

**“My Elders used to tell me stories.
I witnessed their work and
traveled along their trails.
Our youth need to know the ways
of our people. We want to retain
our ways of life and pass it on to
our next generation.”**

(Harry Simpson - June 25, 1991)

Trails Of Our Ancestors

The Elders talk about the seasonal nomadic lifestyle; about the hardships, and the sorrows marked by burial sites. The land and place names also remind the Elders of renewal of spirit, abundance, and gathering to renew kinship, revive stories, and share knowledge. Canoe were significant in charting the history of who we are as Tłı̨chǫ people. We continue to keep our history alive by traveling the trails of our ancestors to our annual gathering, today.



Vision

The Trails Of Our Ancestors allow us to retrace our path through eyes of our elders. In 1990, a plan to implement a vision was developed; The vision of Chief Jimmy Bruneau to teach our youth to be strong like two people.

- It is our goal to increase youth participants on the Trails Of Our Ancestors.
- Preserve our language, culture & way of life.
- Retrace our path through eyes of our Elders.
- Renew spiritual growth, abundance, and gathering to renew kinship, revive stories, and share knowledge.
- Strengthen unity among our youth, elders, families and communities.
- Teach our youth survival skills required on the land. Teaching in geographical mapping, names, stories and recording.
- Training opportunity in canoe safety, first aid course, firearm safety course, GPS training, policy, basic survival skills, roles and responsibility.

Our Way Of Life (Tłı̨chǫ)

Our Elders who have first hand experience told stories about how our people (Tłı̨chǫ) traveled by canoe in the fall to harvest caribou and collect hides for clothing, equipment, and shelter in Barrenlands. They talked about travel back below the tresslines and lived with abundance of caribou in the winter. In the spring, our elders told stories of traveling to familiar fishing grounds by birchbark canoe. The Tłı̨chǫ people continue to keep these traditions alive by traveling with canoes to the annual gathering. Our youth honor their ancestors, respect our land and experience the traditional spirit they will carry with them.



Sharing the Knowledge by our Youth

One of my favorite memories of the canoe trip was listening to Elders speak of the different areas where we disembarked. Many sites showed evidence of past use. Sometimes we would find tents circles outlined by large rocks that were previously used to hold a caribou hide lodge in place. In the center of this area, underneath the moss and lichen, one would find a fire pit and if you were lucky, flint or tiny arrowheads. The Elders shared their knowledge as they explained how camps were set up, how our ancestors lived at different times of the year as they followed the animals and how they worked on the land. At times the conditional were harsh but my faith, courage and determination pulled me through. It is a honor to learn about our land, way of life and filled with pride.





Geographic traditional travel routes to Behchokò, Whatì, Gamèti and Wekweètì.

How to apply for the Trails Of Our Ancestors Program.

- Application with waiver forms can be picked up at the Community Presence Office.
- Application and forms must be completed prior to deadline date.
- Participant names list for the Trails Of Our Ancestors will be selected and post up in public prior to departure to the Tłıchǫ Annual Gathering.



Chief Mowhi drew a map in his mind. He said "as long as the sun rises, as long as the river flows, as long as this land shall last, and nothing will change for my people."

Send your applications to your local:
Community Presence Office of Behchokò, Whatì, Gamèti and Wekweètì.

For more information contact:
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Trails Of Our Ancestors

The **Trails Of Our Ancestors** is a annual canoe journey to the Tłıchǫ Annual Gathering. It is an opportunity to retrace our path through eyes of our elders.



Building Our Nation