



WHY I LOVE **BLACK TICKLE** LABRADOR

The *NunatuKavut Community Sustainability Initiative* is a year-long project that aims to help three pilot NunatuKavut communities – Black Tickle, Norman Bay and St. Lewis – to identify and build on existing community strengths and assets, to foster community engagement in creating a strong future and to develop a sustainability plan for their community.

The approach of this initiative is to start with what is already strong and successful in communities. This is called strength-based or asset-based community development. Instead of being defined by problems or issues, communities identify and celebrate what works well, and how it can build on all the good things.

The quotes in this booklet are from past and present residents who love and celebrate their communities.



LILLIAN DYSON

(winning entry)

“Black Tickle is a community that once was thriving when codfish was king. People would come from all parts of the corners of the earth to settle down in a what we called little sugar shacks and spend the summer there while fishing on the ocean in and around Black Tickle. Then there were bakeapples to pick later in summer but they only lasted about two weeks. During the ripe season, you had to work many long hours every day for the two weeks to get your bakeapples. Otherwise, you would have to wait another year. Ducks and geese are a huge part in spring and fall. You can look out the window anytime of the day in May month and flock after flock of ducks would be flying over. When it would get foggy, you could easily get a feed of Turr as they would fly and not see that well and would simply bang into telephone poles, buildings, even people walking down the road. Everyone was happy there. Everyone helped each other out. Doors were never locked at night or daytime. You trusted everyone. No cops were there. There wasn't any kind of violence and you could raise your children without the fear.

Everyone lived off the land. Everyone knew the weather. You really didn't need much of a forecast as you spent many a day outside. The birds would tell if weather was nigh. Rings around the sun was snow

coming. Rainbow in the sky was a windgall so you knew wind was coming that way. Jack o lanterns in evenings or nightfall was cold weather coming so everyone had a sense of what to expect especially the way of life living by the ocean. Winters were harsh as blizzard conditions would last three days not being able to see house to house or barely tops of the poles or lights from other people's houses. But when it'd clear off, it was glorious and serene. The Northern Lights would take your breath away at night. You could lay down and watch billions of stars at night and watch the jets fly over every 10 minutes or so. And when you'd whistle, the Northern Lights were sure to dance and, by golly, some would get afraid because sometimes it looked like they were coming down to touch you or get you. Black Tickle is a beautiful little spot out on the Atlantic Ocean where it is known well as a hunting place. Many different species to hunt. You'd never be hungry cause you were always provided good food. Fish, ducks, geese, seal, trout, salmon, herring, capelin and even mackerel a ways off. Wrinkles and hor's eggs were a delicacy. Mussels were there when the tide was low enough to pick a feed for supper and tasted better in a boil up out doors on an open fire. Kelp was food too. You'd never be hungry when you lived in Black Tickle.

And people are friendliest kind. You could visit anyone anytime and they'd ask you for a cup of tea and a stove cake. People there appreciated a lot as it was hard to get wood and water but they still drove many miles in the bay to get wood and fresh water. Yet, after the day was done, you'd still make time for a game of ball or cricket. There was no stress and I was told that Black Tickle ranked number one as being the least stress-free community. There are many a stories told in Black Tickle. Ghost stories that will make your hair stand up on your head but after all was said and done and the storm passed, as the old people would say, stop telling ghost stories you are going to make it stormy you really get to enjoy the fresh salty air and the smell of black berry bushes of Black Tickle you can't get in congested towns where the busy hustle bustle life is. Once you visited, you definitely will have to come back again. I love Black Tickle and all the people who lived and still live there. They are my family, my husband's family and his hometown. My children grew up there and my grandchildren were there too. It's home to us and a good many more. Hope you liked my story."



LORI ANN MORRIS

"I'm honestly in love with Black Tickle and, no matter where I go, it will always be home. It's a place filled of old souls and I left my heart there before I moved. I spend every minute homesick, wishing and hoping that I could return. I have so many heartbreaking dreams about waking up in my cozy bedroom, thinking that the move was nothing but my imagination. My little town is always on my mind. I'd do anything to be able to walk on the gravel road or to see the colourful sunsets throughout the sky. I can still smell the saltwater and seaweed from around the coves and, whenever I close my eyes, I can picture the northern lights or the bright stars. There's so much I miss about home. I'd love to see everyone playing soccer ball or tag in the middle of the night and I want to hear the crackling sounds of the wood burning during bonfire night. I created my childhood in Black Tickle and most of my greatest memories too. I'd do anything to be home again, I truly love old BT."

KIM PENNEY

"It's home away from home. It's so peaceful."

CRYSTAL DYSON

"I love how the ground thaws, in the spring of the year. When you get to go for that first ride on bike so far in over the land. The sea, land and snow mixes together in the air and creates a scent that is like no other. I take big breaths in, and sometimes I try to eat it! In the summer, the berries start to ripen and you get that same scent but the air is a little sweeter. But don't get me wrong, I love fall and winter too. The last three years I have left home for work and each Saturday I would come home on the Northern Ranger for two or three hours to see my family. As we reached Domino Point, the air would change from warm and sticky to cool and sweet and I would stand on the top deck, take a deep breath and say in the back of my head "mmm home."



TARA KEEFE

"The main thing that makes Black Tickle so loveable to me is its sense of safety. Some may read and think about the safety it provides for their kids, but I think it means so much more. Black Tickle offers the safety that most people dream of. It's a place where people can be the person they want to be and not face judgement. Where you don't have to constantly worry about bullying based on who you are, what you do or even what you wear. It provides a safety from the scary reality of the outside world. In this day and age, where every news story deals with drug abuse and overdose, people in Black Tickle are blessed without such worries. I can honestly say as a resident of this amazing community that I feel very privileged to have grown up here in its warm embrace and constant security."

SERENA HOLWELL

Village by the sea.
On the southern coast of Labrador
There's a place that's so unknown
Once a fishing kingdom
Is now left all alone
The riches that were offered
To the people far and near
They are now gone forever
And nothing left but fear
We stand alone in a village
Surrounded by the sea
Thinking about what was
And what we could really be
We are a forgotten paradise
Who no one cares to know
People think that we should leave
But we refuse to go
The winter time is fierce
And the snow it rules without end
The water that was blue
Has become white once again
The fishing boats they are no more
They are sleeping on the land
Waiting for the ocean
To once again take full command
The summer time it comes again
And it's now about the sea
It's time for the bake apples
And the crab fishery
The people there rarely complain
About things that others need
We are thankful for what we have
We do not know no greed
But it seems we are not important
To the government we should trust
We are left to fend for ourselves
Morning, noon and dusk
I would like to introduce you
To a land that does exist
A place where you are welcome
A land of beauty bliss
Black Tickle is the village
That I speak fondly of
It was moulded and created
By the good lord up above
If you know this land
Then you can surely see
Why I'm so proud
That Black Tickles is part of me.



KRISTA CONWAY

"Until recently, I had been never anywhere near the Labrador coast. I'd been to Goose Bay but that was a decade ago. When I stepped off the twin-otter schudevac in mid-September, I was still a little bit leery about the quick decision I'd made to leave my 'real life' behind for almost a year, heading north for equal parts work and adventure. When I woke up in a stranger's house the next morning and looked at the postcard-worthy scene outside the bedroom window, I felt like things were going to work out fine. I was right.

As job placements go, I couldn't have asked for a better group of students to work with. They're incredible. (And incredibly loud, but I'm OK with that!) Early on, I was supremely impressed with their dedication to piecing together a play for the Creative Arts Festival. The entire high school class got up there on stage and knocked it out of the park. They chose to showcase the resilience of this sublime, remote place and I got to see a whole new side of these kids. A deep appreciation for their roots, and a dedicated connection to their home. They come from good people, and it shows.

I was welcomed here in so many ways, and had so many people looking out for me. When I'd head out for a walk to explore a bit, my arm would almost get tired from waving to everyone I passed. Heading home from the store one evening in late September, I was invited to join a craft group, and that quickly became a favourite social activity, where I got to learn new skills like working with sealskin. I was given gifts of fresh fish and hand knit socks. At the mention that my dad liked seal meat, or that my grandmother would love a feed of duck, I had people scrambling to provide. I headed home at

Christmas in a flurry of activity -- a storm was coming and my flight was certain to be cancelled -- so with a box of wild meat under my arm, I was wrangled onto an earlier flight that had delivered Christmas cargo, just to make sure I got out to my family and friends. During incredibly powerful blizzards, people would call and check on me to make sure I had lots of supplies, that I was warm, that I wasn't nervous. I was taken on skidoo rides and brought to a family bonfire. I made fast friends with a huge husky. I was invited to family meals and birthday celebrations, and sent home with leftovers for a lunch later on. Just last week, two students delivered cake to my door after one of the kids had a birthday party. I am humbled by (and thankful for) all of this.

Aside from the humanity of this place, it's also incredibly aesthetically striking. It's so stark and beautiful. The rocks and moss and ever-changing shade of the water make an incredible palette. My photos have been complimented but, truly, it's hard to take bad photos when the scenery is so striking. The sunsets here in the fall and the cold winter skies are something else. I've seen the aurora borealis and I got to see polar bears, and place my hands in their tracks. I had to get a pair of binoculars brought up so I could do a daily scan of the water for seals, icebergs, watching the ballicatter with that crazy shade of aqua, or watching people out setting wrinkle pots. Who needs TV? There's too much to be looking at right out the window.

Black Tickle is isolated and it is lovely. It's a shame more people don't get to see this place, because it truly is a home away from home for an outsider like me. The simplicity of life here -- despite its lack of ease -- makes for a special place. There's adversity and struggle, but people persevere. In the best way, it's like being back in time. An older generation where people don't get caught up in the bustle of over scheduling, and where they value their connection to home.

One night at our craft group, the ladies called me a NewfoundlandLabradorian. I'm pretty sure it was a joke, but I like it and I'll wear it with pride. I can't think of a better place I'd like to be an honorary member of. I'm set to leave in a couple of weeks, and I truly am going to miss it here. I always try to make the most of my travels, and this was one of the best experiences I could have hoped for. That's why I love Black Tickle."

LAURA KEEFE

"Black Tickle is special to me because my children are safe here and carefree. I feel safe, no need to lock doors here. I love my home."



CHARLENE KEEFE

“What do I love about Black Tickle? What's not to love? The peacefulness. The beauty of the land. I love all what BT is. The way the bog smells in the spring when everything is starting to thaw, sitting out on the point and watching flock after flock of birds flying by. The smell of sweetness in the air as you go in over the land berry picking. The beautiful colours of bright green grass has you climb the hills in July, the sound of seagulls going crazy for a fed of fish when the fishermen come in with their catch. The way the lights dance on the water on a beautiful calm summers night. The way the town looks after its first snow fall. Seeing the kiddies going from pond to pond to check the depth of the ice for skating time and the memories come racing in of when you were a child and the amount of hours you spent on them same ponds growing up.

The excitement in the kids and adults has Christmas roll near. Going for a ride to see who has their lights and decorations out. Seeing the town light up in all the beautiful colours and, for a second, you forget about all the hardships that have happened over the years! The dressing up with so much clothes you can barely breathe just to go for an endless ride. To feel the crisp bitter cold on your face, and hoping you might get to see a polar bear or caribou on the path. After an adventure in over the land and hills you return home to boil the kettle and enjoy a large hot cup of coffee and you're still thinking about the ride you were just on, the pictures you just took, the tingling feeling in your fingers because they are so cold from taking pictures even though you may have that same view in a picture a thousand times but you can't help but get it one more time! The feeling you get when you see a kid slide down

the gulch and the only thing you want to do is grab a flat cart and call up some old friends just to go down that hill one more time! I have so many wonderful memories of growing up in Black Tickle and I'm so happy to be able to raise my own kids there. Black Tickle will always be home no matter what life may bring. I will forever be BT strong and proud!!"

GERT SAUNDERS

"It's my home town. It's so peaceful. It's a great place to raise children. My family lives there. You can fish, duck hunt, pick berries. I love it when you need help, you don't need a bank book to get help. Everyone is so friendly. I can go on but I know I'm not asked to write a novel about it but I can and, if there was any work home for me, I would be there in a minute. I love my home town and all the people there."



LIVENDA KEEFE

"Well...well, where do I start? I could mimic all the wonderful things previously said about this amazing little piece of paradise here on earth but, even though I share the exact same feelings as Lillian, Abigail and other participants, I want to take a different angle with this love story.

Picture it Cicily 1990....LOL....Naww boy....those darn Golden Girls....Sit back, cock-up ya feet and picture this.....On a sunny spring day, hop on ya ski-doo, the mixture of salt air and hot bog filling your nostrils, despite the bumpy rotten spring snow and exposed rocks and bog you flick up in the gulch, spin the rear of ya ski-doo to flick a little bit of snow (cause ya knows despite your age, it's still cool and thrilling), as you turn to face the town, even though you did this a thousand times or more this season, the view still captivates ya and leaves a heartwarming sense of pride, as you squint ya eyes to see if there's anyone out in boat duck huntin' or anyone out on the point, you cannot help but to reminisce of the days gone by, when our almost vacant little town was full of life and busting at the seams with activity and excitement....a.t.t.t.....don't get me wrong there is still a few attention grabbers and daredevils left lurking about the rock, but not like there once was.

With eyes still squinted (come on now I knows ya squintin' with me)mize around the harbour to see what everyone is at...start up ya ski-doo again and lean heavy to the left and slither along the hill towards the quire, careful now the rocks and bog is out...flick down through the quire as you are checking to see how much ice is out there...."white as far as the eye can see"...glance back over ya shoulder and wonder if you should try to re-climb the quire hill and get a little air as you rev up the throttle just before you reach the top, but nawww instead you flick up the steep snow bank towards Herrin Cove pond and splash ya way across, like a little rebel, cutting loose without a care in the world and a lot to prove, giggling to ya self and make sure no one saw ya acting so silly...but you carry on down towards Mistaken Point to look down the run for another mize around...teee...heee...by now you are a little bit paranoid quickly looking in every direction, just in case Mr. Polar Bear is not around seeking out the views also, so you cautiously pick your way back down the slide-ly snow and back through the rocks towards the mash (marsh) while swerving around the deep spots and exposed rocks you head back home...stop your ski-doo by the door and just sit there retaking it all in...the sights, smells, and activity of the town.

For those of you that know exactly what I'm talkin about "YOUR WELCOME" I enjoyed that glorious adventure as well, and for those of you who cannot picture it, and don't know what I'm talking about in this love story, here are our GPS co-ordinates 53.4694 N, 55.7850 W. We are a little- itty- bitty community packed full to capacity with excellence and glorious adventures like this one. Come on 'by...look me up...and I'll take you on a remarkable journey as we explore and experience this amazing little community for yourself. I first came here in May 1990, chasin a small-dark-handsome man..."Witt-

Weew" (my whistle...lol..) and 27 years later he and this community still makes my heart flutter and blush with love and pride. This is my love story. I hope you enjoyed it."



BERNICE WEBBER PENASHUE

"There are many thoughts and fond memories that come to my mind when asked this question. I grew up in Black Tickle on and off throughout my lifetime. It is a place I call home. As a child, I remember playing outside with friends. We would skate on the pond in front of my house, or play softball, or climb the hill and go swimming at Reeds pond, or run around and play tag, hang out by the fish plant or the community centre, go sliding up in the gulch, or make mud pies, or play house and pretend to cook with the stalks of hemlock.

I remember feeling free and having a lot of fun! We made the best out of anything life threw at us! Even when there were snow storms with no electricity and we couldn't get out of the house for days, my brother and I dressed up warm and played hockey in the house, or played cards, or dinkies and trucks. I remember going out in boat to visit our cabin at Porcupine Bay where we would work hard and help our parents to cut wood or to hunt and fish. One time, my brother and I were swimming in trout

brook close by the boat and an otter came by next to us with her baby on her chest. It was an amazing experience! One I will never forget!

The scenery in Black Tickle is absolutely breath taking! There is barren land everywhere you look and there is a story to be told from every place, hill or landmark you visit. In the summertime, the land is covered with bakeapples. The stars shine so bright and the Northern lights dance in the sky. The fresh smell of salt water, smoked fish, homemade bread, moss, and bakeapple jam is exclusive to Black Tickle.

Black Tickle helped shape the person I am today. I grew up learning many traditional skills and values from my father, Eric Dyson. There is not a single thing that my father cannot do! He taught me the importance of only hunting what you can eat, not to let an animal suffer, to share with your neighbors, to think about tomorrow, to be there for others, never to let anyone go without, to be mannerly. These things money cannot buy.

I cannot forget to mention all of the beautiful people who live and have lived in Black Tickle! Especially, my Aunt Lucy and her whole family for taking me in as their own. I am grateful to have lived in such a beautiful place!"

CATHERINE RICE

"I love Black Tickle for its beauty and peacefulness."

