



**Director's Report: September – mid October, 2016**

***“Peaks & Valleys”***

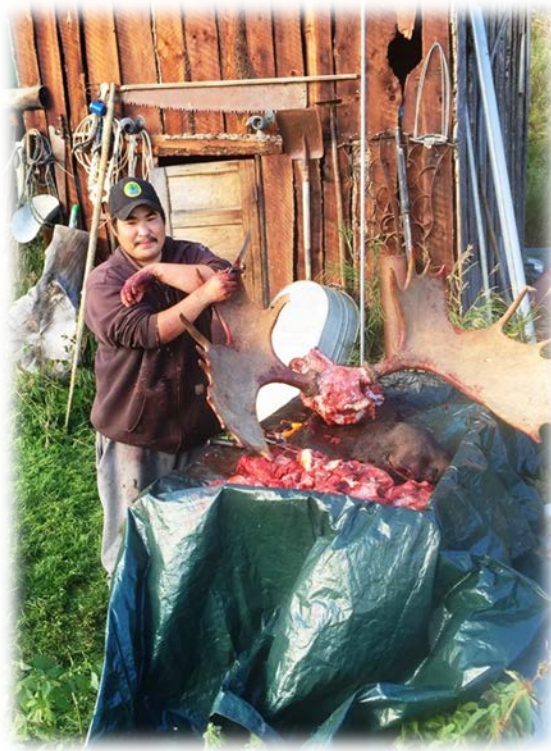
**Summary:** The weeks since our last Council meeting have quickly passed in a flurry of activity. This activity included continuing to follow our traditional fall subsistence activities, receiving notice of the largest grant NVN has ever received – the ICBDG, beginning immediate steps towards its implementation, attending national and regional tribal meetings, and bringing one of our original tribal members Home to rest.

**Fall Subsistence:** It was a good season. Our young People continue to assume more and more of the responsibility for providing food to their families.





*Taking care of the meat in the smokehouse*



*Cleaning the meat off the head – you can feed your family for a week just from the head*

### ***ICDBG:***

With the formal award being made to NVN on September 12, there was a great deal of administration work to do to get to the point of where we could begin actual implementation of this large project later in October. Devron, Marcie, and Lisa took the lead on this while I was on leave for moose season. Upon returning from moose season one of the first steps was to gather everyone involved (NVN personnel, TKC Forester, State forester, and Case Nelson at the harvest site to begin the planning process on September 27<sup>th</sup>.



*September 27<sup>th</sup> Harvest Site Meeting*





*Ground-truthing the site for the future sawmill location*



*Example of natural reforestation occurring in area logged in 2013*

On September 29<sup>th</sup> NVN personnel met at the Nelson Brothers Sawmill Site across the River from Chuathbaluk to inspect the mill and related infrastructure. We observed the mill in actual operation. For most of us who have never been around an automated sawmill it was impressive. During this site visit we also began planning for the disassembly and transport of the mill buildings and equipment.





*Inspecting the main sawmill building*



*The outfeed end of the building – where the boards come out*



*The operators booth*



*Value-added products: planer –molder that can make tongue & groove and many other finished wood products*



Many other details have been worked on since receiving the September 12 notice of award. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, Devron, Marcie, and I met with TKC to discuss this project and to begin negotiating a new relationship/partnership between NVN and TKC. NVN's proposal to TKC is included in your meeting packet.

The TKC Land Committee will meet October 24<sup>th</sup> to consider our proposal and to make a recommendation to the Full Board which will meet on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

TKC has also granted us permission to temporarily store gravel at the site while we work out the final agreement.

With the weather rapidly turning cold it remains to be seen whether or not the barge will be able to deliver gravel to the site late this week.



**National & Regional Meetings:** NVN was well represented at the Obama Administration's final Tribal Nations Gathering in Washington, D.C. and at this year's historical AVCP Annual Convention. Devron and Marcie will elaborate in their reports.



## Middle Kuskokwim Fish Wheel Project

Mark Leary, Director of Development and Operations, The Native Village of Napaimute

### Project Summary

The Native Village of Napaimute Environmental Director, Don Gillin, planned the **Middle Kuskokwim Fish Wheel Project** with a vision to reintroduce the use of fish wheels to the communities of this part of the River. Fish wheels were once a common method for harvesting salmon but in recent years their use had declined to just two or three along the entire River.

The purpose of the reintroduction of fish wheels was to allow People in the Middle Kuskokwim the opportunity to harvest other species of fish during the recent years of King Salmon conservation. The use of other forms of fishing gear such as drift or set gill nets has been severely restricted but fish wheels have remained legal gear under the current regulations – as long as they have a “live box” and all King Salmon are released.

This important project was administered by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and successfully completed by the Native Village of Napaimute. The following pictorial essay demonstrates the important work that was accomplished with this funding.

### The Results

Fish wheels were successfully constructed and installed helping the Middle Kuskokwim People to harvest species other than King Salmon. Here are examples of Red Salmon being put to good use... filling smoke houses along the Middle Kuskokwim!

### Acknowledgments

Thanks to PSMFC and the following key employees for their dedication to the success of this project: Nathan Underwood (Project Leader), Dakota Phillips, Jacob Wale, Ben Leary, Kory Morow, Jared Underwood, and the late Tommy Tom.

### Phase I: Procurement of supplies and mobilization (August 2015)

A boat & motor dedicated to the project was ordered from Anchorage and shipped by barge to the Lower Kuskokwim Port of Bethel. There it was assembled and driven 140 miles upstream to Napaimute. Successful completion of the project also required use of another tribally-owned boat as well as use of personal boats.

### Phase II: Gathering local materials (September - November 2015)

A crew traveled 70 miles above Napaimute to gather driftwood logs for the fish wheel rafts.

The logs were floated to Napaimute where they were hauled out of the water and stored to dry for the winter.

Timber was harvested from the Native Village of Napaimute's tribally-owned land. Timber was stockpiled and milled into lumber for the fish wheels in the spring of 2016.

### Phase III: Milling the lumber and constructing the fish wheels (April & May 2016)

First the fish wheel baskets are built.

Making fish wheel lumber on the Native Village of Napaimute's sawmill.

Then the rafts are built.

Then the ladders, live boxes, and baskets are installed.

Two completed fish wheels waiting for delivery.

### Phase IV: Delivering and helping to install the completed fish wheels (June 2016)

Hauling two wheels 60 miles downstream to Upper and Lower Kaskag on a beautiful June day.

Moving a fish wheel basket assembly 40 miles upstream to Crooked Creek where it was assembled on-site.

Setting up the Upper Kaskag fish wheel.

Project Leader Nathan Underwood points out where adjustments are needed.

*NVN's Fish Wheel Project on display at the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission Annual Meeting*



***Northern Industrial Training:*** This 10 day training for NVN employees began on October 10. I was able to stop in and observe on October 12 and 14. This has been a very beneficial training for our employees. The instructor is thoroughly enjoying it as well. He said it is rewarding for him to be with people that are “hungry” to learn. A big thank you to Donlin Gold, LLC and the AVCP Education, Employment & Training Department.



*Dakota welding ice cleats on the dozer track*



*Nickolai shows his new starter and wiring work*





*Instructor Mike Hobbs pointing out what needs to be done on our old dozer*



*NVN's new dozer arrives on the barge to participate in the training*

***Coming Home to Rest:*** In the middle of all of this activity we had to pause and bring one of our original tribal members, John P. “Binky” Kristovich, home to rest at Napaimute. It was a hard, sad time, but good in that it brought everybody home. Many good People from up and down the River and across Alaska came out to help. A big thank you to all. John is resting in the beautiful place that he loved.



It's been a good, hard month. We look forward to the peaceful, quiet time of freeze up before the next flurry of activity starts.

Thank you.