has been collecting information about striped bass since 2017 following an increase in sightings on the south coast. Information and observations over the past six years show that most reports were in 2017, following the first big surge of bass in Labrador waters and then, again, this past summer when there were signs of increase. Striped bass were found across the south coast from L’Anse-au-Clair to Cartwright.



Figure 19: eDNA sampling

Following the sightings, ENR began a program to determine where the bass are going and if they are sticking around Labrador. During the winter of 2023, water samples were collected and analysed for environmental DNA (eDNA) to determine presence of Striped Bass over the winter at select sites across the south coast. Results from this program will be presented at the 2024 Annual ENR Stewardship Workshop.

ENR is now working to track movements of striped bass through a new program funded under the AFSAR program. We have partnered with Acadia University to catch striped bass, and sample them to determine age, size, and origin.

Striped bass sightings are documented annually, and we encourage anyone who would like to report a sighting to email us at [sightings@nunatukavut.ca](mailto:sightings@nunatukavut.ca).

## Atlantic Salmon Conservation Planning for the Port Marnum Watershed

The ENR department is working to characterize Atlantic salmon habitat within the Port Marnum Watershed. This program is funded by the Foundation for Conservation of Atlantic Salmon.



It aims to develop a baseline of information on the overall health of the watershed, use of habitats within the watershed by Atlantic salmon and other species, and potential areas for conservation measures.

This summer was the first year of the program and the project team was able to sample sites near the mouth of the river for invertebrates and fish species. Stay tuned for results next year.

## Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Fund

The ENR department received funding from the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Fund to conduct a four-year project to inventory data related to ENR, including species distribution, habitat, conservation areas, and more. Under this program, we hired a consultant to begin developing a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database.

## Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy

NCC's Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) harvesting is an important and integral part of the NunatuKavut Inuit culture and annual activities. As NCC continues to define and develop NCC-specific FSC harvesting policies and guidelines, the harvesting of our communal fishery resources is managed through the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy.



Figure 20: Photo submitted by Draper Clarke

The communal food fishery negotiations with DFO extended into June this year, delaying salmon tag distribution. ENR's amazing staff, along with help from other departments, visited 14 communities over four days to distribute designations. NCC thanks all our members for their patience and support during the long lines and wait times for salmon tags.

Despite the late distribution of communal fishery designations, NCC had another successful fishing season. NCC issued over 1,200 salmon, trout, and char designations, over 270 cod designations, and more than 15 halibut designations. While all twelve seal netting designations were issued last season, there were still a few left this season with a closing date of December 31.

Unfortunately, there was a low return rate for catch logs this year. Members are strongly encouraged to return catch logs, which provides crucial information for the monitoring and analysis of designations as well as fish stock variations. This information also assists NCC in making management decisions on our FSC Fisheries. Those who submitted their logs by September 29, 2023, had a chance to win a prize. The draw will take place at the AGA in February 2024.

### Fisheries Stewards

ENR employed four Fisheries Stewards in the communities of Cartwright, Black Tickle, Charlottetown, and St. Lewis for the 2023 season's annual salmon sampling program. The Fishery Stewards collected nearly 500 salmon samples and the results will be coming in the new year. Members are strongly encouraged to participate in this program as it is integral to NCC's ongoing aquatics science program to assist in evaluating NunatuKavut watersheds and fish stocks. Information from this program assists NCC during negotiations regionally, nationally, and internationally.



Figure 21: Tagged salmon taken by a Fishery Steward

### Aboriginal Fisheries Guardian Program

The Aboriginal Fisheries Guardian Program continues to be successful in supporting the management, protection, and compliance of the NCC Communal



Fishing Licence and federal fishing regulations within our communal fishing areas. ENR currently has five full-time permanent Guardians and two Program Support Assistants based in either the Port Hope Simpson (Guardian Headquarters) or Cartwright office. Their input, experience and overall contribution to ENR programs is invaluable to NCC’s relationship with fishers, Elders, and communities, as well as DFO management and science branches.



Figure 22: Senior Guardian George Morris and Guardian Sherry Turnbull out on patrol

Guardians not only focus on fishery compliance and education but also assist with other departmental research and projects. Our Guardians are members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and continues to participate in various training opportunities. Fortunately, with support from the Indigenous Community Boat Volunteer Program, ENR was able to secure funding for an additional Silver Dolphin vessel for our Cartwright Guardians.

The ENR Department has been actively reviewing and searching for additional resources for the AFS program,

including designation distribution policies and process and catch log data, as well as how to improve the Guardian Program.

### Wildlife Management

ENR continues effective co-management of wildlife populations within its territory through the establishment of collaborative networks with a diverse range of partners. Our projects focus on ecologically and culturally important species, including caribou, polar bear, waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, wolverine, bats, and other small mammals. Projects primarily focus on expanding our monitoring presence, filling in knowledge gaps, encouraging stewardship, and combining Indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK) with scientific research towards the responsible management of wildlife.

In 2023, ENR maintained ongoing monitoring initiatives for a number of ecologically important mammal and bird species. Monitoring involved both in field and passive acoustic surveys designed to evaluate and document species distribution and habitat use for numerous species at risk. Through these surveys, ENR located and identified one of the largest little brown bat colonies in Labrador. This is critically important as these bats are an endangered species due to white-nose syndrome causing massive population collapse across the continent.

ENR conducted numerous Common Eider colony counts around Table Bay to continue our long-term monitoring of this culturally important food source.



Figure 23: Snow Bunting tagged with a yellow colour band

Additionally, ENR partnered with the Snow Bunting Network to begin an active monitoring program of Snow Birds as they pass through our territory on the way up to the arctic to breed. This is part of a long-term project to learn about Snow Bunting migration routes across NunatuKavut, their migration loyalty, and monitor their populations here in Labrador as they continue to decline globally due to climate change.

ENR expanded our migratory bird monitoring efforts this year by taking on three Breeding Bird Surveys to document all the small breeding songbirds that call our territory their home.

ENR has also continued our small mammal monitoring program, which tracks the distribution of rodents across the landscape and has expanded its camera trap monitoring program for wolverine and caribou. Currently, ENR monitoring of polar bears predominantly occurs through sightings reported by membership. Expanded use of wildlife cameras is planned for the coming year, as well as additional workshops in NunatuKavut communities focusing on peaceful resolution of human-polar bear conflicts.

## Tuktuk - Caribou

NunatuKavut Inuit have maintained a culturally-defining relationship with tuktuk since time immemorial. The ongoing moratorium on traditional caribou harvests threatens this relationship and has important cultural, ecological, and food security consequences. As such, programs enhancing the conservation, management, and recovery of caribou continue to be a high priority for ENR.

In the winter 2023, ENR partnered with Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (Wildlife Division) to continue collaring boreal caribou herds to monitor their movements across the landscape. Poor snow conduction made it unsafe to capture caribou, however, and no collars were deployed this year.

ENR continues to work with the Province on the development of a Range Planning document for boreal caribou to ensure successful conservation and recovery

of this species. NCC strongly encourages our members to avoid harvesting caribou and to observe appropriate conservation and stewardship practices.

In the spring 2023, ENR was able to host “Tuktuk: on-the-land event for elders and youth.” It was a great success despite a location change due to sea ice safety concerns. Six youth from across NunatuKavut joined five elders for a full day on the land. Starting from Charlottetown, the group travelled by snowmobile to Gilberts Bay. They enjoyed a delicious meal of caribou stew and put up a Labrador tent. The elders shared stories with the youth about travelling along the coast of Labrador, seeing the herds of caribou, and how they



Figure 24: Participants in the tuktuk on-the-land event

would hunt, harvest and cook this traditional food.

We thank the 5th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group – Port Hope Simpson Patrol, for their unwavering support for our communities, assistance with safety, and engagement with youth and elders throughout the day. We also had participation from local DFO Fishery Officers and university research students.

ENR continues consultations with Environment and Climate Change Canada on the proposed listing of eastern migratory caribou as endangered, under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). The consultations allow all stakeholders to express concerns regarding the potential listing. The proposed listing would afford eastern migratory caribou protection on all federal lands and would necessitate the creation of a federal recovery strategy document, providing incentives for voluntary conservation action and stewardship. NCC



continues to encourage compliance with ongoing moratoriums to allow the population to fully recover.

## Climate Change

The unprecedented and unpredictable changes that NunatuKavut Inuit are seeing and experiencing is an ongoing concern for the ENR department. For instance, unsafe sea ice conditions this past spring impacted events that would normally happen this time of year, and the unusual high river temperatures closed salmon fly fishing in Labrador for the very first time.



Figure 25: Photo submitted by Lewis Campbell

Climate change is a top priority for ENR and we will continue to find opportunities for future projects. Throughout the coming year, we will be working on the NCC Climate Change Strategy and will work with other departments on opportunities for funding and specific projects.

We were also able to secure funding for a pilot SmartICE project, which integrates traditional knowledge of ice with advanced data acquisition, remote monitoring technology and mapping. This will help ensure the resilience of NunatuKavut Inuit through localized dedicated climate action in our coastal communities. NCC seeks to utilize SmartICE as one of our climate change adaptation tools.

The Nature-based Climate Solutions project focusing on implementing peatlands and wetlands conservation and restoration has begun and is progressing well since a

Wetlands Project Coordinator was hired in June 2023. A policy review to identify potential protection of significant wetland areas, and associated upland areas has been completed. Additionally, a preliminary desktop analysis to identify priority areas for protection has been done. NunatuKavut Inuit input on the selection, process, and development of potential protected areas is crucial and will be sought through community engagement.

Funding for the Community-Based Climate Monitoring Program ended in March 2023. The focus group sessions are being transcribed and will be analyzed over the coming year. The contribution of sea ice data by our youth will also be analyzed. NCC would like to thank the members who were able to come attend and share their stories. The knowledge shared will help inform NCC's environmental programs and priorities going forward.

## Food Security Program

It has been a very busy eight months in the Food Security Office. It will be even busier in the final quarter, as NCC concludes two major projects and proposes new programs for the upcoming one to three years.

The Local Foods Infrastructure Fund Program (LFIF) has supported six greenhouses, community gardens and helped purchase equipment and supplies. The program finishes in March 2024 and NCC will continue to seek funding to build on the foundation created, and support members growing their own food for themselves and those around them.

Although the community greenhouses are not large, they do provide excellent facilities to learn, share and support members who have an interest in growing their own food and reducing dependency on outside supplies. Strong community support is key and results in many more activities developing from these growing spaces.

The summer support staff through WISE & Conservation Corp was a tremendous help with the greenhouses this year. A greenhouse must be checked daily to ensure the

plants are hydrated, air is circulating, and plants are happy and healthy.



Figure 26: Setting up the community greenhouse in St. Lewis

In 2024, there will be six community greenhouses in partnership with communities and community groups. A proposal was submitted to support these greenhouses, and add community composting to build soil for growing.

The Community Freezer Program continues to secure wild foods harvested by members, to be shared with elders 65 years and older. Over the past year there has been a shift in people’s response to the food. With increased food insecurity, it is more than a meal they enjoy receiving but a need to replace meals they have to buy. The freezer partnered with a local hobby farmer and purchased approximately 130 turkeys to share with elders on a first-come first-served basis. Caribou was also gifted to NCC in 2023 and was shared at four community events and enjoyed by over 100 members.

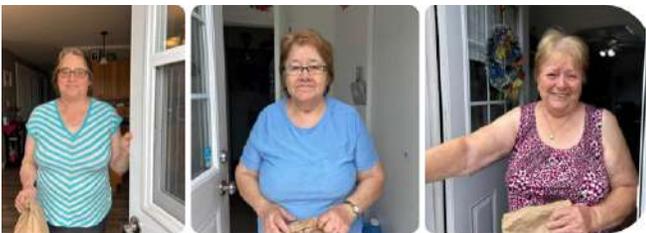


Figure 27: NCC members receiving goods from the Community Freezer

Unfortunately, the cod and char exchange with the Nunatsiavut Government did not take place this year. We are, however, getting great support from members who regularly offer food to share and have no problem entering into hunting and fishing agreements to replenish the freezer with traditional foods, such as fish, salmon, berries, seal, partridges, rabbits.

The Nutrition North Canada (NNC) program subsidizes food and helps purchase extra food for Black Tickle, the only community eligible for the program within NCC. Over the past 18 months, there was an increase in funding to support food sovereignty and to offer grants to support harvesters. This program ends in March 2024, and there are ongoing efforts to extend this program at current or higher grant levels.

The International Grenfell Association has supported the construction of a root cellar, and a new proposal has been submitted to support a community & mobile kitchen. The community and mobile kitchen would support knowledge sharing of food processing, preparing traditional meals, and sharing food to address needs that are emerging throughout the territory. This program will be supported with a new vehicle that was approved through the LFIF funds.

NCC staff got an opportunity to visit community-based full-service programs in Halifax - Dartmouth with the support of Good Foods Canada. There, they observed “Hope Blooms” and “North Grove”, two amazing programs that not only grows food but offers great learning opportunities and meals to those who need it.



## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Health and Community Services Department (HCS) oversees various community health and social initiatives in NunatuKavut. The department strives to nurture and support the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health of NunatuKavut Inuit to ensure the wellbeing of our families and communities.

### Medical Transportation Program

The Medical Transportation Program was initiated in January 2020 to help eliminate financial and administrative barriers to medical care, using NCC’s own-source revenue combined with some Federal contributions. The program was relaunched in June 2023 as the ikajuKatigek (ik/ga/you/hot/de/geek) Medical Transportation Program (iMTP).

Over 2,000 members accessed the program since it began, with many using the program multiple times. There has been an incredible amount of positive feedback regarding this program. NCC members say that without this program, they would not have been able to attend medical appointments, or that it would have caused them great financial hardship as they would have had to count on loans, community fundraising, and help from family and friends.

Members served since June 2023: 320

Top reasons for medical travel:

1. Cardiology
2. Cancer treatment

### Home Repair Program

The Home Repair Program started in January 2020 using NCC’s own-source revenue and has had additional contributions from the province through the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, including a sum of \$500,000 to help the program into 2024.

Changes were introduced to the program in June 2023, and includes homeowners being able to reapply once every three years as opposed to one time only, and the maximum grant amount being \$15,000 as opposed to \$11,000. The changes are in response to increased and exorbitant construction costs. The Home Repair Program, which provides funding assistance for individual home repair in NunatuKavut communities, has a current end date of March 31, 2024.

Members served since January 1, 2023:

New Applicants: 21

Returning Applicants: 16



Figure 28: Homeowners were able to replace shingles, install new siding and bridges, as part of NCC’s Home Repair Program in Port Hope Simpson.

### Virtual Mental Health and Wellness Services

As part of NCC’s COVID-19 community response plan that ended in 2023, NCC provided virtual mental health

and physical wellness services through partnerships with three NunatuKavut service providers: Priority Health Counselling, Kullik Psychotherapy, and Inclusive Health and Fitness.

Priority Health Counselling and Kullik Psychotherapy offered private, one-on-one virtual or telephone mental health counselling. Inclusive Health and Fitness offered physical wellness services, such as nutritional coaching, individual exercise coaching or group coaching. Since the response plan was implemented, these services have responded to some significant, urgent and priority needs for NunatuKavut members.

Access to mental health and wellness services remains a significant barrier, as it relates to the availability and appropriateness to NunatuKavut Inuit. These providers have been able to deliver services that consider community and culture, and directly impact the holistic well-being and mental health of our people and communities.

Although funding for these services came to an end on July 31, 2023, NCC was able to reinstate these services on December 4 with one-time bridge funding from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. NCC continues to work with the provincial and federal governments to secure long-term funding for these vital services.

Inclusive Health & Fitness	Kullik Psychotherapy	Priority Health Counselling
116 clients	50 clients	65+ clients
1097 sessions	626 sessions	1624 treatment hours
159 weeks of service averaging 7 sessions each week	25-34 age range largest population of clients	Average 10-14 counselling sessions per week

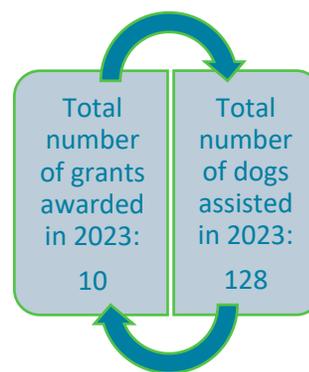
*\*As of August 31, 2023*

### Dog Team Driver Grant

Dog teams remain an integral part of life in NunatuKavut. In the past, they helped families travel or “shift” to their seasonal homes, and hunters and

trappers provide for their families. They allowed people to travel throughout our homeland and connected with one another.

Today, they continue to connect us to our traditions and our culture. There are several Inuit in NunatuKavut communities who own dog teams. Understanding the cost of carrying on this important tradition, NCC introduced the Dog Team Driver Grant Program in January 2023 to help subsidize the costs, and allow drivers to re-apply in January 2024. This is a two-year program with a possibility of extension.



Grants were awarded to dog teams in six different communities in NunatuKavut.

### Gender-based Violence

HCS is continuously working to identify the gaps and barriers of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and the intergenerational trauma they are subjected to. We strive to reduce victimization and increase awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in our communities.

NCC continues to develop working relationships with key partners, including local, provincial, and federal partners and Governments, in identifying the appropriate resources to support NCC’s work around MMIWG.

We are involved in the Provincial Indigenous Women’s Steering Committee in discussing policy issues facing Indigenous women and recommended actions.



NCC will continue to work with key partners, including the provincial and federal governments, to support initiatives that address and prevent violence against these groups of people.

NCC represents our women and girls on the Provincial Indigenous Women’s Reconciliation Council. This council, made up by both Indigenous representatives and Provincial Government officials, focuses on the areas of Indigenous culture, health and wellness, justice, and human security, leading to lasting changes in legislation, regulations, government directives, policies and procedures. They have an overall goal to coordinate and lead meaningful action on implementation of the 196 recommendations from the report “Hear Our Voices: MMIWG Policy Recommendations of the First Women of Newfoundland and Labrador.”



Figure 29: President Russell, Sherry Penney, Kristy Dyson and Aimee Battcock attending the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) Gender Equity Symposium in March 2023

## Residential Schools

NCC has an ongoing commitment to ensure that the experiences of NunatuKavut Inuit who attended residential schools are acknowledged and validated for

the trauma and suffering that stemmed from residential schools.

On September 29, 2023, Premier, Andrew Furey joined former residential school students and family members in Cartwright, where he apologized on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for the treatment of NunatuKavut Inuit in residential schools. Premier Furey acknowledged the failure to treat the children of NunatuKavut with equality and respect, stating that there was no regard for Inuit traditions, values and ways of knowing and being, and acknowledged the impact it has had.



Figure 30: Premier Andrew Furey, Minister Lisa Dempster and President Todd Russell hold the official written apology from the Province of Newfoundland Labrador.

We continue to work closely with the province to build a relationship of respect and cooperation, with the residential school apology being a step in the right direction. It is vital that any work undertaken by NCC is led and supported by those in our communities who are most impacted. We identified huge gaps and complex challenges within the health system available to NunatuKavut Inuit and are working towards ensuring that appropriate, culturally relevant supports and services are available.

## Diabetes

NCC’s ‘Learning for Life – Preventing Diabetes’ program aims to offer culturally-appropriate programs and

services that promote healthy eating and physical activity, raise awareness of the seriousness of Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) and its risk factors, and prevent T2D in children and youth.

This project highlights the importance of:

- Traditional foods in our community.
- Passing cultural recipes and preparation practices from generation to generation.
- Connection to culture in a holistic manner.

## Land-Based Wellness

HCS has ensured opportunities for cultural knowledge transfer, story sharing, and skill development, reflective of holistic health and wellness, with aid from Provincial Government funding.

During NCC's 2023 AGA, HCS partnered with the Junior Canadian Rangers to offer a session on trapping and snaring. This, and other partnerships, support knowledge transfer through a community-based capacity and provide the link to traditional culture.

Through a series of six sessions in December 2023, we hosted a komatik building workshop in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. This workshop was open to NunatuKavut men and boys living in the Upper Lake Melville area and facilitated by local NunatuKavut craftsman, Darin Dyson.



Figure 31: Komatik-building workshop in Happy Valley-Goose Bay

## Community Social Worker

Since the introduction of the role of the Community Social Worker in 2021, NCC has been strengthening relationships with community members, families, organizations and the Government of NL in the areas of holistic health and well-being. Community social work involves building relationships with NunatuKavut Inuit through community visits, addressing systemic issues, engaging in individual and group problem-solving practices, and helping to ensure opportunities for culturally-relevant healing.

### Child, Youth and Families Act

Since NCC was added to the Child, Youth and Families Act schedule as an "Indigenous Government/ Organization" in May 2021, it has established a strong relationship with the province and, in particular, the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

With this relationship, and the role of NCC's Community Social Worker as the Indigenous Representative, NCC can ensure the children and youth who are involved in the child protection system remain connected to their family, community, and culture as a whole.

### Justice

NCC's Community Social Worker represents NunatuKavut Inuit on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Commanding Officer's Indigenous Advisory Committee (COIAC). NCC strives to ensure the delivery of culturally-competent police services within our territory.

#### Did you know?

*If you identify as Indigenous and are charged with a crime, you are entitled to a Gladue Report, as the judge must apply Gladue factors when in a criminal court. This is a way for the judge to consider the unique circumstances of Indigenous people.*



In March 2022, the Community Social Worker was chosen to complete Gladue Writer training through the Indigenous Perspectives Society. This provided the necessary skills, background, and legal knowledge to work with the Gladue Report process and as a Gladue Report Writer in the Canadian criminal justice system.

### *Mental Health and Addictions*

HCS remains engaged in understanding the realities around mental health and addictions in our communities. We have a partnership with NL Health Services and are engaged in various working groups and committees to ensure NunatuKavut Inuit are supported in culturally-appropriate ways.

HCS also collaborates with other NCC departments involved in the NunatuKavut Mental Wellness Initiative (NWI). This project aims to strengthen mental wellness resources in our territory. Through active participation from community members, we are hearing from NunatuKavut Inuit on what mental wellness means to them, allowing NCC to identify key needs and ensure there are opportunities for holistic, culturally-relevant healing.

### *COVID-19 Programming*

NCC was provided funding throughout the COVID-19 pandemic beginning May 2020. Funding was given by a number of providers, including the Federal Government, Red Cross, Second Harvest, NCC's own

source revenues and other small grants from the non-profit sector. The total amount of funding NCC utilized over the course of the pandemic was \$11,952,940.

With this funding, NCC's dedicated COVID-19 response committee designed and implemented a number of programs and initiatives that directly addressed pressing needs as identified by NunatuKavut Inuit. Throughout the pandemic, programs that were offered included:

- Household Supports for Seniors 60+
- Virtual Mental Wellness Services
- Virtual Physical Wellness Services
- Food and Heat Security Vouchers
- Country Food Harvester Support Grants
- Community Recreation and Wellness Grants
- Food Hampers
- Educational Support Program
- Senior Subsidy Mailout
- Cultural Mental Wellness Community Fund
- Social and Wellness Grant for Seniors and Vulnerable Persons
- Personal Care Grant Program
- Gardening Grant Program
- Firewood & Heat Security Program
- Contributions to NCC's Medical Travel Fund

Programming ended July 23, 2023.

## RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The Research, Education and Culture (REC) department works to implement and develop culturally relevant educational programming and resources that reflect NunatuKavut Inuit history, culture, and traditions. This work helps to provide opportunities to celebrate and strengthen our connection to our ancestors, to each other, to preserve and pass on our traditions, and promote mental health and well-being among our people.

### *Inuit Education Program*

REC had a great year with the Inuit Education Program (IEP) for the 2022-2023 school year. All the schools on the coast carried out activities under the IEP program. These included soap stone carving, cooking and bread making, Inuttitut sessions, as well as making seal skin slippers and mitts. REC was excited to have expanded partnerships in the Upper Lake Melville area. The NCC IEP program was introduced to Mealy Mountain Collegiate as part of its Wellness Wednesday's initiative. This included a making seal skin coin purses and wooden ice fishing hooks. The ice fishing hooks went over very well, and the department was able to bring this activity to Lake Melville School in North West River.



Figure 32: Students at Mealy Mountain Collegiate participating in ice fishing hook assembly during Wellness Wednesday

For the second year, REC has supported schools in their commemoration of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR). REC offered a small grant to schools in NCC communities to help them organize a commemorative initiative for NDTR. The schools were very receptive and many of them planned activities or purchased resources to raise awareness.

As an example, St. Mary's All-Grade implemented a weeklong commemorative event, which began with the raising of an "Every Child Matters" flag. Individual flags were made available to each student that they displayed on desks or lockers. Cultural activities were held throughout the week, including crafting sessions around NDTR.

Three schools in NunatuKavut have already started on IEP activities, having chosen to do seal skin slipper and mitt projects. Another school has chosen to do a quilt-making project. The schools are very excited to continue in-person instruction of traditional skills and are very thankful to NCC for its continued support of students participating in cultural activities and traditional knowledge exchange within the school system.

### *Indigenous Cultural Heritage Program (ICHP)*

This year, the REC department was successful in securing Indigenous Cultural Heritage Program (ICHP) funding through the Provincial Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation. The program supports initiatives that safeguard traditions and culture. Traditional wooden boatbuilding skills have been identified as a skill at risk of being lost. Boatbuilding has been an integral part of life for our people for many generations. From transportation to economics, the traditional practice of boatbuilding ensured our people could continue to live off the lands, waters, and ice of our ancestors.

The goals of this project are to provide opportunities for intergenerational knowledge transfer of traditional



skills, to recognize and celebrate our culture and traditions, and to recognize local knowledge holders and community members as leaders in maintaining and passing on the tradition of boatbuilding.



Figure 33: A photo submission from Eric Poole of his late father, Hubert Poole's last longliner. Seen here being towed by townsfolk from the area where it was built.

REC plans to host community meetings to share, learn and gather information around boatbuilding. Through these engagements, discussions, and survey work, they will assess current boatbuilding skills in NunatuKavut, gauge interest in future mentorship and learning opportunities, and gather additional historical or current boat blueprints/plans. This data will be valuable as NCC works towards revitalizing the art of boatbuilding in NunatuKavut. REC will also be collecting oral stories regarding traditional wooden boatbuilding and the lived experiences of boat builders and users.

Recently, the department put a call out on social media, asking for pictures and stories around traditional wooden boatbuilding which resulted in an exceptional response. Many submissions told a great story, both in words and in pictures, of the amazing boat builders in NunatuKavut. One submission, from a son of a great boatbuilder, said his dad had built more than 80 boats in his lifetime! REC is very excited to continue this conversation at the community level and talk about the importance of continuing this tradition as it was so vital to the NunatuKavut Inuit way of life.

### Language Revitalization

The REC department has continued development and implementation of Inuttitit programming across NunatuKavut. This includes beginner Inuttitit sessions and active learning activities like Bingo. These sessions

and activities have been offered in schools and communities and at NCC-organized events in our territory.

REC has also been offering virtual sessions to our members through Zoom. The first online session had a great turnout, and everyone enjoyed learning. More online opportunities will be rolling out throughout the year. In November, we held several sessions in schools along the coast with our translator Lydia Tuglavina and had our first in-person staff session along the coast. All sessions went very well and had rave reviews. People expressed interest in NCC offering more sessions and those who have attended are looking to learn more.

In all this work, REC remains grateful for the guidance and patience of our translator, Lydia. Lydia holds a fierce passion and belief that teaching and preserving Inuttitit is important, which is evident every time we meet with her.

Thanks to the hard work of Lydia and dedicated staff, the rollout of language programming has been a huge success. As a result of their commitment, as well as community interest, passion, and feedback, REC is very excited to announce that we have been approved to continue this great work over the next five years. This will include additional resources and opportunities to learn and share Inuttitit in our communities.

### Research

The REC department works to advance diverse and innovative research based on the needs and priorities of NunatuKavut Inuit. In collaboration with NunatuKavut communities, NCC departments, and academic institutions, REC focuses on key priority areas such as health and wellness, history and archaeology, and renewable energy. Some of the ongoing research endeavors led by REC are captured below.

### NCC's Research Advisory Committee

NCC's Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is an interdepartmental committee that reviews applications submitted to NCC that propose doing research in NunatuKavut or with NunatuKavut Inuit. NCC's research

governance process ensures that NCC is engaged and involved in the development and implementation of research and can identify any opportunities for NunatuKavut Inuit as the experts in communities and on our own lands, waters, and ice.

Over the course of the year, the RAC has reviewed 12 new research applications, while also building, maintaining and contributing to research partnerships and relationships of previous projects. Examples of research topics from 2023 include energy resilience in NunatuKavut, sea ice degradation, and healthy aging. Each application reviewed follows a rigorous in-depth discussion involving NCC departments and researchers, ensuring that they meet the criteria of our governance process.

### *Housing Assessment*

NCC has been working with a consultant through the At Home in the North program, to capture housing needs across NunatuKavut, to help inform an NCC-specific housing strategy. Feedback from community engagements (online and virtual), as well as survey responses have been collected. A draft report summarizing feedback has been compiled and is currently under review. It will provide direction to NCC on its work around housing needs and supports in our communities.

### *NunatuKavut Mental Wellness Initiative*

The NunatuKavut Mental Wellness Initiative (NWI) is currently in the program development stage. REC and the NWI steering committee is pleased with the information gathered and collected from NunatuKavut communities so far, and the value that NunatuKavut communities place on holistic well-being and the effect it has on one's mental health has been heard loud and clear.

Community members have voiced that wellness is a combination of things, from having access to good healthcare, to being able to hunt and eat foods from the land as was done for generations. What the steering

committee learned from sharing circles, activities, trainings, and survey has been used to develop a visual definition of mental wellness. People had the opportunity to comment and contribute to this definition through workshops and group events held over the past year, such as the 2023 AGA. REC has also worked with community champions across NunatuKavut to ensure that this definition represents NunatuKavut Inuit. The comments received validated the definition that was developed, and supported the findings of the steering committee on what mental wellness looks like, and what is needed to be mentally well. This has been a powerful process.



Figure 34: Community Champions Meeting in April

Engaging the communities through conversations has been very important in this work. As such, the committee has continued to involve community champions at each stage of the project. At the champions gathering in April, the committee demonstrated how many aspects of the mental wellness definition can be implemented in one workshop. They were able to include sessions around food sovereignty and the role traditional food plays in wellness, movement while connecting with the land, the impact of community care, and conversations around becoming more accepting of oneself and one's strengths. One important message was that people needed to be met where they are in their life; that there is no one size fits all, and that each person and each



community has different and distinct needs that require consideration for future programming.

The goal is to take everything learned from the past few years of this program and start looking at how NCC can build a wellness program to fit the needs of NunatuKavut communities. To do so, REC is working with the Health and Community Services department and a consultant to develop a pilot program based on everything that was heard. The department will continue to ensure that community voices are informing and directing this important work in a meaningful way.

### *Sandwich Bay Community Hub*

The Sandwich Bay Community Hub is a partnership among the Sandwich Bay 50+ Club, NunatuKavut Community Council and Memorial University that enhances community access to research and education. The hub offers a tangible means of connecting to NCC's past, celebrating NunatuKavut Inuit culture and forging a path forward for generations to come in NunatuKavut.

It has been a busy and successful year. Since the grand opening in fall of 2022, staff have been implementing programming in the community for all age groups, with a focus on school-aged kids and seniors. Programs have included opportunities for seniors to share their knowledge of traditional crafts, games, and traditional foods – such as fish cakes, toutons, and jams! – with our youth. There have been lots of activities centered on intergenerational learning, traditional skills, and drum dancing.

The hub has been very grateful to partner with a variety of groups and organizations to hold training workshops around topics such as micro-computer basics, suicide prevention, public legal information, Indigenous diabetes, stress management, and kayak safety courses for adults and youth. Staff have been able to deliver mental health and stress management for grades 7-9 and 10-12, an informational session on fraud to seniors, and an information session on Indigenous justice navigation.

The hub is an engaged space for research activities and community events. They have featured research presentations on permafrost from groups such as Queens University and continue to coordinate and host workshops, community gatherings and meetings for NCC departments. The first big community event was the National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration in June. The Hub also partnered with the Town of Cartwright and held Canada Day celebrations, took part in NCC's Provincial Apology for former Residential School Students, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation community feast, and the "Igniting the Spark on Tourism" event in Cartwright.



*Figure 35: A snapshot of a climate change workshop being held at the hub*

The provincial launch of the Community Hubs Program across Newfoundland and Labrador was held on September 8, 2023, which involved a lot of preparation and was a remarkable success. The hub communicates with all hubs in the province monthly, to see what other Hubs are doing, share ideas and have support in what is done locally to deliver increased educational and research opportunities in NunatuKavut communities.

### *Museums Assistance Program*

The Museum Assistance Program (MAP) is funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage and provides opportunities for NCC to further develop our inventory of tangible cultural heritage objects and consider

potential repatriation plans. REC's work with archaeology and cultural history is integral to NCC and our communities continue to express a great interest in shared heritage.

REC is continuing to build on this work through the hiring of a Heritage Advisor and building on our relationships with federal, provincial and academic partners. Further to this, REC has recently developed an MOU with The Rooms related to 3D scanning of NunatuKavut resources held in their collections. REC recently visited The Rooms to complete training in 3D scanning and, while there, took the opportunity to review the Indigenous exhibit to identify required updates. REC values this relationship and plans to work with The Rooms staff to advance work with other significant NCC repatriation processes.



Figure 36: REC staff learn about 3D-scanning

## NCC's Relationship with Parks Canada

REC is the lead department overseeing NCC's Shared Understanding Agreement (SUA) with Parks Canada related to the Akami-Uapishk<sup>u</sup>-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve. In addition, Parks Canada has approached NCC to consider the development of interim management guidelines related to park management.

Through feedback from Cartwright residents, NCC and Parks Canada selected significant areas in or near the

park where NCC and residents could focus on developing tourism experiences and materials.

Through public engagement with Cartwright residents, NCC and Parks Canada selected significant areas in or near the park where NCC members and local residents could focus on developing tourism experiences and materials.

To build on this work, during site visits to areas of the park reserve this year, NCC assessed locations for consideration with Parks Canada and offered guidance on the unique conditions that may present obstacles to tourism experiences. This includes sourcing safe areas to disembark, and special attention to areas of archaeological significance.

NCC is working toward a new funding agreement with Parks Canada that supports our work into the future. We are already planning for significant fieldwork in 2024.

NCC is also working directly with staff at the Red Bay National Historic Site, to bring aspects of NunatuKavut Inuit culture and history to the exhibits there. They will reflect the presence of Inuit in Red Bay and surrounding areas during, and prior to, the time of Basque whaling in the area.

## Energy

The REC department and partners continue to undertake clean energy work and build on our progress from two initiatives: the Indigenous Off-Diesel Initiative (IODI) and Clean Energy in Indigenous, Rural, and Remote Communities program. The aim is to reduce diesel reliance in remote Indigenous communities that are completely dependent on fossil fuels, such as diesel, for heat and power. As a result of the hard work and dedication of NCC's energy team, solar panels have recently been commissioned in the NunatuKavut communities of Black Tickle and St. Lewis.

NCC prioritizes initiatives that seek to promote self-determination of our energy future on NunatuKavut Inuit lands, ice, and waters through a community-driven process.



REC has been busy implementing Phase Three of the IODI and expanding our planning to Phase Four of the program. Some of the highlights of our work include:

- Expanding our Home Energy Repair Program beyond the initial pilot communities of Black Tickle and St. Lewis, into all diesel-dependent communities in NunatuKavut;
- Addressing community-identified needs and priorities via the second iteration of our successful energy efficiency Micro-Grant program; and,
- Continuing to build professional human resource capacity within the energy efficiency sector in our communities.

This year NCC was also a proud recipient of an Organizational Leadership Award at the 2023 Luminary Awards. These awards are presented by takeCHARGE, an energy efficiency awareness program run by NL Hydro and Newfoundland Power.

The award recognized NCC's leadership and commitment to energy efficiency in Newfoundland and Labrador through planning, project development, energy management and employee engagement.

NCC's energy team is actively working to respond to the impacts of climate change while recognizing the needs of NunatuKavut Inuit. We will move forward together on a cleaner, greener path by moving toward clean, renewable and efficient energy.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Head Office

Email: [admin@nunatukavut.ca](mailto:admin@nunatukavut.ca)  
Tel: 877.896.0592 or 709.896.0592  
Fax: 709.896.0594  
200 Kelland Drive  
PO Box 460, Stn. C  
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL  
A0P 1C0

### Labrador West Indigenous Service Centre

Tel: 709.288.0471  
Fax: 709.288.0473  
Office 1024, Colby Building  
121 Matthew Avenue  
Labrador City, NL A2V 2A2

### Cartwright Office

Tel: 709.700.2850  
Fax: 709.938.7882  
10A Point Road  
PO Box 130  
Cartwright, NL A0K 1V0

### Port Hope Simpson Office

Tel: 709.960.0407  
Fax: 709.960.0425  
3 Route 510  
PO Box 198  
Port Hope Simpson, NL A0K 4E0

### Charlottetown Office

Tel: 709.949.0320  
Fax: 709.949.0373  
PO Box 59  
Charlottetown, NL A0K 5Y0

### Mary's Harbour Office

T: 709.921.6257  
F: 709.921.6575  
32-34 Lodge Bay Road  
Mary's Harbour, NL A0K 3P0



### Head Office

Email: [info@nunacor.com](mailto:info@nunacor.com)  
Tel: 866.446.5035 or 709.896.5722  
Fax: 709.896.5739  
169 Hamilton River Road  
PO Box 418, Stn C  
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL  
A0P 1C0

### Mary's Harbour Office

Tel: 709.921.6905 (Business Growth)  
Tel: 709-921-6569 (NDC Fisheries)  
Tel: 709.921.6970 (NBC)  
Fax: 709-921-6567  
32-34 Lodge Bay Road, PO Box 169  
Mary's Harbour, NL A0K 3P0





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