

Edzo & Akaitcho Research Project & Workshop

August 25 – 31, 2014
Gots'okàtì (Mesa Lake)

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Tłıchǫ Ndek'àowo
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Introduction

The Edzo & Akaitcho Research Project & Workshop was an eye opening for many of us that attended from communities of Behchokò, Whatì, Gamètì, and Wekweètì. Our time in Gots'òkàtì (Mesa Lake) was an opportunity to listen and record further research on "Edzo and Akaitcho Making Peace".

A total of 24 participants; 10-Tł̨chq̨ Elders, 2-Youth, 1-Culture Management, 1-Program Assistant, 2-TG Lands Research Team, 2-Researchers, 2-Camp Helpers, 1-cook, 1-Wilderness Worker, and 2-Translators. Breakfast was served at 8:00 a.m. followed by a rosary prayer, morning sessions, lunch break, afternoon sessions and end with a prayer at 5:00 p.m. At evening, group will go for a nature walk, visit sacred rock, pick blue berries or take an evening nap.

Extraordinary Learning Experience

The Gots'òkàtì (Mesa Lake) trip was an extraordinary learning experience, group sharing, sharing duties, walking on the land, and listening to stories allowed everyone present to not only learn about the story of the peace between Edzo and Akaitcho, but to also understand its contemporary relevance.

At the workshop, our elders developed a ground rules that there will be no interruption, every voice is important, young or old during sessions. Elders provided a wealth of knowledge on this historic event, both in the camp and locations in the surrounding area, including the rock that provided a hiding place for Edzo's son and meeting taken place between Edzo and Katehwi.

Offers to rock at Gots'òkàtì



Edzo's sons hid behind the rock



Sharing stories and legends near rock



Group picture after story telling near rock



Edzo and Akaitcho made peace

The Tłı̨chǫ and the people of Akaitcho fought for many years and witnessed many casualties amongst their people. In early 1800's, Edzo and Akaitcho made peace on condition that we would respect one another.

They had a feast and drum dance that lasted for many days.

The people danced so hard that the circle pounded into the ground can be seen to this day at Gots'ǫkàtì (Mesa Lake). What distinguished our time in Gots'ǫkàtì (Mesa Lake) from other research projects was the connection between place and names. Retracing our path through eyes of our elders while walking the trails of our ancestors was an important source a proposed creation of an animated film based on stories/legends that took place hundreds of years ago at Gots'ǫkàtì.



John B. and participants



Gameti canoe travelers taking a break

Cultural knowledge sustained through engagement



This project has explored how cultural knowledge may be sustained through community engagement and a creative process involving elders and youth. As this research evolves into an on-going relationship with communities, the fusion of visual art and traditional narratives may provide new ways of revitalizing Tłı̨chǫ oral stories/legends.

Documentation of this trip was provided by Scott Portingale. His excellent work in documenting storytelling sessions, capturing images, and recording video of the land and the camp, has provided a valuable resource for this animated film as well as future projects requiring knowledge and/or imagery of the Gots'òkàtì (Mesa Lake) area.

Forgiveness, healing and reconciliation

A recognition of Edzo's vision towards forgiveness, healing and reconciliation at the north shore of Gots'òkàtì (MesaLake). Elders recommended an annual gathering and a placement of a monument where the meeting took place between Edzo & Akaitcho. Edzo's ability to make peace within and forgive others after so many conflicts and suffering amongst his people. He developed a path to forgive and reconcile our differences. Gots'òkàtì (MesaLake) will always remind our elders of forgiveness and move forward to better life.

Edzo has developed a path towards self-determination, self-government, and self-sustainability. Our elders are supportive of enhancing education through sustaining our Language, Culture, Lands and Way of Life. Our elders are supportive to link between our youth and elders to educate through programs based on Reviving our Language, Culture, and Way of Life.



Monique praying at child's grave at Gots'òkàtì

Spiritual Journey

The trip to Gots'òkàtì was an unforgettable experience, a spiritual journey, nature healing, and a sense of belonging. I know that this trip will help those of us involved develop an outstanding importance of sustaining our language, culture, lands, and way of life. The group stayed extra two (2) days and waited for the arrival of the Traditional Knowledge group traveling by Canoes to Gots'òkàtì (MesaLake). The Traditional Knowledge group were delayed due to more time spent cutting trails to Gots'òkàtì (MesaLake). During our stay, we prepared food, set up extra tents, cut wood, and food were dropped off for canoe travelers at Gots'òkàtì (MesaLake). The canoes arrived at 9:30 pm on Saturday, August 30, 2014. The canoe travelers were welcome with hot food, warm tea, heated tents, and relaxed after a long journey on the land.

Combining the Traditional and Modern

The Culture Management under Tłıchq Government is working with a University of Alberta Student, Adolfo Ruiz, Animation Designer to develop contemporary combining the Tłıcho Traditional and Modern form of image making based on "Edzo & Akaitcho Making Peace".

Masi cho

I would like to thank all who participated in program; Our Youth, Elders, Helpers, Wilderness Worker, Cooks, Translators & Culture Workers. Masi Cho for all your support in making this journey reality.

The Tłıchq Researcher Project and Workshop based on "Edzo & Ekècho Making Peace" was a success due to all participants from Behchokq, Whatì, Gametì and Wekweètì.

I look forward as we continue to work with Adolfo Ruiz, and Scott Portingale on developing this animated film – "Edzo & Akaitcho Making Peace".

Photos taken from the Edzo & Ekècho Research Project & Workshop that was held at Gots'okàti (Mesa Lake).

