

# Picturing the Thelon River



December 2013

## Restor(y)ing Denesoline relations en route to the headwaters

Lutsel K'e information letter: Research planning visit, December 04 - 08, 2013

The Thelon River is a special place that means different things to different people and is experienced in multiple ways. For the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN), the Thelon River is a sacred part of the cultural landscape. It is important to Denesoline livelihoods, memory, traditions, subsistence, land use, occupancy, and treaty rights. In other words, the Thelon River is significant to Denesoline ways of life.



Picturing the Thelon River is a research project that has been ongoing since October 2009. It is a community-based, collaborative, and participatory project coordinated by

Bryan Grimwood, an Assistant Professor at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario. The initial study involved working with river tourists (wilderness canoeists) and river inhabitants (Inuit from Baker Lake, Nunavut) to document knowledge about the Thelon, and to share this knowledge within and between these groups.

In November 2012, Bryan visited Lutsel K'e to meet with LKDFN representatives in order to share results from the initial study and to discuss the possibility of a related collaborative project with Lutsel K'e. Bryan met and spoke with several

individuals and groups, including: Chief Dora Enzoe, Elders, Mike Tollis, the Wildlife Lands and Environment Committee (WLEC), and students. Following this visit, Bryan worked with Mike Tollis, the WLEC, and Gita Ljubcic (who works at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario) to develop a funding proposal for a new study based on three objectives:

1. To foster and celebrate Denesoline cultural livelihoods by recording, experiencing, and exchanging local and traditional knowledge associated with the Thelon River watershed;
2. To synthesize, analyze, and interpret Thelon River watershed policies, archives, and media productions for meaningful use within the community contexts of Lutsel K'e;
3. To plan and pilot a research land camp that will: a) involve collaborations between Dene, Inuit, university researchers, and other Thelon stakeholders; and b) become the basis for future research.



In June 2013, this new component of the Thelon River study was awarded two years of funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (<http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/>).

From December 04 – 08, 2013, Bryan will be in Lutsel K'e with two students, Lauren King and Ally Holmes, both of whom study at the University of Waterloo. The purpose of their visit is to:

- a) Participate in a two-day project implementation workshop with the WLEC and other community representatives; and
- b) Answer questions that residents and representatives of Lutsel K'e may have about the next stages of the Thelon River study.

The WLEC workshop is scheduled for Thursday, December 05 and Friday, December 06 and will take

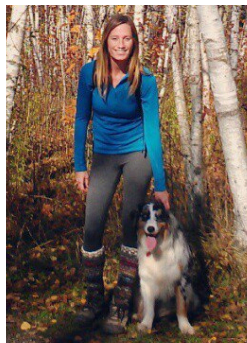
place at the WLEC office. The goals of this workshop are to identify community perspectives and expectations of research; discuss and clarify project objectives, methods, timelines, and desired outcomes; recruit a local research coordinator; and address outstanding issues or questions about the study. Over the course of their visit, Bryan, Lauren, and Ally hope to become more familiar with the people and community of Lutsel K'e and continue building research relationships based on trust, mutual respect, cooperation, and shared commitments to honouring the Thelon River.

## Meet the uWaterloo research team:



Bryan Grimwood was born and raised in Sarnia, Ontario at the southern point of Lake Huron and the mouth of the St. Clair River. He now resides with his family in Kitchener, Ontario, a short hike to the shores of the Grand River. Rivers have been central to Bryan's personal and professional travel experiences as a canoe tripper, outdoor educator, and guide. He is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. He teaches and researchers about nature-society relationships in contexts of tourism, learning, and livelihoods.

Photos contributed by: J. Joedee, W. O'Driscoll, H. Wiedemar, Anautalik, B. Bailey, P. Albrecht



Lauren King is a Ph.D. student in the School of Planning, University of Waterloo. Her research interests are in protected

area planning and management, resource management, and community-based participatory research with First Nations. Her Ph.D. research explores co-management of Canadian national parks. When she is not busy studying, she enjoys escaping the city to go on canoe or hiking trips. She lives in Toronto, Ontario.



Ally Holmes is a Masters student in Tourism Policy and Planning at the University of Waterloo. She is

interested in tourism development and community-based participatory research approaches. In her free time, she plays volleyball and enjoys being around family, friends, and her golden retriever. Ally currently splits her time between London, Cambridge, and Waterloo, Ontario.

If you have questions about the Thelon River study, or would like to learn more about it, please introduce yourself to Bryan, Lauren, or Ally during their visit in December 2013. You are also welcome to use following information to contact Bryan at any time.

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