

Nulato (Noolaaghe Doh) Community Plan



2016

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Nulato Tribal Council
Adopting Community Plan

Resolution 2016-05

Whereas, this Community Plan is important to the future growth and development of Nulato; and,

Whereas, this plan was created through a public process which captured the values and goals of our community: and,

Whereas, this plan is a tool that helps us manage change in our community: and,

Whereas, this plan is intended to coordinate future community development and service delivery; and,

Whereas; it is understood that this document was created for public use and will be made publically available and,

Whereas, we ask all public, private, and non-profit entities serving our community to recognize and use this plan; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the parties of this resolution agree to work together to pursue the values, goals, and vision expressed in this plan.


DULY ADOPTED THIS 1st day of March, 2016.



Nulato Tribal Council, 1st Chief

Certification

This certifies that the above resolution was duly adopted at a convened meeting of the Nulato Tribal Council, at which time a quorum was present. This resolution was adopted by a vote 7 for, 0 against, with 0 abstaining.



Nulato Tribal Council, Secretary/Treasurer

Vision Statement

“Nulato is a family-oriented community that places a high value on harvesting subsistence foods, holding cultural gatherings and events, celebrating and drawing from the wisdom and teaching of our elders, and maintaining a strong tie to the land and water. We are committed to maintaining a healthy life through traditional activities as well as continuing to improve our community’s infrastructure, diversifying our economy, and training our workforce.”

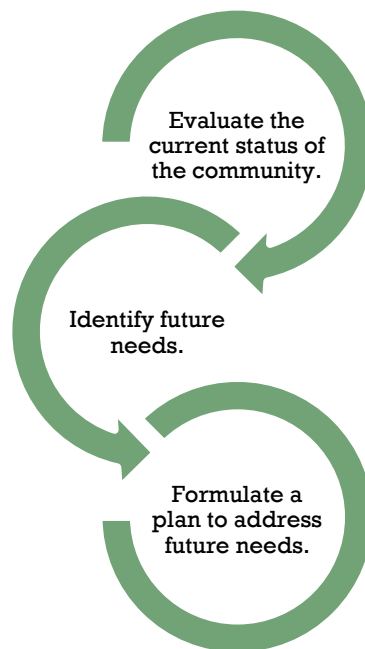
Community Values



Executive Summary

In October of 2015 The Tanana Chiefs Conference Village Planning and Development (VP&D) Program awarded the Nulato Village Council a contract to hire a Community Planning Specialist. Through the VP&D Program, local resident Robyn George was hired to research, update, revise, and create new goals for our community plan. Information included in this plan is based off of interviews with community members, surveying of residents, community meetings, and reviewing past plans. The City of Nulato completed a Community Plan in 2007 with assistance from Agnew Beck Consulting.

The purpose of the plan is threefold:



Through this process it is intended that the community will be better able to anticipate future needs and promote development of facilities, infrastructure, and economic development that the community desires and is sustainable.

Community Profile

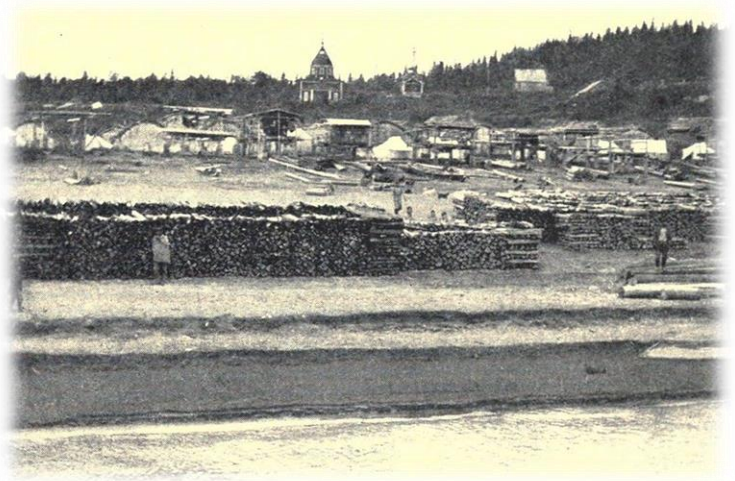
History

The Russian explorer Malakov established a trading post at Nulato in 1839. A small pox epidemic, the first of several major epidemics, struck the region in 1839. Disputes over local trade may have been partly responsible for the Nulato massacre of 1851, in which Koyukuk River Natives decimated a large portion of the Nulato Native population. A Russian fur trader named Malakov reportedly arrived in the fish camp town of Nulato as far back as 1839 and saw the trading potential of the little village. He saw the coastal Eskimos come to this Indian town, offering seal and whale oil, tobacco and copper spearheads in trade. Malakov noticed that the spearheads bore the imprint of a forge in Irkutsk, which the visiting Eskimos must have received during barter with Chukchi Natives. The Nulato Indians also welcomed the new trade with Malakov and he traveled back out to St. Michael with 350 beaver pelts.

The Western Union Telegraph Company explored the area around 1867. Nulato was a center of missionary activity, and many area Natives moved to the village after a Roman Catholic mission and school, Our Lady of Snows Mission, was completed in 1887. Epidemics took heavy tolls on Native lives after the onset of the Yukon and Koyukuk gold rush in 1884. For instance, food shortages and a measles epidemic combined to kill as much as one-third of the Nulato population during 1900. In 1900, steamboat traffic peaked, with 46 boats in operation.

Through the turn of the century, two steamers a day would stop at Nulato to purchase firewood. A post office was opened in 1897.

In the late 1970's the community decided to develop a new townsite in the hills just west of the old townsite. Moving from a flood plain area was the primary motive for the new development.



1908- Wood yard in Nulato

It's hard now to comprehend the volume of traffic that coursed up and down Alaska's coastlines and the Yukon River in the early 20th century. Records show that by 1900, during the peak of the

Alaska Gold Rush, there were 46 steam boats in operation on the Yukon. Two steamers a day would stop at Nulato to buy firewood for their boilers. The town's new post office was a popular stop en route up or downriver.

Nulato would fall prey to a number of the white man's epidemics during the periods of Western contact for the next century. It was in 1839 that Nulato was swept by an epidemic of smallpox – possibly carried in by Malakov or even the Eskimo neighbors. The deadly disease struck hard and left survivors in grief. Then in 1851, only twelve years later, came the Nulato massacre in which the village was almost wiped out. Before then a Russian fur trader named Darabin, reportedly a heavy drinker, had settled in Nulato and built a permanent and fortified trading post for himself – fortified only to protect his trade goods, himself and his private stock.

Culture

The Koyukon Athabascans traditionally had spring, summer, fall, and winter camps, and moved as the wild game migrated. There were 12 summer fish camps located on the Yukon River between the Koyukuk River and the Nowitna River. Nulato was the trading site between Athabascans and Inupiat Eskimos from the



Kobuk area. Western contact increased rapidly after the 1830s.

Nulato has retained the tradition of Stickdance, considered the most honorable and remarkable of the Athabascan Indian culture. This event rotates each March between Nulato and



neighboring Kaltag, a dance honoring the departed and helping families deal with grief and loss of loved ones. A decorated spruce stick is used during the dance and potlatch. It symbolizes the souls of the deceased – a final farewell to a loved one and the cleansing relief of closure. Nulato has had much experience with loss and grief, a remarkable community.

Village Location

Nulato is located on the west bank of the Yukon River, 35 miles west of Galena and 310 air miles west of Fairbanks. It lies in the Nulato Hills, across the River from the Innoko National Wildlife Refuge. It lies at approximately 64° 43' N Latitude, 158° 06' W Longitude (Sec. 08, T009S, R004E, Kateel River Meridian). The community is located in the Nulato Recording District.



The area encompasses 47 sq. miles of land and 7 sq. miles of water.

Population

The current population is 269 with children and adults ages 0 on up. The population increases to 277 with the inclusion of teachers and their significant others and children. This data came from a recent headcount by the Community Planning Specialist.

Over the past few years, Nulato's young population has declined, with the local school population falling from 167 students to 67 in a ten year period. This decline is related to a general population decrease, as well as to increases in the numbers of Nulato's school-aged children attending school in other communities such as Galena and Sitka, where academic programs have been developed specifically to serve rural youth. Though the benefits of the educational experiences offered at Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA) and Mt. Edgecumbe cannot be denied, Nulato residents have also expressed a desire to improve the quality of education offered at the Andrew K. Demoski School and to educate a larger number of Nulato youth locally. Improving technical infrastructure, such as internet connectivity, so that local students are better equipped to take classes through the University of Alaska system would also improve local educational opportunities.

Governance and Public Administration

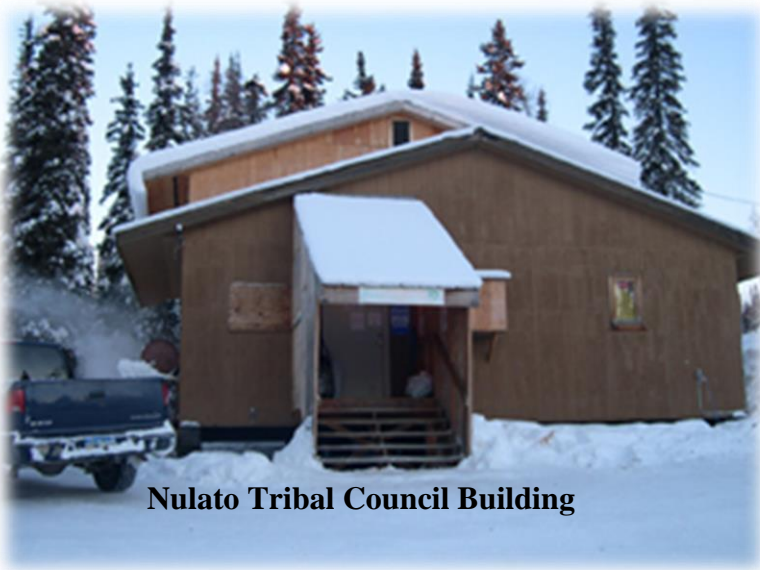
Council

Nulato consists of two councils; tribal and city council. The Nulato Tribal Council is represented by a seven (7) member traditional council, and is recognized by the federal government as the official tribal governing body for the village of Nulato. The Tribal Council consists of a 1st Chief, 2nd Chief, Secretary/Treasurer, and four council member seats. Each term is staggered from 1 yr. to 3 yr. seats. Elections are held annually in January; tribal members who are 18 years or older are eligible to vote. In order to serve on the council, a person must be a resident of Nulato, 18 years of age, and a tribal member.

Nulato Tribal Council currently employs twelve (12) staff. The council also has seasonal employment such as brush cutting, carpenters/laborers for the NAHASDA projects, etc.

There is a Nulato Tribal Court established which consists of a pool of five (5) judges elected by Nulato Tribal members. Judges serve for three-year terms, provided that shorter terms may be used to initiate a staggering process. If an elected Nulato Tribal Court Judge runs for and is elected to the Nulato Tribal Council during their term, they shall forfeit their seat as an elected Judge. There shall be no term limits for Nulato Tribal Court Judges. Nulato Tribal Council Members may serve as alternate judges provided that they meet the qualifications for serving as a judge on the Nulato Tribal Court and do not have a conflict of interest with that case.

The purpose of the Nulato Court is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the Nulato people and Tribe by addressing problems locally through a fair and consistent application of unwritten Nulato cultural traditions and written tribal ordinances. The juridical power of the Nulato Tribe shall be vested in the Nulato Tribal Court which shall consist of the Nulato Tribal Court, Nulato Court of Appeals, Circle Court and other courts as deemed necessary by the Nulato Tribal Council. This outlines the structures of the Nulato Tribal Court.



Nulato Tribal Council Building

The Nulato Tribal Council purchased an unused city-owned building in 2002 and established its quarters in October 2002. Since forming its governance in 1994 the Tribal Council had been renting “cubby holes” from the City of Nulato. Now the Tribal building can staff up to 12 employees year round. In 2015 the upstairs offices had walls put up so instead of being “wide open” there are now individual offices.

VPO/ Law Enforcement

Nulato currently employs a VPO. Hours of operation are 1:00 -2:00 PM; 8:00 PM-1:00 AM. The nearest law enforcements are the Galena State Troopers which is 35 air miles/ 54 river miles who will respond to Nulato if the VPO needs assistance. The VPO has requested a VPO assistant to the City Council; this position has yet to be filled.



VPSO Building

Village Corporation

The village corporation is Gana-A' Yoo, Limited. Alaska Native Corporations are the result of the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), which was signed into law by Pres. Richard Nixon in 1971. The act was intended to resolve long-standing issues surrounding aboriginal land claims, to stimulate economic development throughout Alaska, and settle land and financial claims. Throughout Alaska, over 200+ Alaska Native village corporations and 12 regional corporations were entitled to select and receive title to approximately 44 million acres of land.

As a historically nomadic people who relied on each other, the concept of sharing is a pivotal one in Athabascan tradition. For thousands of years small groups would band together to share resources and ensure the success of the group. In the Athabascan language, Gana-A'Yoo means “friends,” or literally “friends together.” This was the underlying sentiment in 1978 when the shareholders of Galena, Koyukuk, Nulato and Kaltag made the decision to join together as “friends” and merge into one Village Corporation. Thus, Gana-A'Yoo, Limited formed.

The majority of the shareholders are Koyukon Athabascan people. While headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska; the company has strong social and cultural ties to its villages and is committed to meeting its economic, social and cultural obligations to its shareholders. The company played an active role in helping to rebuild Galena after a historic flood nearly wiped away the village in 2013. It assists with community service projects including the securing of new market tax credits, which benefited the Elder Center and offers employment and opportunity to local individuals. Gana-A'Yoo's mission statement is “we are a unique company and people, ‘Tleeyegge Hut'aane’, thriving for thousands of years by adapting to the environment.”

Today it serves 1,200 shareholders primarily of Koyukon Athabascan descent who consider the company and all its subsidiaries with a mission “**to Strengthen the Pride of our People.**”

Currently our 1st Chief, Michael Stickman serves as the President of Gana-A'Yoo, Limited.

Regional Corporation

Our regional corporation is Doyon, Limited. Doyon operates more than a dozen for-profit companies driving thousands of jobs in the Alaska Interior and beyond. When Doyon is financially strong, they can distribute tools for economic success straight to shareholders—in the form of dividends, employment opportunities, training and more.



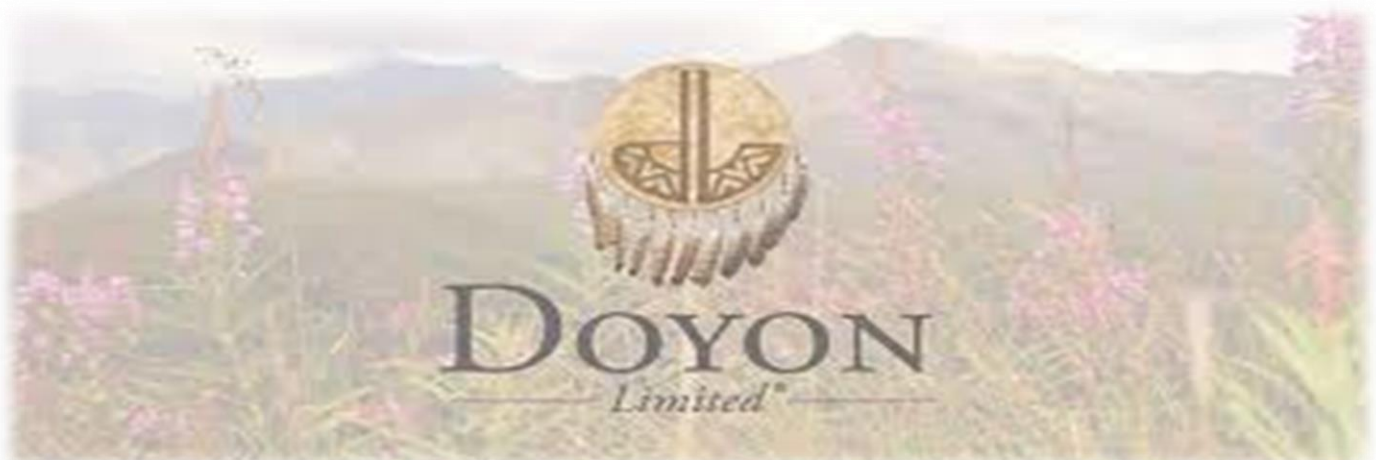
Victor Nicholas, Longtime resident.
Serves as Vice-Chair on the Doyon
Board of Directors



Paul Mountain, Tribal Administrator
Serves on the Doyon Foundation as a
Member for the Board of Directors



Miranda Wright, Nulato Tribal Member
Serves as Treasurer on the Doyon Board
of Directors.



Public Utilities

Water and Sewer

Nulato has central water and sewer extended to areas of the village. Service is managed by the City. A piped water and sewer system was completed in 1996 for 53 homes in the new (upper) townsite. These homes have both kitchen and bathroom plumbing. This water is derived from wells and is treated. The remainders of households use other water collection system (river, cistern, etc.). Thirty-four unserved residences in the lower townsite haul water from the Blackberry Well or the Water Plant. Some households not on the public sewer system have honey buckets or outhouses at their disposal.

A new sewage lagoon was constructed in the lower townsite area in 2002. The lagoon is unique among village sewage disposal. The effluent is treated in a lagoon and is then discharged into the natural wetland surrounding the facility for further treatment. Continued filtering of pollutants occurs in the wetland until it can no longer be distinguished from area water.

Fuel

Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area communities all rely on barge service for bulk-fuel delivery. There is only one company that provides this service. A majority of the households in Nulato heat with wood.

Nulato fuel tanks and fuel depot



Electricity

Electricity to the village is provided by Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC) with diesel generation.

Tanks to hold diesel



Avec Building

Public Facilities

Together, the City and Tribal governments manage most of public facilities and provide a wide range of public services to community members. These include two stores, a community hall, a health clinic, a Head Start facility, a school, a post office, a teen center, a washeteria, and a city garage. Community members generally rated as good the current level of transportation and public services provided by the City and Tribal governments, but identified a number of issues in both public services and transportation that they felt were important to the overall health and safety of their community.

Clinic

A health clinic was constructed in 2005; this newer facility has room for three aides, a room dedicated to behavioral health, and another equipped with a dental chair and equipment. Nulato is classified as an isolated village, found in EMS Region 1C in the Interior Region. Emergency service is provided by volunteers and the village health aides. Village residents requiring health care beyond what can be obtained at the local Health Clinic must travel to Fairbanks or Anchorage for treatment. There are no local dental services, although an itinerant dentist and hygienist/dental aide from the Tanana Chiefs Conference visits the village every six months.

TCC-region Tribal members come to Fairbanks for all medical needs that cannot be handled by the village health aide. Cancer treatment is offered in Fairbanks at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, but for most major medical procedures, patients are sent to the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage and/or referred to Providence Medical Center in Anchorage or an alternate facility in Seattle.



School

Nulato has a K through 12 school that is part of the Yukon-Koyukuk Regional School District, the Andrew K. Demoski School. The school has seen a slowly declining in enrollment since a high during the 1997-98 school year when there were 167 students enrolled in Pre-K through 12. In the 2006-07 school year there were 67 students enrolled according to the State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.

As of school year 2015-2016, headcount for students are at 47 grades K-12. Also within the school is Tanana Chiefs Conference Head Start class which has an enrollment of 8 students all of which will be graduating except for 2 therefore makes it a possibility for the Head Start Program to shut down due to low enrollment.

For the first time in years, Nulato was finally able to obtain a high school boys basketball team with the exception of Jr. High boys and one high school girl playing on the team. This was a big excitement for the community of Nulato as basketball is one of two major sports in the village. It is with great hope that Nulato will also be able to obtain a high school girls basketball team as well in the coming years.

The coming summer 2016 Andrew K. Demoski School will begin renovation. This is a 2 year project that is funded through a DEED grant process in which school districts submit applications to fund renovation. This will be a major renovation for AKD School. The goal is to upgrade electrical, mechanical systems, as well as finished surfaces within the building. The school will also be renovating the gymnasium and it will be an entire new gym. On top of renovation this will benefit the community members by providing local employment within our village.

Andrew K. Demoski School



Emergency Services

Fire Protection

There is a small volunteer fire fighter team that also performs search and rescue missions. Nulato participates in Project Code Red, a project of Alaska Village Initiatives, and has Code Red equipment located in new townsite. Community members also identified the lack of adequate firefighting equipment and training as a serious public safety and community threat. Although the City owns a fire truck, it is operational only in the summer because there is no indoor heated garage for the truck. There is also a Project Code Red box in Nulato, but lack of proper training and the wide geographic distribution of buildings within the village render it less effective than it is in smaller, more contained villages. In 2005, the Nulato City Offices burned to the ground. The City of Nulato renovated a former HUD home and turned its facilities into a City Office.

The summer of 2015 Nulato experienced natural disaster and many residents (mostly women, elders and children) were evacuated to surrounding villages due to wildland fire. The fire burned all around Nulato and a couple local guys were able to prevent the fire from coming into town as fast as it was with the city tractors. This was a devastating time as most thought that they had lost their homes. Fortunately the only building that burned was an abandoned house in the old town site. There were crews from Pennsylvania and other Alaskan crews that maintained the fire. Both city and tribal councils would like a fire line prevention around the town with water pumps, water hoses, water tanks, etc. in case this were ever to happen again.



Fire aftermath



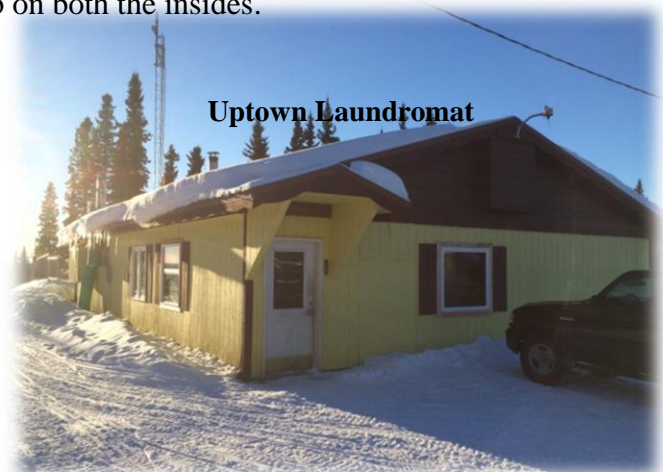
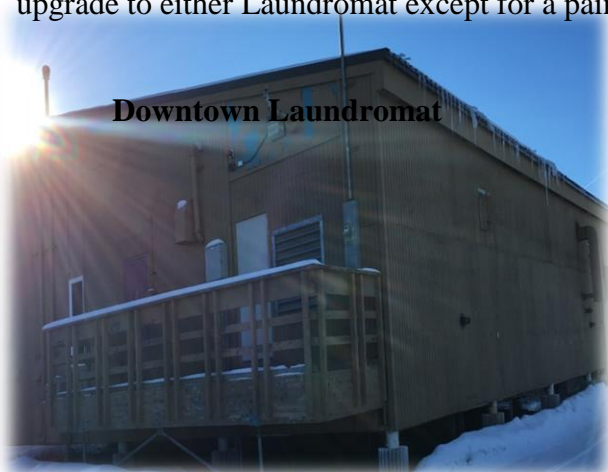
Post Office

Mail is flown in from Fairbanks by several small airlines serving the area. The local post office collects and distributes the mail and is operated Mon-Fri, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM.



Washeteria

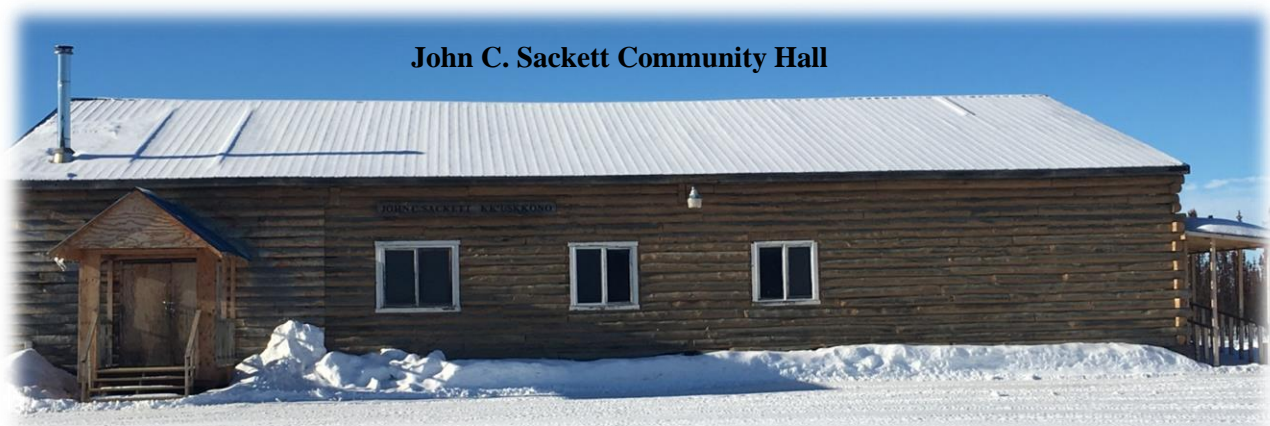
There are two Laundromats in Nulato; old town and new town facilities. The old town facility is connected to the school. The uptown facility is newer but in need of an upgrade. Both facilities are operated by one Water Plant Operator and both are cleaned by two different custodians. Hours of operation are from 8AM-7PM, Monday-Saturday; both are closed in observance of holidays. The downtown Laundromat consists of 2 showers, 2 sinks, 3 toilet stalls in the women's bathroom facility and 2 showers, 2 toilet stalls, 1 urinal and 2 sinks in the men's facility. There are 4 double washers and 5 dryers in the downtown Laundromat. All equipment are utilized by the majority of the downtown residents as they are the ones without running water except for a select few who have septic tanks. For the uptown Laundromat, there are 2 showers, 2 sinks and 2 bathroom stalls in both men and women's bathroom facilities, 1 urinal in the men's bathroom. There are 5 dryers, 3 double loaders but one has been out of order for over a year and has not yet been fixed and there is 1 triple loader that is the most utilized by the majority of all residents as people who live downtown do their laundry uptown as well. Not all homeowners own a washer and dryer. There has not been an upgrade to either Laundromat except for a paint job on both the insides.



Community Hall

The Community Hall was built in 1979 by all the men in town who hauled logs in the winter months for the hall. No preservatives were put in logs when it was built thus the logs are now getting rotten. The building is high with not enough over hand. The hall is built in the old town site and is considered a “flood plain”. The hall currently has a very spacious parking lot. Since being built there have been few renovations. It is inhabited by rodents such as mice, squirrels, etc. which live in the attic of the hall and underneath the flooring. Therefore, Nulato is currently in need of a new building. In June Of 2004, the community hall was named in honor of John C. Sackett whom served in the Alaska Legislature for eighteen years and was instrumental in establishing public infrastructure and schools in Alaska’s interior villages. Since being build the hall has had little renovation. In July 2003, there was a replacement of the flooring. This was to ensure that the floor will be stable for future events. The community hall is used yearly on numerous occasions with Stickdance being the biggest event that is held in the hall. Sometimes Nulato will get up to 500+ visitors during Stickdance making it overcrowded in the hall. Stickdance happens every 2 years in Nulato and as the years progress the hall is getting older. Other events include wakes/funerals, potlatches/cover dishes, community dances, community events/gatherings, fund raising, trainings/workshops. The city of Nulato has a \$75.00 charge for use of the hall with the exception of traditional events.

The City received a grant from CDBG to design the hall in 2010. The City was to then apply for a grant to build a new building but due to conflict most residents were concerned with traditional ways of the new building being in the new town site. One of the grant requirements was that the new building would not be able to be building the old town site because of it being located in a flood plain. Nulato residents have shown interest in having a “Multi building” being built.

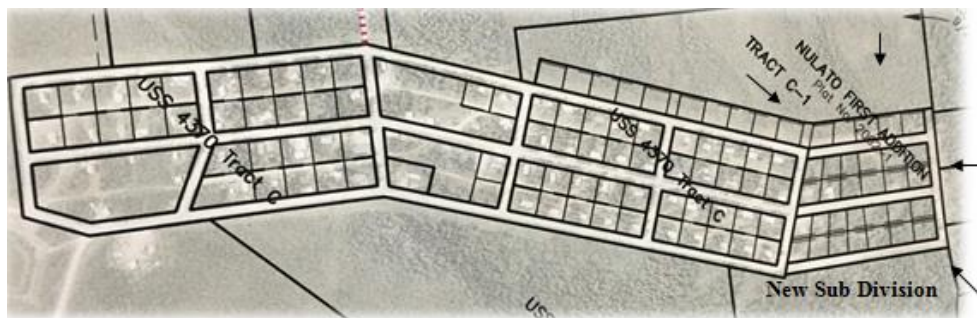


Housing

Healthy affordable housing is another village need. Currently there are about 110 housing units in the village (old homes unlivable are not counted towards this), of which 83 are occupied year-around. Of these existing homes, 58 have running water and indoor plumbing; all are located in the new townsite. 2 of the 27 homes in Old Town have water and sewer; residents haul water from the Lower Townsite Water Plant, and use honey buckets and outhouses. In 2003, the Department of Environmental Conservation/Village Safe Water funded a \$25,000 contract to analyze requirements for water and sewer upgrades in Old Town. The results showed that constructing water/sewer lines in Old Town would be cost prohibitive for two reasons. First is the increased cost of building water/sewer lines in a floodplain. Second is the fact that the lot sizes are larger in Old Town and the buildings are randomly scattered throughout the Old Town site, thus increasing the amount of pipe that has to be laid to connect the system. Since a conventional water/sewer line is not an option for Old Town residents, identifying water and sewer alternatives for Old Town residents is a top priority.

The community supports the idea of building the most energy-efficient housing possible. Substandard housing in the new townsite incurs high energy costs for homeowners. Through new construction methods, many of the newer homes in the new townsite are comparatively energy-efficient, though residents still shoulder a heavy energy burden to heat and light their homes. Relief in this area through both lower energy costs and increased energy efficiency is a continuing need.

In July 2007 a compact between Nulato Tribal Council and USA proposal for Indian Reservation Roads Funding was approved. A new subdivision went underway for construction in 2009. This was a \$1.4 million dollar project which required three quarters of a mile of road. With this new sub division, many lots were cleared for new home construction. Within this new subdivision, community members are able to purchase a lot for \$25.00 and build from their own material.



Economy

Subsistence activities are integral to life in Nulato and comprise a large part of local economic activity. Many families have fish camps. Salmon, whitefish, moose, caribou, several bird species and berries are all harvested. Several local businesses operate within the community and provide general services. Most of the full-time employment in Nulato is with governmental entities.

Local Businesses-

Small local businesses are the vital seeds from which a local economy grows. Local businesses allow dollars to circulate more than once within a community. For example, if a resident receives their paycheck, and immediately drives or flies to another community to spend it, no dollars have been spent in the local economy. Conversely, if a resident receives a paycheck and then spends some of his or her earnings at a locally-owned grocery store, those dollars then help pay residents employed by the store and the local person who owns the store. If these people in turn spend their earnings locally, the dollars continue to circulate and spread wealth to a larger number of local residents.

Historically dependent on subsistence activities, Nulato's economy has been supplemented over the years by income to community members from government and service industry jobs. There is also a small amount of private enterprise in the community, mainly taking place within residents' homes as a source of supplemental household income.

These businesses generally support a family, but do not provide employment opportunities for others in the community. Like most rural, small, Alaska communities, the

economy in Nulato offers a limited range of jobs and business activities. Many people who earn a living in the area do so through public sector employment.



Subsistence provides for basic household needs for many Nulato residents, and should continue to be the cornerstone of the local economy. Increases in the cost of fuel make subsistence fishing more expensive; some residents are concerned about Nulato residents' ability to affordably fish and access traditional use areas. Subsistence goods are supplemented in some households through the local community garden and also bartering and trading for goods and services.

The goals for economic development generated by the residents of Nulato reflect the idea of maintaining a subsistence lifestyle while increasing other types of economic opportunities. Other goals under consideration by area residents include trying to reduce the cost of living, encouraging job training and local hire practices, and creating strategies that will help increase the number of viable locally-owned businesses, with a possible focus on tourism development.

The private sector ultimately drives economic development. While many village members are employed by public entities, Nulato will benefit as more private enterprises are established to take advantage of local markets, diversify opportunities and strengthen the economy as a whole. There are limits to what type of private enterprise is supportable in rural areas, however. Entrepreneurs in rural Alaskan communities face many challenges, including distance of goods from market, the small size of the local market, difficulty obtaining business loans and the seasonal pattern of life. In spite of these challenges, Nulato sustains local businesses, one being a Package Store that sells

liquor and one private owned store. Other forms of local business include informal childcare provision, arts and crafts production and sale, mechanical repair, cosmetics sale, trapping and sale of skins and furs.



The City of Nulato owns the local bulk fuel depot and sells fuel to locals and travelers. In July of 2006 residents of Nulato voters overwhelmingly voted for a City-Owned Package Liquor Store. Ballot results were 67 for the store and 29 opposed. In November of 2007, the City opened the Package Liquor Store for business. Revenues generated from the sale of alcohol is hoped to

offset the rising costs of fuel, and costs for water and sewer service. Also spokespersons for the City have stated that the proceeds will improve facilities for alcohol preventive programs to be established.

Residents have noticed youth are not as likely to return to the community after leaving for school, in part because of the lack of jobs. Providing good employment opportunities for youth is a community priority. The community often has need for certain types of skilled labor such as carpenters, engineers or builders. These jobs are sometimes given to non-locals when the skilled labor is not available locally. There are some service providers – such as behavioral health aides – that visit the community itinerantly from other communities. If qualified people existed within the community, some service positions could be filled through employing locals. Access to training opportunities is important in order for Nulato residents to be able to fill such positions when they are available.

Additionally, some residents have acknowledged the strong connection between establishing basic community infrastructure – such as access to running water and affordable electricity – will need to be resolved to provide the right environment for economic activity to flourish.

Certain types of larger-scale industrial development could help boost employment in Nulato. Residents have considered approaching Doyon, Inc. about coal exploration and extraction in the nearby Nulato Hills. This idea has been considered in the past, but was not deemed viable. With recent changes in the cost and availability of different types of fuels however, it is possible that coal extraction in this area may become more feasible in the future.

Nulato residents have also raised the idea of taking advantage of the Internet and other technology enabling resident access to skilled jobs outside of the community. To support local employment the Nulato Council has thought about approaching Tanana Chiefs Conference to advocate for village-based employment opportunities promoting long-term economic and community benefits.

In summary, residents of Nulato have the benefit of an engaged community hoping to expand local economic opportunities to complement their subsistence lifestyle. Such growth will help Nulato increase its ability to offer public services, allow youth to return to the community for jobs, and provide a base for village economic stability and growth.

Transportation

People can access Nulato by air and water; however, air transportation is the most frequently used. The village is served by Wright Air & Ravn Flying Services. Regularly scheduled flights are offered seven days a week, although flights can be cancelled unexpectedly due to weather, lack of availability, or insufficient passengers/cargo to warrant a flight. Ravn and Wright's are both passenger and freight airlines.

The State-owned 4,000' long by 100' wide lighted airstrip provides year-round access. The airport has recently undergone major improvements and is scheduled for more work. While river barges are used by the village to bring in large goods, like building materials and cars during the summer months, Nulato relies on air transport for much of its supplies, groceries, mail and fuel, especially in winter.

The Yukon River and overland trails are primary routes and the primary mode of local transportation. During ice-free months, village residents travel by boat to various area villages for festivals, softball tournaments, and to fish and hunting camps. The river becomes an ice road during the winter for both vehicles and snow machines. Numerous trails are used for trapping, hunting, and woodcutting. Cars, trucks, snow machines, ATV's and skiffs are the principle vehicles used by residents.

For Nulato residents, most transportation issues are local in nature. All 13 miles of village roads are unimproved gravel, and dust during snow-free months (roughly May through September) resulting in ongoing health concern for residents. Another major transportation issue for the village is acquiring sufficient funds to build a road to the new landfill site. Remote construction of gravel roads is estimated at about \$1 million/mile; the proposed landfill road will be at least three miles.

The Tribe has a relatively up-to-date Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) inventory, which provides the fundamental funding formula for BIA transportation monies allocation, the Tribe receives, on average, just under \$150,000 in Tribal transportation funds. BIA-IRR transportation funds are intended to provide monies for transportation planning, maintenance

and as seed money for design and construction. Developing a leveraged construction funding plan for this new road is of paramount importance to the village at this time.

Although Nulato has a designated area for barge landing, it is largely unimproved. Local boats are moored there as well. The village has identified further enhancement of the landing as one of its transportation priorities. The village would like to have an enlarged area for mooring private boats, with a capacity for at least 65 boats.

Since the river is a major component of Koyukon life, the addition of a recreation/picnic area near the landing where residents, particularly elders, can sit and enjoy the river is of interest to village residents. This type of riverside gathering place could contribute to the integration of the two town sites by providing a central gathering point for all residents.

Land Use and Environment

Land Ownership

A majority of the land in the Nulato area is ANCSA land as well as some BLM parcels.

Land ownership in the vicinity of Nulato is, within a 40-mile radius of the city, a mix of local, state and federal ownership with federal lands predominating (see Land Ownership Maps 2 and 3). Both the USF&W and BLM manage large portions of land in the area. The USF&W manages the land in the two Wilderness Refuges that are in the vicinity – Innoko and Koyukuk. Within these Refuges there are also parcels held in Native and private ownership. Outside of these lands, the BLM holds large amounts of property. The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resource (DNR) also has several holdings. Closer to the cities and along the Yukon River, much of the land is managed by Native entities. At present, the State of Alaska has not compiled detailed mapping information for the Doyon region. Detailed land ownership information would likely require a search of the District Recorders Office.

Land Use

The Innoko Wildlife Refuge is the place known as Kaiyuh to the Koyukon Athabascans; it is their home, and the place where they have lived and harvested food for centuries. As is common throughout Interior Alaska, Nulato residents are increasingly concerned about the growing pressure from outside hunters on area moose populations, Nulato's primary source of winter protein. As moose become more difficult to hunt near urban areas like Anchorage and Fairbanks, hunters that have the means to do so are choosing to hunt in remote, isolated areas like the Kaiyuh. Locals report that permitted hunting and non-permitted hunting (poaching) is taking place in the refuge, impacting the number of moose available for subsistence purposes. Other animal populations impacted by local and non-local harvest include fur-bearers and fish. Such pressures are causing heightened conflict and competition between villagers and outside hunters. Nulato residents feel that their efforts to have their concerns addressed by Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW), which manage the Innoko Wildlife Refuge, have not achieved desirable outcomes. They wish for, at a minimum, a voice in refuge management issues, and at best, greater local control over the natural resources that constitute their home and their sustenance.

Environment

For the most part, the environment in and around Nulato is healthy and vibrant. Residents are able to live from the land and have good access to clean drinking water, clean air and bountiful lands. The village also is not as impacted by some of the more serious environmental contamination that have plagued other Interior villages, such as nearby former military defense sites, abandoned drum “farms”, leaking underground storage tanks, and/or the presence of lead-based paint in older BIA schools and housing. However, some areas and elements of life in Nulato are being impacted by environmental issues such as climate change, inadequate solid waste services and lack of water and sewer for all community residences. Residents have repeatedly expressed strong desire for a clean and healthy environment and are eager to address these issues and maintain a high quality of life. Closely related to the issue of game management discussed above are village concerns about the effects of climatic change on their subsistence resources. Residents report smaller- sized salmon in the rivers and increasing numbers of salmon with parasitic infections or body lesions, possibly due to higher water temperatures.

Another population seemingly affected by changes in climate is Nulato’s moose population. Not only do moose seem scarcer, but the rutting season is shifting later in the year due to warmer fall temperatures. This has two impacts on subsistence: first, the ideal time for moose hunting in the fall does not coincide with hunting seasons as specified under state law, and second, calves arrive later in the spring and are smaller and more susceptible to predators in the late spring and summer. Residents have also noticed a decrease in annual snowfall, which – if a sustained pattern – has implications for many animal and plant populations and, consequently, subsistence practices.

As with most riverine villages, Nulato frequently experiences severe springtime flooding as a result of ice jams on the Yukon. Residents are pragmatic about living with frequent flooding and do not view flood mitigation as a necessary or viable option in their village. Proposed home sites and new construction are being located further away from the river; however, at present the village’s main drinking water well remains within the floodplain. Often when seasonal flooding occurs, the wellhead becomes submerged, which threatens the village’s access to a reliable potable water source while the wellhead is underwater.

Subsistence

To a large extent, residents of Nulato rely on subsistence activities for food and supplies.

Salmon, northern pike, dolly varden char, arctic grayling, burbot and several species of whitefish are all found in the region's waters. These fish as well as moose, bear, small game, waterfowl, grouse ptarmigan, and berries are harvested by locals in abundance.

Kaiyuh Flats and surrounding area (Innoko National Wildlife Refuge) is the most important area for the collection of subsistence foods. This has been a traditional subsistence area for hundreds of years. Want it preserved and protected for use by the people in this area.

According to the US FWS manager for the Kaiyuh Flats, the estimated number of subsistence hunters was at 500 persons per year from Nulato, Galena, Kaltag, and Koyukuk. These numbers are estimates.

Community Well-Being

Nulato residents have a strong sense of community and connection to their Koyukon Athabascan cultural traditions, history, lifestyle and language. In a preliminary discussion on priority community issues, several residents emphasized a desire to increase instruction in and usage of the Athabascan language and to strengthen the local culture.

Community members are concerned about future generations losing the ability to speak the Athabascan language. Nulato still has a large group of elders who speak the language together, but the younger elders are not as engaged. Opportunities such as the singing events sponsored by the Tribal Council and the language program offered in the local school help the younger generations to be familiar with the language but more intense learning opportunities – such as an immersion program -- are needed.

When considering the elements that constitute “community wellness,” it is clear that in Nulato, maintaining and passing on language, knowledge, and traditions that have developed over thousands of years is critically important. Harvesting subsistence foods and the work inherent with subsistence activities brings families together and sustains them through the winter. Finding ways to maintain the health of the environment means a strong subsistence harvest and a strong local culture.

Cultural strength and connectivity are the foundations of a healthy community. Educational opportunities on all levels; programs to support healthy families and family members; options for spiritual development and guidance; recreation that benefits the body and mind; and personal safety services are others.

There are a number of resources both within Nulato and the region that can aid residents in achieving the goals and priority actions that will come together to create a healthy community whole. Locally, these include the Nulato Tribal Council, the City of Nulato, the Nulato Clinic, Gana-A'-Yoo Ltd., and local church communities.

Within the region, the Tanana Chiefs Conference provides funding for the local elder lunch program; a Head Start program; a diabetes prevention program; continuing education and job training; a Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC); funding for respite for the elderly and disabled; and behavioral and physical health programs. A Behavioral Health Aid is needed in the community, but they have been unable to fill this position. Other resources include the Yukon/Koyukon School District which offers an in-school language program. Locally, the Tribe supports a safe house and the City sponsors the Nulato Life Project, a youth program delivered through a state prevention grant.

Since the river is a major component of Koyukon life, the addition of a recreation/picnic area near the landing where residents, particularly elders, can sit and enjoy the river is of interest to village residents. This type of riverside gathering place could provide a central gathering point for all residents.

Finally, as with all villages located on a river, promoting water safety through consistent use of life jackets is a village priority. Drinking and boating has also been an issue in the community. In addition to participating in the “Kids Don’t Float” program, which supplies a riverside kiosk with children’s life vests for borrow, the village would like to implement an educational project that encourages adults and youth to always wear life vests when boating, to discourage the use of drugs and alcohol when operating a boat, and to investigate ways to fund provision of life vests to families that cannot afford them.

Community Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Employ and maintain a Youth Director

Objective: Provide assistance and programs to youth on a daily basis

Objective: Ensure that youth stay culturally entwined with Native traditions and customs

Objective: Maintain current educational opportunity information in the Tribal Office

Goal 2: Construct a fireline around the community in case of wild land fires

Objective: Find funding source and/or cooperate with Bureau of Land Management to install and construct fire line

Objective: maximize the effectiveness of a firebreak at slowing the spread of wildfire and reducing the ultimate size of a wild fire

Goal 3: Land protection

Objective: Protect subsistence resources for future generations, including protection of overuse by local and outside users.

Goal 4: Develop robust funding for road maintenance and new construction

Objective: Lift main road from old town site to new town site to ensure safety from collisions, floods and dust control

Objective: Ensure that all pot holes are properly fixed on all roads

Objective: Find solution and funding for dust control

Goal 5: Construct new community hall

Objective: Ensure that community members have a new hall for Stickdance, potlatches, funerals, fund raisers, dancing, community events etc.

Objective: New hall is installed with water and sewer system

Objective: Hall is maintained and utilized yearly

Resources

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Index Map

