



Fall Harvest Fair Reporting

October 29, 2015

Ecology North and Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) organized the 7th annual Fall Harvest Fair, which took place September 4-5th 2015 in Ndilo. The two-day event consisted of a workshop on September 4th and the Fall Harvest Fair on September 5th.

September 4, 2015 – Successes of Community Gardening Workshop

The full-day workshop included community gardeners from five communities who are successfully making their community garden or small commercial garden a success in their community. Ecology North facilitated the workshop called “Successes of Community Gardening” with the goal of determining the reasons for success, and current challenges for community gardeners.

Table 1: Workshop participants on September 4, 2015.

Name	Organization/Community
Melissa Sangris	Community Wellness - Ndilo, NT
Kathy Dryneck	Wekweeti, NT
Stella Quitte	Gameti, NT
Lone Sorensen	GNWT ITI North Slave Region Ag Consultant – Yellowknife, NT
Kris Johnson	GNWT ITI North Slave Region Superintendent – Yellowknife, NT
Donovan Simpson	Whati, NT
Jim Stauffer	Whati, NT
Katelyn Friendship	Arctic Institute of Community Based Research (AICBR) – Whitehorse, YK
Kim Rapati	Northern Farm Training Institute (NFTI) Operations Manager – Hay River, NT
Christine Barker	Ecology North Agriculture Specialist – Yellowknife, NT
Tasha Stephenson	Site Manager at Yellowknife Community Garden Collective (YCGC) – Yellowknife, NT
Jennifer Broadbridge	Ecology North Administrative Coordinator – Yellowknife, NT

A successful community garden:

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- The whiteboard features a circular arrangement of yellow sticky notes, each containing a concept. The notes are connected by lines, forming a continuous loop. The concepts include:
- Serving the Community
 - Inspiration
 - Happiness
 - Fun
 - Health
 - Satisfaction
 - Being Outside
 - Engage the Senses
 - Spiritual Connection
 - Freight
 - Trading
 - Sharing
 - Building Skills
 - Teaching Counselor
 - Jobs
 - Solve
 - Loving
 - 1-0-10 Food
 - Loving Food

Two different case studies of successful community gardeners were presented during the workshop. Katelyn Friendship from Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research (AICBR) presented on community gardening gatherings that have been hosted in Whitehorse Yukon in 2014 and 2015. She shared some of the perspectives from Yukon growers with relation to successes and challenges of community gardening. Katelyn also spoke about Kluane First Nation, a community who is considered by Katelyn to be a “mover and shaker” in realizing their potential for local food security. Kluane First Nation is currently focusing on growing their agriculture potential of their community by exploring the building of a greenhouse using a geothermal well, community gardening, revitalizing traditional sharing practices and promoting intergenerational learning. They recently opened up a small store and gas station, where they plan to carry local vegetables in the store, to help support access to food. The community is currently 300km away from the closest grocery store in Whitehorse. The second case study was

about Gameti and their story about building a community garden to become a more food secure community.

The workshop included a tour by Melissa Sangris in the Ndilo community garden and greenhouse, where the plants were all doing especially well. Melissa spoke about the values and healing experience of being part of the community garden. While on the tour, Christine Barker and Kim Rapati spoke about soil and indicators of healthy soil. Workshop facilitator Craig Scott demonstrated how to maintain your backyard compost by turning, watering, and layering.



Workshop participants taking a tour of N'Dilo community garden.



Workshop participants touring N'Dilo's new community greenhouse.

During the workshop, participants were asked to talk about what they thought were the primary challenges and barriers to a successful community garden. The themes that came out of this session are listed below.

The main challenges and barriers for a successful community garden are:

- Bureaucracy;
- Getting people engaged;
- Poor soil quality;
- Lack of communication;
- Lack of training and education;
- Lack of land availability;
- Not knowing what happens after the community champion moves away. How do you increase chances of succession so that the project continues?

The last portion of the workshop was a visioning exercise for Wekweeti, Whati, and Gameti. Participants who were not from those communities grouped together to help brainstorm with the three communities towards a 1, 10, and 50 year plan. Their visions are attached.

September 5, 2015 – Fall Harvest Fair

The 7th annual Fall Harvest Fair was held on September 5, 2015 and hosted by the community of Ndilo. It has been an important event in the agricultural calendar in Yellowknife for the past seven years. Until last year when we brought it back to the land, it had been held at Northern United Place auditorium and included a potluck and a veggie, jam, and pie making competition.

In 2014, the organizers decided to expand the fair with outdoor events, workshops, food, and entertainment. Although a simple concept, it was a challenge to find hosts and funding to support a larger event of this nature. AICBR and GNWT Industry Tourism & Investment North Slave Office provided modest financial support, and the YKDFN and community of Ndilo were excellent hosts, covering some of the costs. Ecology North hired two coordinators to help organize the events, volunteers, locations, and to ensure supplies and food were organized for the Fair. There were many events happening concurrently, which made for some challenging logistics. Stacey Sundberg from Dettah, and Dawn Tremblay from Yellowknife were hugely important in the success of this project.

A big thank you goes out to the dedicated volunteers, who made this project happen. Organization included over twenty volunteers with an estimated 150 hours of volunteer time, as well as two Ecology North staff and two contracted event organizers. It was estimated that 250 people came out to the potluck feast, with many more people filtering in and out of the different events throughout the day.

The Fall Harvest Fair was located at the K'alemi Dene Schoolgrounds and the Ndilo Community Gym. Events started with a feeding the fire ceremony and kids games, which were followed by workshops, and pony rides offered free to the public. See Table 2 for events and participation.

There were many kids and families in attendance, and it was amazing to see such a diverse and young crowd. The petting zoo was tremendously busy, with throngs of kids getting their first ever ride on a horse. The potluck and veggie show-off were also very popular. After a prayer by elder Muriel Betsina, the packed food table was polished off by a very full crowd (all chairs were used, people were sitting all around the gym, and many were standing or swapped seats with those who had already eaten). Prizes were given out to the grateful winners of the Veggie Show-off. Thank you to ITI for providing garden related prizes. A drum dance closed off the night.

Just a note to celebrate the amazing community spirit that the event developed. Using the Ecology North dishes, ensured that there was little waste, but the dishes needed to be cleaned. After the meal the diners took it upon themselves to make sure all the dishes were washed, with people swarmed around the kitchen cleaning and socializing. It was a true community style event, which brought N'dilo and Yellowknife together

Events and Participation

Facilitator	Type of Workshop	# of participants
Kim Rapati and Jackie Milne	NFTI display	
Patrick L. and Amy W.	Ndilo Garden Tour	20
Muriel Bestina	Feed the Fire	90
Melissa Sangris & Dawn Tremblay	Potluck supper	250+
Melissa Sangris	Local Food Workshop – Soup Making from garden veggies	10
Bessa Blondin	Traditional Plant medicines	35+
Therese Sangris	Dry Fish-Making and Smokehouse Tour	30
Dene Drummers	Drum Dance	100
N'Dilo children	Refreshments Stand	
Dawn Tremblay / Jessica Dunkin	Veggie Show-off	20 participants**
Jacob Kass	Petting Zoo	100+
North Country Stables	Pony Rides	80+
Tracy Williams / Jeremy Flatt	Kids games	30
Total Participants*		400+

* Please note that it is likely that some participants would be counted more than once if they participated in one or more activities. Therefore, we estimate that there were a total of 400 participants including volunteers, as people came and went throughout the day.

** The participants counted here brought Veggies or items for the contest. This number does not include the number of people who participated in voting or who viewed items.

Volunteers

We must thank all the hard work of the people who made this happen. We had many people who volunteered their time to make this event a success, including Ernest Betsina who MC'ed and hosted the event, YCGC and N'Dilo residents donated food for the potluck supper and soup making workshops, elders and other volunteers helped run workshops and events, and many others who dedicated their time to make this event a success.

	Numbers	Hours Spent
YKDFN Staff	2	15
EN Staff	3	15
Volunteers (both YKDFN & EN)	21	37

Fall Harvest Fair Schedule

Master of Ceremonies: Chief of Ndilo, Ernest Betsina

Time	Event
3:00 – 6:00pm	Petting Zoo and Pony Rides
	Kid's Games
	Workshops
	Displays
	Face Painting
	Feeding the Fire
4:00 – 6:00pm	Veggie Show-off
6:00 – 9:00pm	Potluck Feast
	Veggie Show-off prizes
	Drum Dance



Lessons Learned

Large community events like the Fall Harvest Fair always have some logistical challenges. This year our challenges included some the following: supplies scheduled for delivery not showing up, volunteers cancelling at the last minute, insufficient funds for some of the workshops, and unreliable commitments from workshop facilitators.

To be honest, a key challenge was overcoming the difference in tradition. For example, the community of Ndilo has a tradition of community feasts, whereas the Yellowknife garden community has a tradition of potlucks. Ecology North was proud of how we overcame this challenge. Another example of cultures and traditions differing was around the schedule, which flowed in an organic nature more or less adhering to the advertised structure. The only moment of tension came when the scheduled time to eat arrived but the elder meant to bless the food was still preparing fish. We learned the blessing should be scheduled earlier, for example 5:30pm or 5:45pm, plus the fish preparation workshop could have started earlier so that the participants would be ready for the feast. But most of all we learned to have patience and that having a Community Coordinator was key to success!

Ideas for Next Year

Many participants thanked us for hosting the event in Ndilo. It was a great opportunity for the Yellowknife community and the Ndilo community to come together and share food traditions. Some ideas for next year include hosting at the Yellowknife River, having more workshops, better signage for the dry-fish workshop, a mini-bus tour stopping at community gardens around Yellowknife. We love to dream big, but this year's fall harvest fair was pretty big. So the most resounding idea for next year is to do the same thing again! Internally, we hope to implement our lessons learned so that externally the event flows even more smoothly.