



# Birch Creek Community Plan

## 2020-2025





## Table of Contents

Resolution .....	6
Community Vision.....	7
Executive Summary .....	6
History .....	7
Location .....	8
Climate.....	10
Population & Demographics .....	10
Governance & Public Administration.....	10
Tribal Council .....	10
Tribal Governance.....	11
Programs .....	11
Law Enforcement & Justice .....	11
Village Corporation .....	11
Non-profit Corporation: Tanana Chiefs Conference .....	12
Regional Corporation: Doyon .....	12
Public Utilities .....	14
Water.....	14
Sewer.....	14
Landfill .....	15
Communication.....	16
Transportation.....	17
Energy & Bulk Fuel Storage .....	18
Environmental hazards .....	18
Infrastructure .....	19
Multipurpose building.....	19
Community and culture.....	19
Birch Creek Community Priorities .....	21
Birch Creek Power Priorities .....	22
Birch Creek Water Priorities .....	23
Birch Creek Communication Priorities .....	25

Birch Creek Housing Priorities .....	27
Birch Creek Education Priorities.....	29
Birch Creek Equipment Priorities.....	30
Appendices .....	31
Survey Questions .....	31
Honorable Mentions.....	34
Community Planning Meeting Process .....	35
Previous goals.....	36
Housing Survey Questions.....	38
Community Planning Meeting Sign-In Sheet .....	39
Community Planning Meeting Sign-In Sheet .....	40
Birch Creek Area Map 2010.....	41
Birch Creek 2010 Community Map .....	42
Birch Creek 2010 Community Map .....	43
Doyon Limited Index Map .....	44
Equipment List .....	45
Resources:.....	47
Contact Information.....	48



## Table of Figures

1 Welcome sign, Birch Creek courtesy of Birch Creek Tribal Council .....	6
2 Aerial View of Birch Creek .....	6
3 Cabin on Birch Creek, next to hills ext. 1925? -1954? Courtesy of UAF digital archives .....	7
4 Birch Creek saw mill. B. O'leary, 1940 Courtesy of UAF digital archives .....	7
5 Location of Birch Creek Courtesy of Explore north .....	8
6 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge map of Alaska Courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service .....	8
7 BLM Flickr Winter view of Birch Creek .....	9
8 2010-2018 Population Estimates of Birch Creek courtesy of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section .....	10
9 Denduu Gwich'in Logo Courtesy of Birch Creek Tribal Council .....	10
10 TCC Logo courtesy of Tanana Chiefs Conference .....	12
11 Doyon official announcement of collaboration of Hilcorp dated 12/09/19 .....	13
12 Rest of facility room in multipurpose building .....	14
13 Water treatment facility located in multipurpose building .....	14
14 Outside of church outhouse .....	14
15 Church outhouse .....	14
16 Map showing the distance between Birch Creek and Fort Yukon .....	16
17 Satellite dish located by the Multipurpose building .....	16
18 Birch Creek James Airport Building .....	17
19 Birch Creek EMS van .....	17
20 2 out of 3 existing bulk fuel containers .....	18
21 Birch Creek generator house .....	18
22 Multipurpose building .....	19
23 Margaret Martin Clinic logo .....	19
24 Thank you appreciation from participants of the Tseenjik Portage Culture Camp .....	20



## Community Vision

*Birch Creek is a thriving, healthy, safe community that values our culture and traditions while pursuing and encouraging sustainable economic and personal growth opportunities.*

Birch Creeks' Assets:

Elders, Subsistence, Church, Water, Family,  
People, Culture, and Language.

Safety, Family, Acceptance, Helping each  
other, Respect, Community Engagement, and  
Communication.





## Executive Summary



*1 Welcome sign, Birch Creek courtesy of Birch Creek Tribal Council*

Birch Creek's Community Plan was compiled from information collected through surveys, completed by residents of Birch Creek during a community planning meeting, hosted by Birch Creek Tribal Council in May of 2019. With the communities' input the tribal council was able to identify and prioritize the needs of their residents, specify what the community's goals and wishes were for the future of the village. The Birch Creek Community Plan is a living document, meaning the Birch Creek Tribal Council can always revise this plan to align with the needs of the community and its tribal members. This was procured to serve as a guide to those who follow, and complete tasks specified by the community members and tribal members. This community plan was composed from the help of TCC's Community

Development team and Birch Creeks' Fairbanks Office worker Millena Jordan.



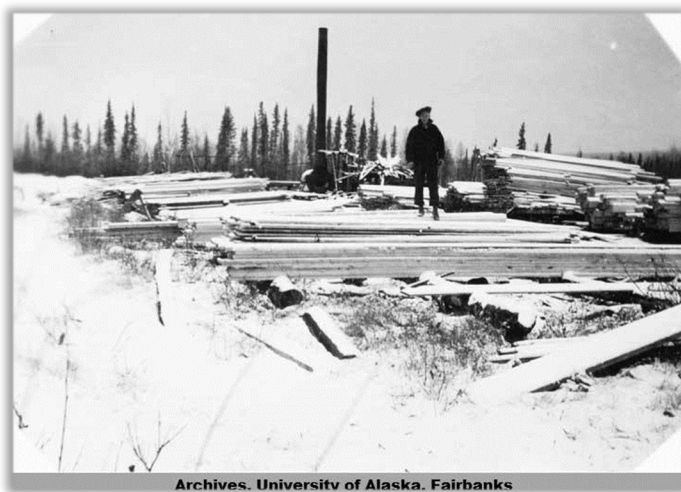
*2 Aerial View of Birch Creek*



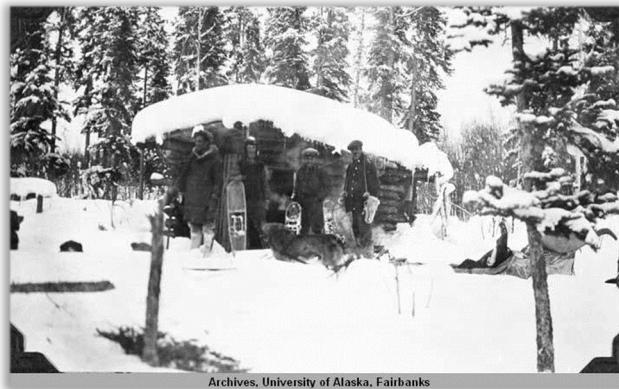
## History

Birch Creek is a Denduu Gwich'in Athabascan village located 26 miles southwest of Fort Yukon and 115 miles northeast of Fairbanks. The Denduu Gwich'in traditionally occupied much of the Yukon Flats on the south bank of the Yukon River, spanning the land from the Crazy Mountains to the White Mountains. The Denduu Gwich'in meaning the "foothill mountain people", still reside in this village and actively follow subsistence practices.

First documentation of the village was by a Fort Yukon clergyman who visited the established camp to provide fish for Hudson's Bay Company in 1862. Before, only semi-permanent camps existed in the area scattered along the river



*4 Birch Creek saw mill. B. O'leary, 1940 Courtesy of UAF digital archives*



*3 Cabin on Birch Creek, next to hills ext. 1925? -1954? Courtesy of UAF digital archives*

banks. Some anthropologists believe the group that occupied the area in the 1800's was annihilated by scarlet fever, although there was ethnographic proof of existence in the area from 1867 onwards.

Birch Creek Jimmy, who was the founder of Birch Creek, built a cabin in 1898 at the site of the Hudson Bay fish camp. After some time, Birch Creek Jimmy was joined by extended family members at his cabin. The group moved three miles upstream to the site of the present village in 1916, where it remained as a seasonal base for harvest

until the early 1950's. The formation of the village school sparked encouragement to settle in the area and rely less on the previous nomadic lifestyle. The first airstrip was constructed in 1973. In 1983 there was a fire in Birch Creek that burned down a lodge house that operated as a rental space for visitors, other collateral damage was a shed full of tools, a fully stocked kitchen, living areas as well as beds, all diminished in the fire. The school was later closed in 1999 due to insufficient student numbers. In 2011, Birch Creek was devastated when the 2-story structure that housed the tribal office and other amenities caught fire due to faulty wiring. Which then caused a massive domino effect and an explosion destroyed the neighboring generator house that sheltered the entire water system, what was left of the phone house, and garage/shop. Birch Creek is still in the process of making a full recovery from the aftermath. Small, "temporary" systems were set in

place almost a year later and after 9 long years, in 2020, new systems were installed. Birch Creek experienced a flood in 1967 and again in 1992, both were open water flood since ice jam floods do not occur in Birch Creek.

## Location

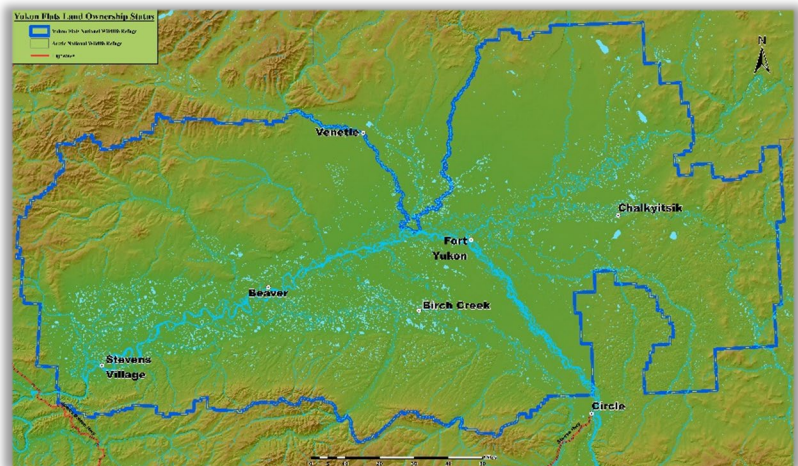


5 Location of Birch Creek Courtesy of ExploreAlaska

Birch Creek is located approximately 66° 15' N Latitude, 145° 48' W Longitude (Sec. 28, T017N, R009E, Fairbanks Meridian). The village is located in the Fairbanks Recording District, the area surrounding Birch Creek encompasses 10 sq. miles of land and 0 sq. miles of water.

The village is located within the boundaries of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, which is a part of the federal conservation system. The refuge is the third largest land conservation

refuge established in the United States at approximately 11.1 million acres. 8.63 Million of those acres are under federal ownership. The refuge is home to several villages and countless animals including: moose, black and brown bears, wolf, and caribou; Smaller mammals include wolverine, lynx, red fox, beaver, snowshoe hare, mink, muskrat, weasel, marten, red squirrel, and porcupine; Upland birds include northern hawk-owl, great horned owls, rough grouse, spruce grouse, boreal chickadees, and red poles; Runs of

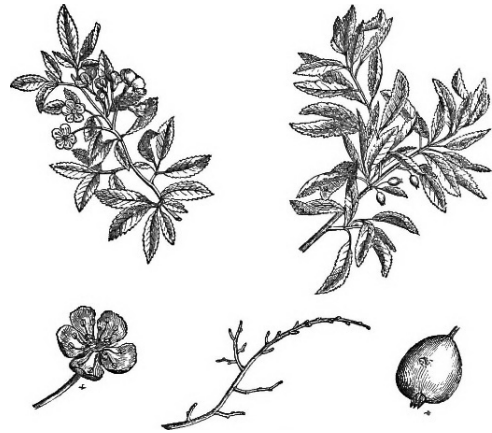


6 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge map of Alaska Courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



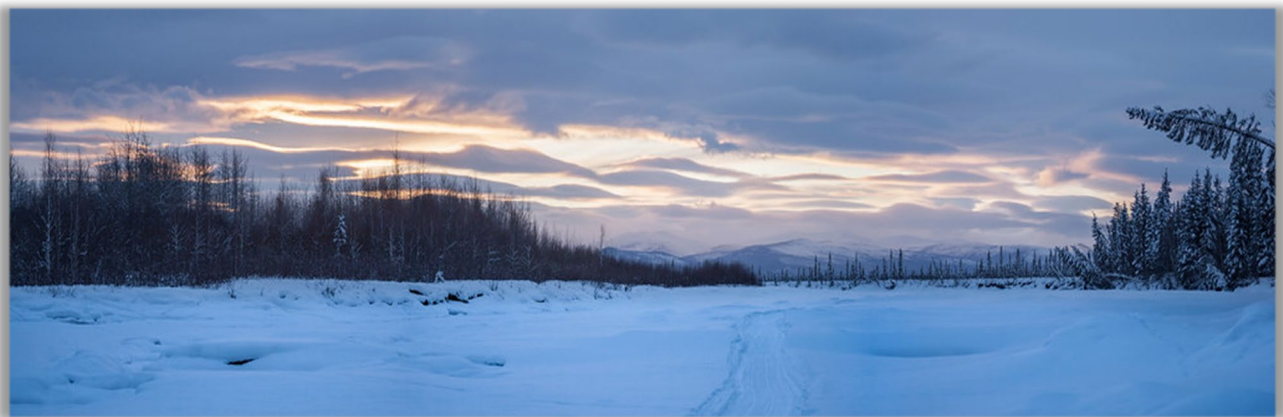
king and chum salmon, salmon spawn in clear water streams each summer; Other fish supporting the region include northern pike, whitefish, burbot, and grayling; During spring, millions of migrating birds converge on the Flats, arriving from four continents, including various species of ducks, geese, cranes, and swans. The region has one of the highest nesting densities of waterfowl in North America.

Boreal forests dominate the landscape with black spruce, white spruce, balsam poplar, paper birch, and trembling aspen. Black spruce forests often grow in permafrost flats where drainage is poor. Common understory shrubs include bog birch, Labrador-tea, crowberry, and blueberry. Feathermosses are common. Many wet depressions are dominated by alder and willow swamp communities. The low shrub layer typically includes currants, high and low bush cranberries. Blue joint, sedge, horsetail, and marsh five-finger are common herbs. Sedge tussock communities dominate the coldest, wettest sites on the Yukon Flats. Mosses and berries are present here. Well-drained alluvial soils support mixed forests of white spruce and paper birch. Natural levees support a forest of white spruce and balsam poplar. Here understory consists of alder and willow, prickly rose, and high bush cranberries. Tall willow, birch, and alder communities are scattered throughout the region. Wildfires are common in the Yukon Flats.



The Birch Creek Tribe owns 63,070 acres of surface estate within the core township surrounding the Village. That land was transferred to the Tribe from the Tihtet'Aii, Inc. village corporation in 1987. Additionally, the Tribe owns approximately 20 lots within the Alaska Native Townsite, totaling around 15 acres.

Birch Creeks' pristine setting and remote location are its greatest assets, providing absolute serenity. This serenity, combined with the unique natural and rich cultural setting, are what the residents of Birch Creek want to share with the world.



*7 BLM Flickr Winter view of Birch Creek*



## Climate

Birch Creek is located within the continental subarctic climate, categorized by seasonal extremes in temperature. The continental climate zone covers most of Alaska's interior making the area experience long drastically cold winters and short warm summers. The climate range is extreme with summer temperatures reaching up to 97°F to a low of -71°F in a long winter (dependent on the year). Extended periods of -50 to -60 are extremely common in the winter as well. Annual precipitation averages 6.5 inches, and snowfall averages 43.4 inches per year. Birch Creek is ice-free from mid-June to mid-October.



8 2010-2018 Population Estimates of Birch Creek courtesy of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

## Population & Demographics

The community of Birch Creek currently has a population of 21 according to the 2020 Census. Other source counts vary from 18 to 33.

## Governance & Public Administration

Native Entity Within the State of Alaska	Borough/Census Area	Native Village Corporation	Native Regional Corporation	Community Name
Birch Creek Tribe	Yukon-Koyukuk	Tihteet'Aii, Inc.	Doyon Limited	Birch Creek

## Tribal Council



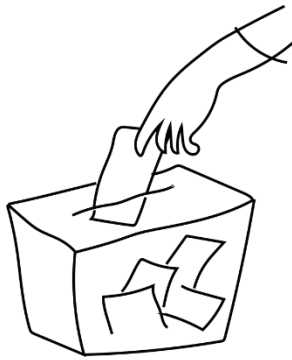
9 Denduu Gwich'in Logo Courtesy of Birch Creek Tribal Council

Birch Creek Tribe, also known as the Birch Creek Tribal Council or Denduu Gwich'in Tribal Council, is a federally recognized tribe in Alaska. As a Sovereign entity Birch Creek Tribal Council is eligible to administer a variety of federal programs including, but not limited to: local health care; employment assistance; social services; and tribal operations. Currently, there is no operational tribal office located in Birch Creek due to unfortunate



circumstances. Due to this, all Council employees residing in Birch Creek must work out of home offices, per program employee. Birch Creek Tribal Council employs 8 people both in Birch Creek and Fairbanks. There are currently 3 open positions located in Birch Creek still vacant. The Tribal Administrator is currently located in Fairbanks, Alaska at the tribal office stationed there. Last adoption recorded of the constitution was in 1993 and the codes were adopted in 2015 with no resolution record.

## **Tribal Governance**



There are 5 members who serve this council, in staggered terms. Elections by seat are held every 2 years by secret balloting, which are administrated by 2 appointed election committee members who supervise, administer, and conduct all tribal elections. The Council assigns two adult tribal members to the election committee prior to each tribal election. To be eligible to vote for the council members, one must be over the age of 18 and must be enrolled to Birch Creek Tribe.

## **Programs**

Self-governance, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Aid to Tribal Government, Adult Basic Education, Economic Development, Scholarships & Higher Education, Job Placement & Training, Social Services, Wildlife & Parks (trust) and Agriculture (trust).

## **Law Enforcement & Justice**

Currently, there is no constant presence of law enforcement in Birch Creek. The Alaska State Troopers would be contacted if situations arise. Birch Creek is currently working towards a tribal court to handle lower level cases dismissed by the state.

## **Village Corporation**

Tihteet'Aii, Inc. is the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) village corporation for the community. The corporation is governed by a President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer and 2 board members.

## Non-profit Corporation: Tanana Chiefs Conference



*10 TCC Logo courtesy of Tanana  
Chiefs Conference*

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is the regional non-profit corporation for the Interior Region of Alaska. Established in 1962, the organization provides services to meet the health and social service needs of tribal members and beneficiaries of the 42 tribal communities in Alaska's interior.

## Regional Corporation: Doyon

Doyon, Limited, the Native regional corporation for Interior Alaska, is a for-profit corporation with more than 20,000 shareholders. Established under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), Doyon is the largest private landowner in Alaska, with more than 12.5 million acres allocated to the corporation under ANCSA.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December of 2019 Doyon announced an agreement made with a partner company Hilcorp to explore the possibility of exploring with the intention of drilling in the Yukon flats subregion. The agreement covers the 1.6 million acres of Doyon owned mineral rights where Doyon has previously showed interest in exploring for the oil and gas potential when the selection of ANCSA lands were being finalized. As stated above the initial focus area of exploration is in the Birch Creek area. The agreement included village corporations to provide economic benefits as well as service contracts and corporation shareholder training and hire. Birch Creeks' corporation Tihtet Aii was the first to sign a cooperation agreement with Doyon.



December 9, 2019  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contact:  
Sunny Guerin, PR Specialist  
(907)375-4202 Office  
(907)280-9810 Cell  
guerins@doyon.com  
www.doyon.com

### **Doyon Announces Agreement with Hilcorp for Exploration in Yukon Flats**

*Fairbanks, Alaska* –Doyon, Limited ("Doyon"), an Alaska Native regional corporation, headquartered in Fairbanks, Alaska, is announcing today an agreement signed with Hilcorp for renewed oil and gas exploration in a portion of the Yukon Flats.

The agreement covers 1.6 million acres of Doyon owned mineral rights in the Yukon Flats subregion where Doyon has a long-held interest in the oil and gas potential of the area. The greater Yukon Flats area comprises over 10 million acres, with much of it under federal ownership as part of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. The agreement with Hilcorp includes an initial airborne gravity survey of the region followed by the opportunity for further exploration in the form of seismic and drilling programs. The initial focus of exploration is in the Birch Creek area.

Doyon's interest in oil and gas in the subregion was highlighted beginning with the selection of ANCSA lands by Doyon in the area. In 1974, only two years after its incorporation Doyon signed a series of land selection agreements among Beaver, Fort Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Circle, and Birch Creek in order to maximize Native-owned lands selections. These agreements resulted in 400,000 extra acres of ANCSA lands in the Yukon Flats. This was done to both capitalize on economic benefits from the oil and gas potential in the region and to mitigate possible impacts from development by providing an additional private land base for local traditional activities.

Aaron M. Schutt, President and CEO of Doyon, Limited said, "Doyon has been actively exploring for oil and gas resources in our region for over a decade. We've barely scratched the surface. We are pleased to sign this agreement allowing Hilcorp to explore further and we look forward to seeing results from their activities."

David Wilkins, Senior Vice President, Hilcorp Alaska said, "Our partnership with Doyon represents great opportunity for their shareholders and the State. We have worked successfully with Doyon over the years both in the Cook Inlet and on the Slope. This agreement opens the door to continue that relationship in the interior as well."

This agreement is designed to provide maximum participation from the village corporation to provide economic benefits to the area. Doyon has also signed a cooperation agreement with Tihtet Aii, Village Corporation for Birch Creek regarding a joint pursuit of service contracts, and shareholder training and hire.

*11 Doyon official announcement of collaboration of Hilcorp dated 12/09/19*

## Public Utilities

### Water



*12 Rest of facility room in multipurpose building*

during the long winter months (approx. half the year) which results in the local residents to form a hole in the river to harvest and haul untreated water for sanitation purposes. If drinking water is needed, a boiling treatment is conducted. The treatment system is set on a temporary wooden structure inside the multipurpose building. The only building with running water is the Clinic inside the multipurpose building. There is no other water infrastructure in Birch Creek at the moment.

After there was a devastating fire in 2011, the community of Birch Creek bought and installed a temporary CampWater model FUV20C nanofiltration water treatment unit (90-gallon tank) in the multi-purpose building that also houses the Clinic, Tribal Office, and a community gathering center. The intake and raw water transmission line does not have a working heating system aligning the water pipes. Causing the water system to freeze



*13 Water treatment facility located in multipurpose building*



*14 Outside of church outhouse*

### Sewer

Birch Creek does not currently have a unit in place for a sewer system. All community members have residential outhouses available to themselves.



*15 Church outhouse*



## Landfill

The landfill for Birch Creek is a class III municipal solid waste disposal facility, authorization number is SW3A144-19. Location for landfill is 66.270425, -145.832431, the landfill is closed off with a degenerating fence and should be replaced. The landfill is equipped with an incinerator.



## Communication

**United Utilities**  
**United-KUC**  
**Yukon Telephone**  
A GCI Company

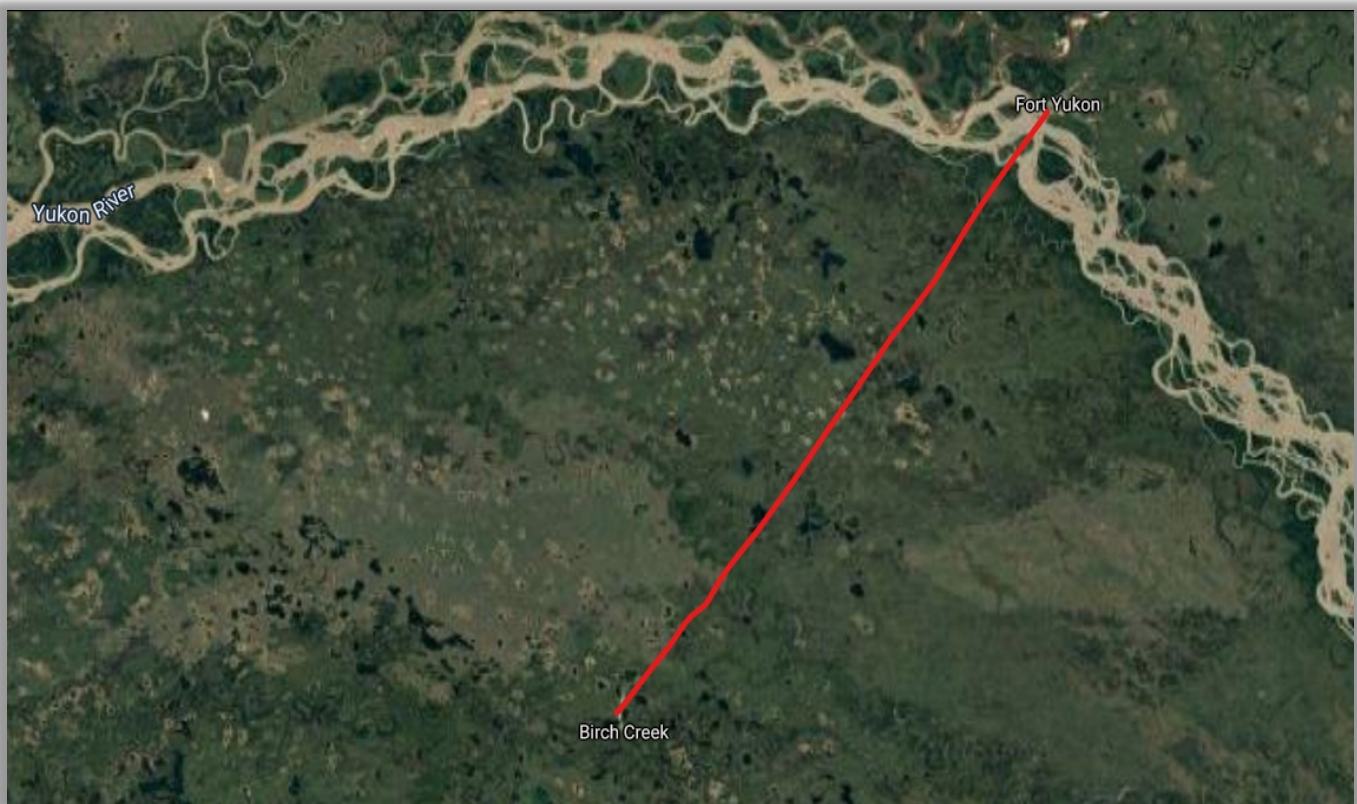


Communication in Birch Creek is very limited to the outside world. A

landline phone system is operated by United Utilities, however there is no cell phone coverage at all. United Utilities is a GCI owned company and provides service for a majority of rural villages in Alaska. Few residents of Birch Creek have limited satellite internet through some providers that service the area. Birch Creek uses an AT&T plan for long distance calling services unless person owns a prepaid international calling card. A post office has never been established in Birch Creek so residents rely on mail services through the neighboring village of Fort Yukon. The Fort Yukon Post Master sorts through mail received and collects all Birch Creek mail in one area till a flag-stop is arranged to be delivered, then gets distributed once arrived in Birch Creek.



*17 Satellite dish located by the Multipurpose building*



*16 Map showing the distance between Birch Creek and Fort Yukon*



## Transportation



18 Birch Creek James Airport Building

Birch Creek is uniquely remote, deep in Alaska's wilderness leaving very limited transportation opportunities to outside communities. Residents travel to the neighboring village Fort Yukon often on trails, but otherwise travel to cities is rare unless it's medically urgent. Birch Creek resident's main mode of transportation is either an ATV or snow machine switching seasonally. In summer, residents can travel to neighboring communities by boat. The Margaret Martin

clinic owns and operates the sole running vehicle in Birch Creek. Birch Creek is considered a flag stop community with flights on weekdays only, times determined by the air carrier Wrights Air Service. Prices listed below. Airport code is Z91, which is maintained by Alaska DOT residential employee and state equipment.



Figure 19 20 Birch Creek EMS van

Location	Dates	Time	Check-in time	Flight #
Birch Creek	Monday - Friday	11:00 AM	9:45 AM	360 - 361

Freight Type	0-2 LBS	3-10 LBS	11-47 LBS	47 LBS +	Outsized
\$ Total / LBS	\$20 (flat rate)	\$25 (flat rate)	\$35 (flat rate)	\$0.74	\$1.39

Ticket Prices	One way	Excess Baggage / LBS	Round Trip
Adult (12+)	\$140.00	\$1.75	\$280.00
Child (11-) or Senior (65+)	\$105.00	\$1.75	\$210.00

## Energy & Bulk Fuel Storage

Birch Creek is currently looking into purchasing a new double wall fuel tank to store the diesel fuel needed for the diesel generator owned by Birch Creek Electric Utility. The company charges \$1.15 per kWh \$4.300 average 3,983.90 gallons delivered by plane.



*20 2 out of 3 existing bulk fuel containers*

There are currently 3 bulk storage tanks located in Birch Creek.

Fuel is delivered in a bulk aircraft every 3 months when needed, by either Everts Air Fuel or Alaska Air Fuel. Everts Air Fuel uses their DC6 (capable of delivering 4,650 gallons per flight) and still have space for up to 6 55-gallon drums for delivery.

There is no designated fuel purchase center in Birch Creek, so residents must be informed when a fuel plane is being arranged by Birch Creek Tribal Council. Residents then make own purchase of fuel and reserve one of the 55-gallon spots on plane. Most used method is contacting plane carrier and paying the carriers fuel price for a full drum. When organizing the charter, Birch Creek Tribal Council orders approximately 3,200 gallons or more of Diesel fuel when needed. No set fuel amounts each purchase, so room for gas drums fluctuates depending upon the amount of Diesel sent to the village. The less Diesel, the more drums could be sent.



*21 Birch Creek generator house*

## Environmental hazards

Birch Creek is comparable to the rest of interior Alaska when it comes to environmental concerns including erosion, occasional flooding, and rapidly shifting climate from previously recorded temperatures.

The banks of Birch Creek river are reported to be eroding at a rate of 1 foot per year, with the erosion area measuring at about 500 ft horizontally, 10-15 ft vertically spanning over much of the village. This area is in close proximity to many of the village's amenities such as: numerous outbuildings; sheds; the fuel tanks and lines; an access road; boat launches, storage, and boat repair structures; utility poles; power lines; sewage lagoons; a clinic; and the water intake system. One measure Tanana Chiefs Conference advised in their 1990 annual convention is to plant trees and other plants to slow the momentum erosion was causing on the river banks. The implementation of natural and planted vegetation such as willows, grasses, and alders have helped slow the degeneration of erosion.



There are 2 recorded events of floods in the village, both being open water since ice jams do not occur in Birch Creek. The first flood happened in 1967 and the most recent one occurred in 1992.



The climate oscillates compared to historic numbers colder and summers climbing in temperatures. This will greatly if it continues without change.



with winter being affect the village

## Infrastructure



*23 Margaret Martin Clinic logo*

### Multipurpose building

This building was first constructed to serve as the school for the village till it was later shut down in 1999 due to an insufficient number of students. Since then the building was at

a standstill, till it was renovated through a group effort of Birch Creek Tribal Council, Interior Housing Authority, and Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments. This now serves as a multipurpose building holding a community gathering center, the Margaret Martin Clinic, and the water treatment facility. There is still an array of opportunities this space could bring to the community, including a kitchen for elders' nutritional program, potential office space and a small community computer room.



*22 Multipurpose building*

## Community and culture

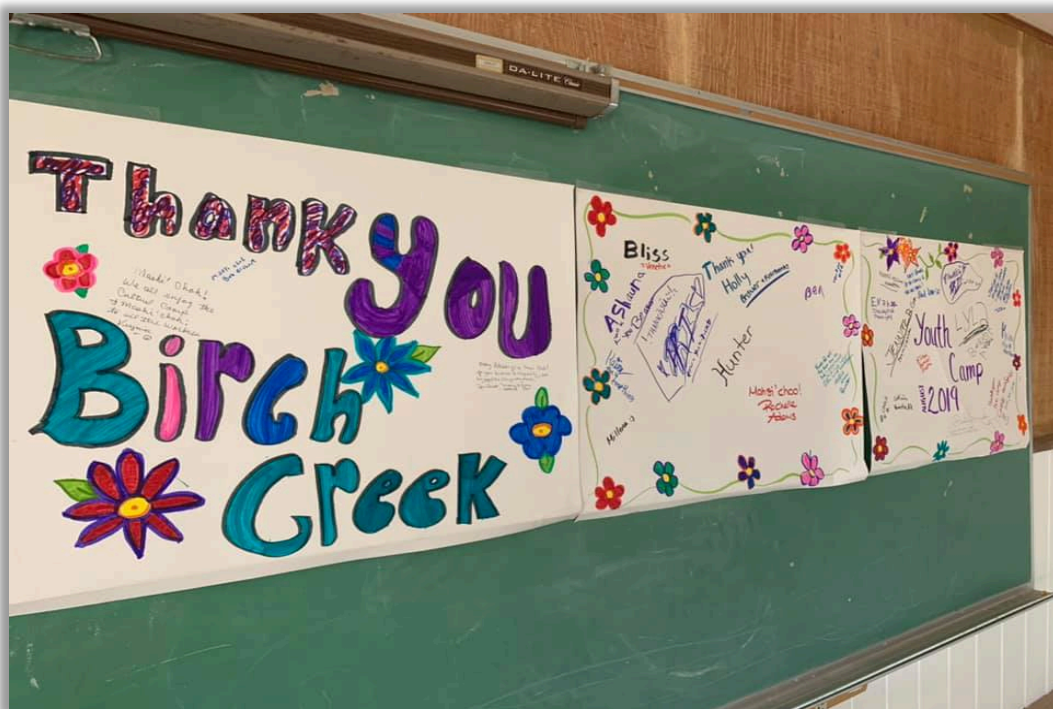
The residents of Birch Creek celebrate annual events such as trash pick-up day, Memorial Day, host community potlatch during holidays, community health fairs, and residents also attend neighboring villages for other significant events or gatherings.

Birch Creek Tribal Council organize and distribute an annual holiday food box giveaway for residents during the holiday season. The council also provides school supplies to tribal citizens that live throughout the state and are enrolled in school covering k-12.

Birch Creek is filled with insightful and culturally knowledgeable residents, all varied by their own skills. Living in the harsh weather environment of interior Alaska has modified the necessary survival abilities of its inhabitants. Therefore, all locals are experts in their own environment through the passing of cultural survival knowledge. Saying that, it doesn't take the interest of obtaining more experience away from the residents who are fully willing to learn more cultural understanding. According to surveys, residents are eager to learn as much as they can and teach what they know to others. Skills ranging from hunting and trapping game to navigating the great outdoors, sewing together fur mitts, and building an emergency shelter in extreme weather conditions. The job of the BCTC is to create an opportunity and space to make this all possible, which is hard considering tribal members are scattered throughout the state.

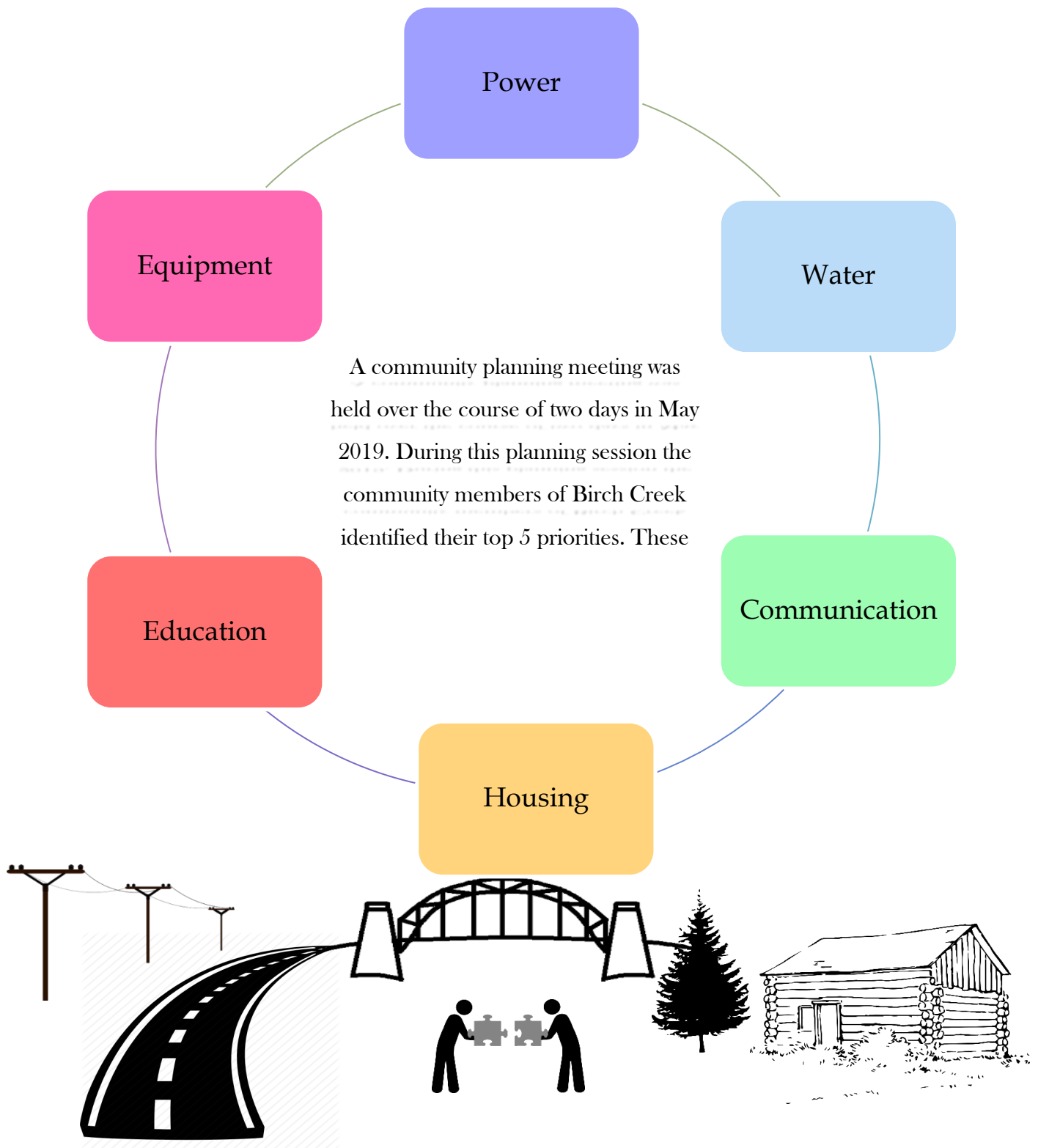
But through partnerships it is possible to create the space and provide workshops to teach the next generation. In fall of 2019, Birch Creek Tribal Council hosted a Culture Camp sponsored by Tanana Chiefs Conference named Tseenjik Portage Culture Camp. The camp was organized to promote healthy wellbeing and to further build cultural knowledge in our subregion's youth. It offered a short time in the rural subregion and showcased the beauty of the country. The participants engaged in cultural activities such as beading, a guided walk through the portage with a story to accompany and created the opportunity to take a select few hunting. Other efforts to share cultural knowledge have been administered in the past through the DEENA grant administered through Doyon utilities which allowed a fur mitten shop to commence in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Few locals of Birch Creek rely on commercial food that must be imported through Fairbanks since there is no store. But many residents participate in a subsistence lifestyle to provide for their families.



24 Thank you appreciation from participants of the Tseenjik Portage Culture Camp

## Birch Creek Community Priorities



## Birch Creek Power Priorities

January 2020	A Tanana Chiefs Conference Rural Energy Coordinator traveled to Birch Creek in the 4 <sup>th</sup> week of January to install a new power panel in the generator room to accurately determine the community electrical output and decide whether a new power generator is needed. Complete by end of February, beginning of March.
April 2020	To ensure that current employees are competent with the new generator system and are knowledgeable in their respected field of work, Birch Creek Tribal Council sent two residents to complete Power Plant Operator Trainings offered through Alaska Energy Authority. Each training duration lasts 1 month and both residents will fully complete trainings by end of April.
Goal of 2020	Guarantee there is always a generator operator or qualified alternate in Birch Creek.
Future Goal	To help assure confidence in operators, the council will take it upon themselves to administer an annual test to assess the knowledge of said operator (Research online modules, contact AVTEC and coordinate to complete an annual test to assess the knowledge of said operator).
May 2020	Birch Creek Tribal Council will purchase a custom made 6,300-gallon capacity double wall fuel tank manufactured by Greer. Full construction will take up to 6 weeks to fully complete. The tank will be welded onto skids to ensure full use when certain moving equipment is unable to start.
Check annually till complete in 4 years	Conduct electrical house evaluations of residents' house to ensure safe operation.
	Present data and propose a partnership with Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA) and other funding resources based on the figures. Design an action plan for a safe and harmless arrangement between the electrical system and network.
2024	Research and conduct a feasibility study, then propose a renewable energy plan in a community meeting to determine if the tribe would like to move forward. (4+ years of research, 5 <sup>th</sup> year execute with a detailed plan with multiple options)
2025	Seek funding and establish partnership with Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) and other funding resources to solidify funding.



## Birch Creek Water Priorities

February 2020	Assess current water treatment system and determine if it is competent for full village capacity.
March 2020	Inform residents and visitors about water conservation and management.
End of 2020	Birch Creek Tribal Council will contact Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) and coordinate a collaboration to educate how drinking unclean water can affect a human and all living things.
End of 2021	Birch Creek Tribal Council will create clear policies, rules, and guidelines of use to optimize water management.
September 2020	In July of 2019 Birch Creek Tribal Council and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium entered a cooperative project agreement to improve the sanitation facilities located in Birch Creek. This project will completely update the water system in Birch Creek. By September of 2020 the design for the new system will be complete.
September 2021	Project will install: new buried prefabricated Arctic Pipe Spool, SDR 15.5; well casing access, new well pump and pump: control panels; also provide an upgraded electrical service to the RWTL system glycol circulation pumps, controls, and electrical heat trace. These upgraded electrical system will also be integrated into the plants controls system to conduct automated control with heat trace to prevent freezing. This project will also install a brand new 500-gallon interior WST and a solenoid-controlled watering point for the community to access water without a hassle. All construction to be finished by September 2021.
February 2023	As per agreed upon through the agreement made Birch Creek Tribal Council will assume or retain ownership of and will be responsible for all operation and maintenance of the improvements and facilities constructed under contract.
January 2021	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium will begin a preliminary engineering report to initiate a process to service 6 Birch Creek homes with water/sewer. To be completed January of 2021.
Completed 2023	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium will be actively seeking funding till summer of 2021 when the full design and construction will be funded. When

	funding is secured, depending on methods of service determined from the Preliminary engineering report final construction will be completed 2022 or 2023.
End of 2020	Search for renovation opportunities for the washeteria building and foundation (possible 5+ year project)
Till end of 2023	Birch Creek Tribal Council will conduct and compare estimates on damage of washeteria and how much the total renovation will cost or if a whole rebuild is the only option to provide a safe space for sanitation purposes.
Beginning of 2024	If rebuilding is the only option, Birch Creek Tribal Council will search for funding through grantors and other funding opportunities.
Research till end of 2024 and implement plan in 2025.	Following either renovation or new construction of washeteria, Birch Creek Tribal Council will investigate the hydro-electric option to operate new building on clean energy. This would be a 5+ year project to complete and install. (Once results of washeteria is completed, the council will initiate this action if determined right for the village of Birch Creek)

## Birch Creek Communication Priorities

January 2020	Birch Creek Tribal Council contacted GCI for a potential future partnership to install working cell towers to provide service to the village. (Birch Creek is within range of Fort Yukon's cell phone towers and would be able to coordinate and bounce off to optimize use without installing an entire new system).
November 2020	Birch Creek Tribal Council is currently working towards obtaining a 2.5 GHz license from the FCC that will provide the council the right to internet and cell phone service over the tribal lands. Once obtained, BCTC will lease the license through a communication entity (GCI, ATT, ACS) to provide services.
Projected 5-year plan	BCTC will prepare a contract binding the communication entity aforementioned that states that all equipment installed in Birch Creek will be paid back by the council, in a set amount of time for an agreed price to own all equipment once the lease is complete and equipment is paid in full. Owning the equipment will allow BCTC to form a communications business and provide own services to Birch Creek.
End of 2020	Birch Creek Tribal Council will submit an official resolution to Tanana Chiefs Conference to review during its annual convention in March 2020 concerning the continuous lack of a post office in Birch Creek. The resolution will ask for aid in establishing a contract with United States Postal Service to form a post office location in Birch Creek for the first time in written history.
June 2020	<p>Birch Creek Tribal Council will compile and distribute contacts to the tribal members to explain the sovereign world of politics and chain of command. By doing this is establishes a new level of understanding that was not previously common knowledge.</p> <p>Provide go to contacts and break down the process of which our health system is operating.</p> <p>Include detailed job description and how a contact could help in any situation, also incorporate different department specialties.</p>
End of 2023	Seek funding for updated telephone lines to handle current technology.

End of 2024	Establish new tribal office to unite the village workforce and rid the need of individual home offices with provided internet services.
	Research funding for a community computer lab/learning center for adult education programs and home school services.
	Seek funding, grants, and partnerships with Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) and/or Alaska native Health Consortium (ANTHC) to assist BCTC in constructing a new local tribal office for the benefit of Birch Creek.
Research till end of 2024  Initiate plan by beginning of 2025	Found an Emergency Response Team to regulate the vast Yukon Flats and coordinate with other surrounding villages.
	Organize a local team for every village and seek funding to provide Satellite phones to volunteers for communication in between villages. Doing so will create a network to promote the safe travels of villagers in between each village.
	Seek partnerships with Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), Grantors, or any safety organizations.



## Birch Creek Housing Priorities

March 2020	Attend Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Convention to listen to their solutions to housing.
	Taking gathered information from the convention and research to possibility of a Birch Creek Housing Authority.
June 2020	Prepare and distribute tribal surveys to statistically determine possible tribal migration back to Birch Creek.
	Ask in what circumstances would it take for tribal members living in cities to move back, and how many would be willing to relocate.
March 2021	Assess Birch Creek lumber mill.
	Estimate cost of fixing if broken, by doing this it could provide a steady income for the right person to harvest lumber for housing. Cutting the price of building a house in Birch Creek exponentially, because lumber was not imported.
July 2021	Birch Creek Tribal Council will perform house evaluations to determine livability and assist locals that are occupying unsuitable housing apply for one of the 4 new houses through Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA).
November 2021	BCTC will create a program to support applicants in process to qualify for placement in new houses.
	BCTC will supply aid in obtaining a GED to qualify for local jobs openings to ensure the income portion of the application.
November 2022	Survey and mark land plots to update map on available plots for future reference.
November 2023	Birch Creek Tribal Council will calculate the full cost building a new subdivision and/or duplex in Birch Creek
	To ensure local/tribal hire, groom potential employees to excel in the construction trade.

September 2024	Renovate existing homes to suit current standards with the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Home Improvement Program (HIP)
	Certify that individuals are qualified to receive assistance and help with the application process.

According to current statistics, there are 32 structures in Birch Creek with 3 rendered unlivable. In the information gathered from housing surveys administered to residents, the oldest house that is still currently occupied was constructed in 1967 with no major renovations to date.

## Birch Creek Education Priorities

December 2021	Birch Creek Tribal Council will contact Yukon Flats School District (YFSD) to coordinate and implement a homeschooling program in Birch Creek to encourage inward migration for all families with school age children.
December 2022	Birch Creek Tribal Council will contact other education agencies (AVTEC, Iḷisaġvik, Interior Alaska Campus, etc....)
December 2023	Birch Creek Tribal Council will set up community center to have an online school set up. Contact Interior Alaska Campus (IAC) to seek instruction on organizing and choosing an Adult Education program.
December 2024	Birch Creek will research all necessary steps to re-opening the school and construct a detailed written plan to follow over time with set goals and deadlines. Possible 10-year plan if new building must be constructed.
December 2025	Birch Creek Tribal Council will seek opportunities to open new school if feasible.

## Birch Creek Equipment Priorities

December 2020	Birch Creek Tribal Council will identify all needed equipment for max village performance. The list will incorporate cost of purchase and cost of transportation to Birch Creek.
December 2021	Birch Creek Tribal Council will seek and hire a certified mechanic to evaluate and repair all Birch Creek owned equipment. Diagnosing and estimating total cost of getting all equipment to operational standards.
December 2022	Identify and purchase all needed equipment, new or used, for max village performance.
	Create a list with cost of purchase and cost of transportation incorporated.
December 2024	Birch Creek Tribal Council will outreach and train interested locals or tribal members in the mechanical trade to be fully self-sufficient.
December 2025	Birch Creek Tribal Council will organize the construction of new garage would be necessary to store all equipment. To do so will provide a safe place that is easy to keep track of all essential items (keys, parts, tools, etc.).



## Appendices

### Survey Questions

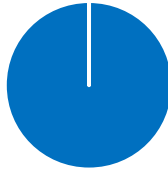
1. How long have you lived in this community?
2. Why do you stay in your community?
3. Do you think of leaving? Why?
4. What are the current strengths and weaknesses of the community?
5. What opportunities are available in the community?
6. What do you enjoy the most about living in your community?
7. What is your most important concern facing your community today? Why?
8. Do you have access to WIFI / internet?
9. What education and training suggestions/improvements can be made?
10. Would you be willing to travel for training?
11. Would you be willing to travel for work?
12. How do you currently provide for your family?
13. What are some potential local business for your community?
14. Would your community benefit from more employment opportunities?
15. Would you like to see the school reopened?
16. Do you know of any families willing to move back to Birch Creek?
17. If a school is not possible, would you want to see a home-school system operated?
18. What is the primary mode of transportation?
19. How are supplies brought to the village (barge, plane, etc.)?
20. How often do you leave your community? For what reason?
21. What projects are currently going on in your community?
22. What subsistence activities are most common in your community?
23. What environmental concerns or issues do you have in your community pertaining to the air, water, land, and natural resources?
24. Do you have environmental concerns that affect village residents (fish and animal population, weather, water quality, dust, etc.)?
25. Is there a demand for single family housing?
26. What is your primary concern regarding housing?
27. Is your housing needs being met?
28. Is your household overcrowded?
29. How many generations live in a household?
30. What important cultural activities does your village have?
31. What subsistence activities does your family participate in and do you feel that this is a major part of your necessary food supply?
32. Do you feel that the Health and Mental Health services provided to you are adequate?
33. Are you satisfied with the current law enforcement method in your community?
34. What can be done to see that these things happen?
35. What are some project/areas in the community that can be done to improve your community?
36. What are your top three priorities for the community?
37. What do you want your community to look like in: 5 years? 10 years?
38. Additional feedback about the survey, questions, or concerns:
39. What is your household income?

Access to Wi-Fi/internet?



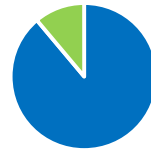
■ Yes ■ Sometimes ■ No ■ N/A

Travel for training?



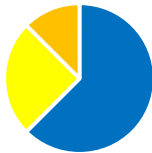
■ Yes ■ No

Travel for work?



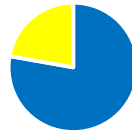
■ Yes ■ No

Do you know families willing to move back to Birch Creek?



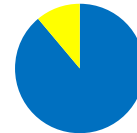
■ Yes ■ N/A ■ I

Would you like to see the school reopen?



■ Yes ■ N/A

Would your community benefit from more employment opportunities?



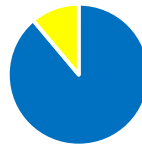
■ Yes ■ N/A

Is there a demand for a single family housing?



■ Yes ■ No ■ New house

Would home-schooling be suitable if reopening a school is not possible?



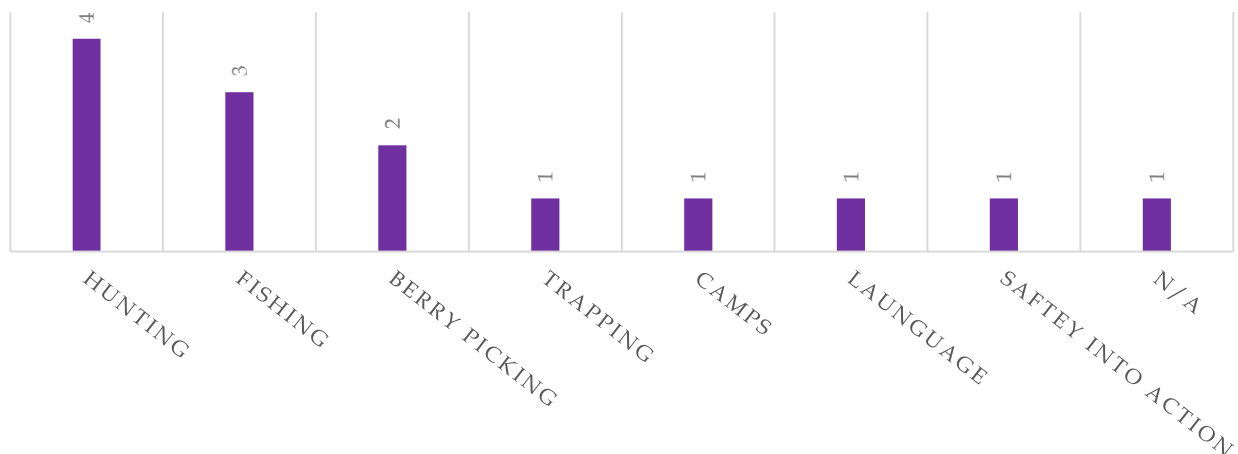
■ Yes ■ N/A

Is your household overcrowded?



■ Yes ■ No

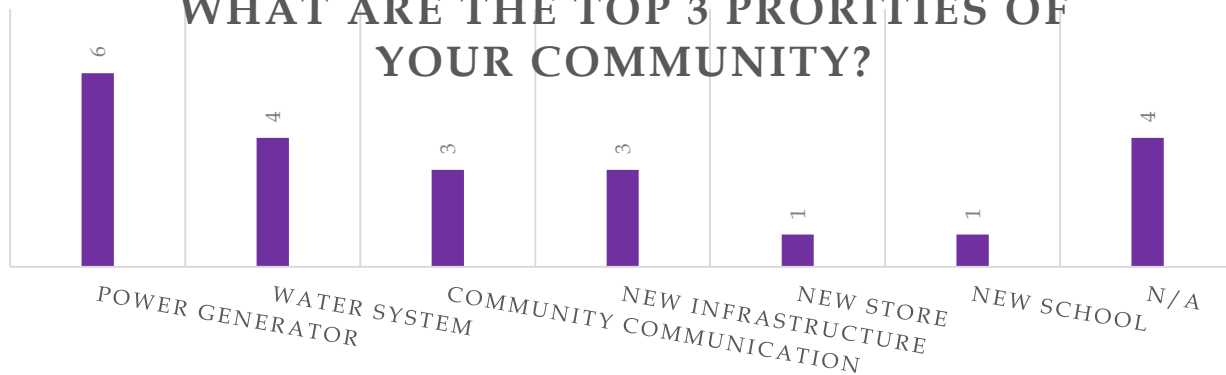
## WHAT SUBSTANCE ACTIVITIES ARE MOST COMMON IN YOUR COMMUNITY?



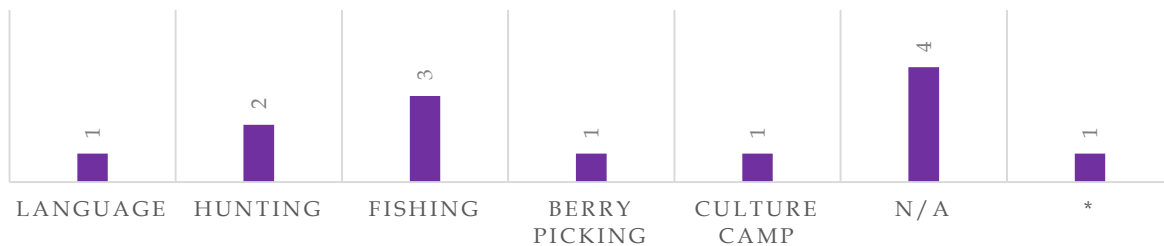
## HOW MANY GENERATION LIVE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?



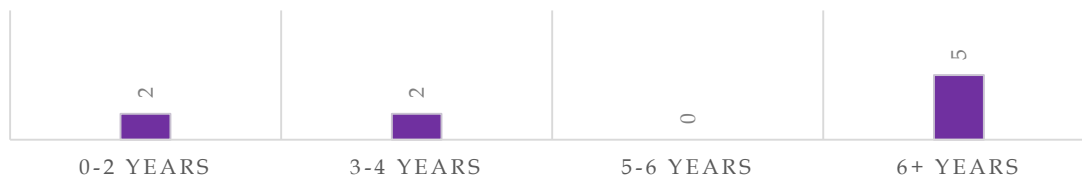
## WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 PRIORITIES OF YOUR COMMUNITY?



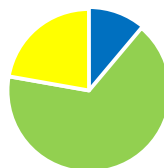
## WHAT IMPORTANT CULTURAL ACTIVITIES DOES YOUR VILLAGE HAVE?



## LENGTH OF RESIDENCY



Are your housing needs being met?





## Honorable Mentions

“I like to live here, it’s nice and quiet. I like to hunt and fish, trapping, getting spruce wood or cotton wood to burn.” – (Why do you stay in your community?)

“Because I love it! It’s a peaceful home.” - (Why do you stay in your community?)

“I don’t think of leaving here, I enjoy living here.” - (Do you think of leaving?)

“Yes, because of my child will need to go to school.” - (Do you think of leaving?)

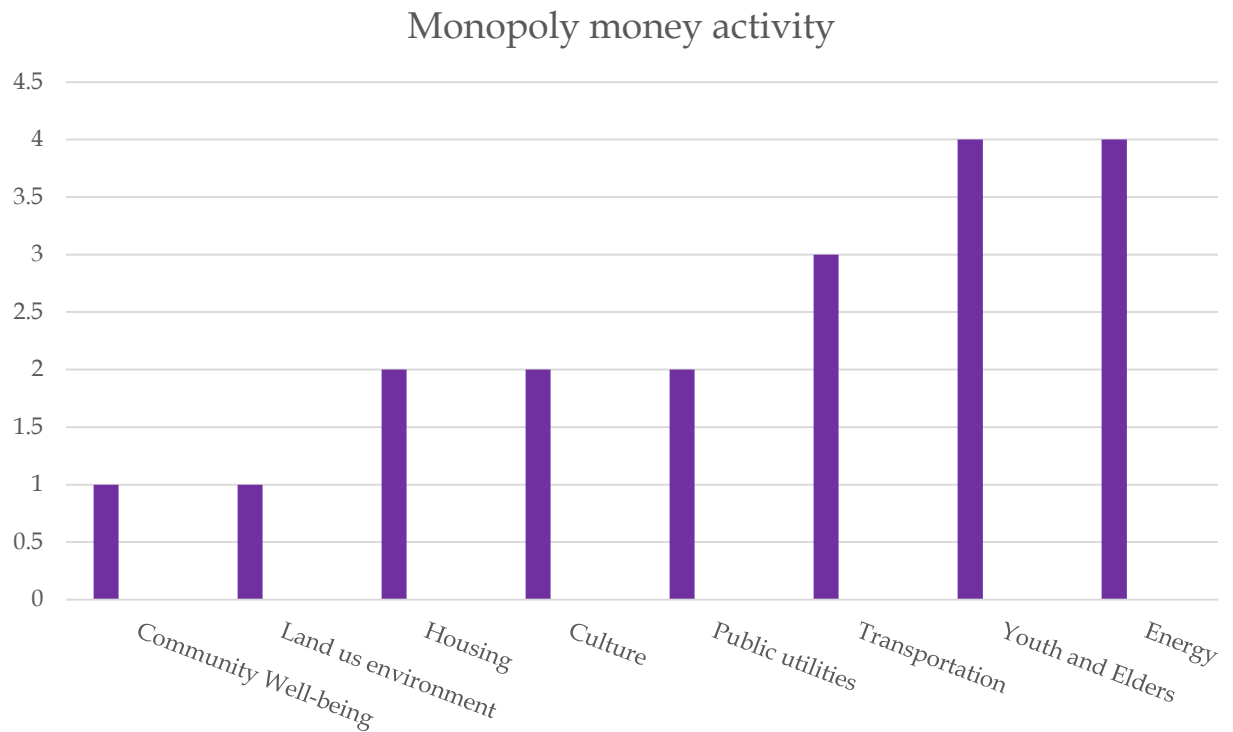
“Hunting, fishing, trapping, hauling wood and water.” - (How do you currently provide for your family?)

“For the boats with motor sitting in the river, I’m concerned about oil leaks going into the river. Trash burning in town, instead of at the trash dump.” - (What environmental concerns or issues do you have in your community pertaining to the Air, water, land, and/or natural resources)

“Making sure it’s warm with no drafts. Also, good electricity.” - (What is your primary concern regarding housing?)

## Community Planning Meeting Process

On the trip to Birch Creek, employees administered an activity with the residents. Every person was handed 3 monopoly monies and administered where they thought the monies would have the biggest impact.



## Previous goals

### Birch Creek Health & Wellness

**Priority:** Keep our future healthy and safe by providing support and healthy alternatives.

Objective #1: Hire a permanent village Health Aide through collaboration with Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG).

Objective #2: Behavior Health workshops through collaboration with CATG.

**Priority:** Encourage engagement in the church.

Objective #1: Renovate housing and hire a priest.

Objective #2: Encourage and support others to attend the local church.

**Priority:** Increase community engagement through recreational nights.

Objective #1: Find grants and/or funding for a new tribal building to host a monthly community game/movie night.

Objective #2: Engage in more subsistence activities as a group such as berry picking

### Birch Creek Economic Development

**Priority:** Create sustainable jobs within the community that utilize the skills and talents of residents.

This will be very important in regaining the population needed to reopen the school

Objective #1: Support new, innovative ideas to build the local economy.

Objective #2: Explore opportunities to develop natural resources.

**Priority:** Utilize resources to develop economic growth for our community through collaboration and partnership.

Objective # 1: Encourage community engagement by holding more community events.

Objective #2: Collaborate with CATG to develop an environmental tech coordinator to help maintain the landfill.

**Priority:** Encourage local businesses

Objective #1: Research holding a small business and business financing requirements class.

Objective #2: Research the startup and operation costs for a local store.

Objective #3: Research possible small business opportunities such as a bed and breakfast.

### Birch Creek Education Priorities

**Priority:** Support residents in acquiring training and identifying job opportunities.

Objective #1: Support residents in identifying and enrolling in training opportunities

Objective #2: Ensure there is community participation in promoting and developing workforce development trainings.

Objective #3: Communicate and coordinate with proper organizations in identifying and marketing job opportunities available locally.

**Priority:** Reach out to organizations such as Interior Aleutian Campus, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and CATG to offer local courses and trainings. Many community members are interested in technical, behavioral health, and safety related trainings.

Objective #1: Reach out to the organizations and other appropriate organizations listed above and keep a list of available programs, trainings, and funding opportunities related to education and training.

Objective # 2: Better advertise education assistance programs and scholarships to encourage more residents to seek a higher education.

**Priority:** Leadership through mentorship and role modeling.

Objective #1: Promote and participate in community planning and infrastructure development.

Objective # 2: Foster rural development, mentoring with community leaders, and Alaska Native History.

### Birch Creek Infrastructure Development

**Priority:** Multipurpose Building.

Objective #1: Research grant opportunities for a multipurpose building with running water.

Objective #2: Coordinate with CATG for a feasibility study on potential buildings for multipurpose building.

**Priority:** Look into getting access to running water.

Objective #1: Reach out to appropriate organizations for a feasibility study.

Objective #2: Research water and sewer funding opportunities.

**Priority:** Research funding opportunities to repair and purchase equipment.

Objective #1: Inventory current working/ nonworking equipment available.

Objective #2: Research funding opportunities to help repair available equipment.

Objective #3: Research funding opportunities to help purchase new equipment.

**Priority:** Research funding opportunities for Energy Assistance.

Objective #1: Reduce heating costs.

Objective # 2: Start the planning process in installing a solar PV-diesel hybrid system with battery storage to serve small electric demand

### Birch Creek Housing

**Priority:** Birch Creek is a place where residents and newcomers can find affordable housing that suits their needs.

Objective #1: Research and pursue grants that can support the construction and maintenance of housing.

Objective #2: Look into using unutilized funds through Interior Regional Housing Authority appropriately.

Objective #3: Research the pros and cons of operating an internal housing program.

Objective # 4: Improve communication and coordination with Interior Regional Housing Authority and Tanana Chiefs Conference Housing department.

**Priority:** Encourage and seek educational, employment, and training opportunities related to housing.

Objective # 1: Research and pursue educational opportunities in construction and other technical trainings that can help in the constructions and maintenance of housing.

Objective # 2: Encourage local hire in the construction and renovation of Birch Creek Housing.

## Housing Survey Questions

1. How old are you?
2. What is the size of your household? How many are adults?
3. Would you say your house is overcrowded?
4. When was your home originally built? And have you had any major renovations since?
5. Do you own your house? If not, explain.
6. What is the structure of your home?
7. To your knowledge, in what condition would you say your foundation is in?
8. What material is your existing foundation made of?
9. Would you say you have adequate indoor air quality? Adequate ventilation to prevent mold?
10. How would you categorize your insulation on a scale from 1-10? 10 being fairly new and 1 being poor quality, please explain.
11. How would you categorize your roofing on a scale from 1-10? 10 being fairly new and 1 being poor quality, please explain.
12. How would you categorize your electrical system on a scale from 1-10? 10 being fairly new and 1 being poor quality, please explain.
13. How do you heat your home in winter?
14. Are your windows quality enough to not let heat escape or in need of repairs?
15. Does your home have any form of running water? If yes, please explain.
16. Does your home have a bed bug issue?

Additional survey administered by Birch Creek Tribal Council made by TCC called individual asset survey provided the cultural aspect of community plan.

**Individual Assets Survey**

Each individual in your community can be considered an asset based on their skills, talents, and strengths. It's important to keep track of the different cultural knowledge each community member has and their interest in teaching or learning different cultural skills.

Community Members Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact information: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tribal member of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Circle all those that apply to you.

**Traditional Knowledge**

I am familiar with traditional stories	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to story tell	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I am familiar with cultural history	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know traditional songs	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I understand traditional songs	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to drum	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to dance	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know customs of traditional potlatch	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to play AK Native Games	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know the history behind AK Native Games	Yes / No	Want to Learn

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**Subsistence Activities**

I know how to fish	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to make fish nets	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to make a fish wheel	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to cut fish	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to dry fish	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to jar fish	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to smoke fish	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to hunt	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to trap	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to make a snare	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to butcher/skin moose/caribou	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to cut meat for drying	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to store meat in the freezer	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to tan a hide	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to make jam	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to use traditional tools	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to make a sled	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to repair a sled	Yes / No	Want to Learn

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**Outdoor Survival**

I know how to run a motor boat	Yes / No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to teach gun safety	Yes / No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to shoot accurately	Yes / No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to use traditional tools	Yes / No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to make traditional tools	Yes / No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach

**Outdoor Survival**

I know how to dress appropriately	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to make winter clothing	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to navigate the land	Yes / No	Want to Learn
I know how to make emergency shelter	Yes/No	Want to Learn
I know how to build a cabin	Yes/No	Want to Learn
I know how to cut wood	Yes/No	Want to Learn
I know how to pitch a tent	Yes/No	Want to Learn
I know how to dress appropriately	Yes/No	Want to Learn
I know how to make winter clothing	Yes/No	Want to Learn
I know how to navigate the land	Yes/No	Want to Learn
I know how to make emergency shelter	Yes/No	Want to Learn
I know how to build a cabin	Yes/No	Want to Learn

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**Athabaskan Culture & Art**

I know how to sew	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to sew fur	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to make moccasins	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to make beaded gloves	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to make dresses/vests/regalia	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to bead	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to bead traditional earrings	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to bead with two needles	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to make beaded frames	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to carve wood	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to make Birchwood baskets	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to build a cabin	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach
I know how to cut wood	Yes/No	Want to Learn	Want to Teach

Tanana Chiefs Conference



## 2020 Birch Creek Community Plan

Page 39

# Community Planning Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Birch Creek Meeting Sign-In Sheet  
May 17-19, 2019

	Name	Title	E-mail Address, Mycelium@birchcreektribe.org
1	Joe Guillelmo	First Chief	
2	Nenessa Joseph	resident	joanawc@hotmail.com
3	Stacy Cleveland	resident	
4	Winston James Sr	RES	
5	Wm Whitely Jr	gub	
6	Dakota Joseph	Resident	
7	Matthew Williams	RES	Facebook
8	Moissa Harrison	RES	
9	Vincent Williams	RES	
10	Edie Jones Sr	RES	
11	Cheryl Medlocke	RES	
12	Julia Spivey	Water Dept Operator	N/A
13	Winston James Jr.		
14	Victoria Balam	Council	
15	Angelica Balam	Council	
16	Stacyana James	Council Member	P.O. Box KBC Fort Mckinley 99740-5999
17	Ozzie James	Chief	Facebook
18	Cheryl James	Tribal Council (All lower case)	ca.james1112125@gmail.com
19	Aatoo		
20	Jessie		

Joe Guillelmo



## 2020 Birch Creek Community Plan



# Birch Creek 2010 Community Map



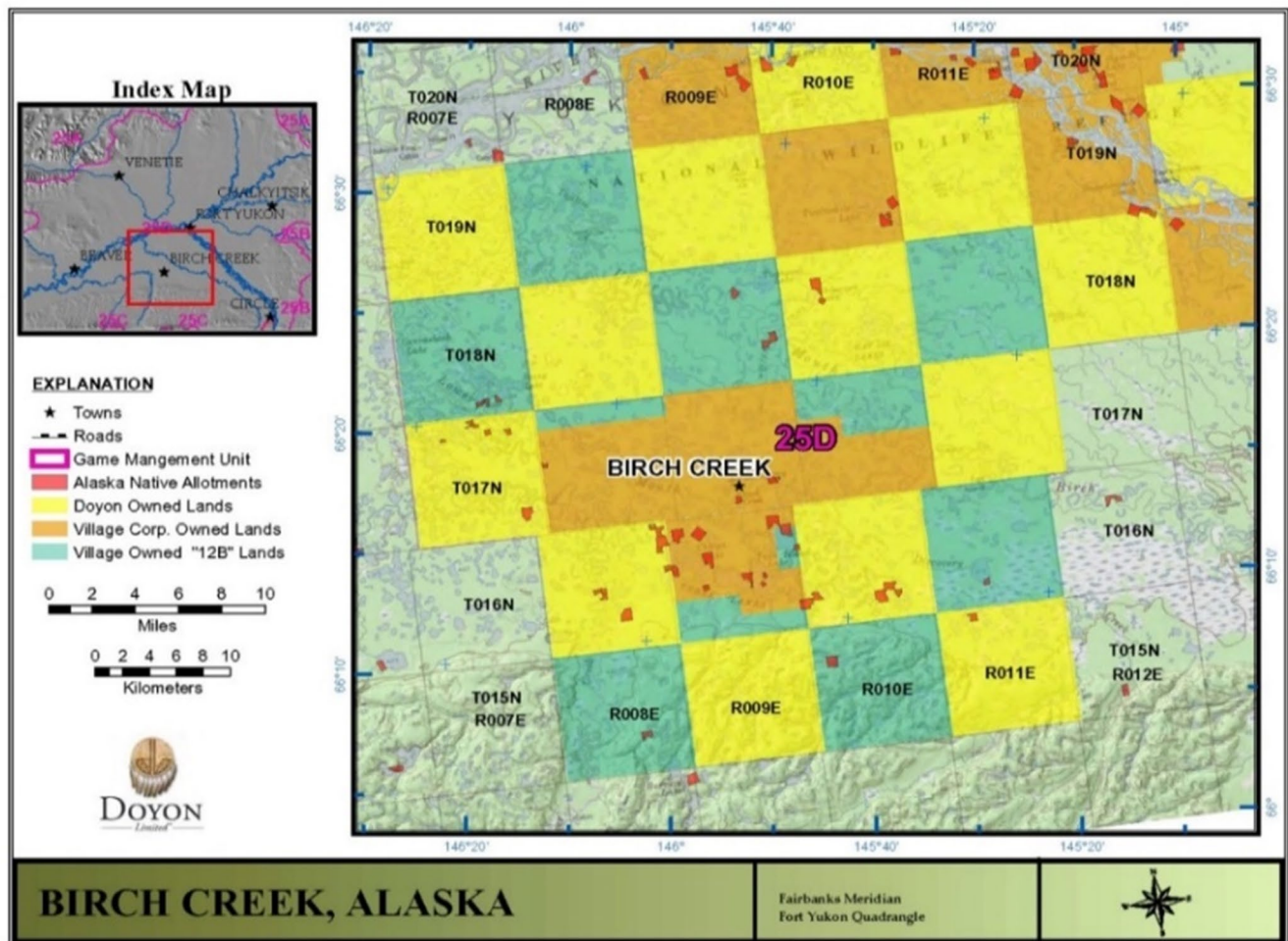


# Birch Creek 2010 Community Map





## Doyon Limited Index Map



## Equipment List

Equipment Type	Known Issues	Notes
Village Dozers (2)	Refuel Fuel Pumps Batteries Hoses Fluids Oil Air Filters Diesel	Tune up Overhaul
Village Backhoe	Overhaul Pistons Gaskets Spark Plugs Tires Batteries Seat Padding	Wire issues Tune up
DOT Village Loader	New Windshield Base Gasket Filters Belt Water/Fuel Separator Leaks Oil	In front of Washeteria Tune up Assessment
Empty Diesel Tanks		Located in man made farm to
450 Dozer		Backhoe attachment is good. Tractor can (add-on) should be good- glass may be an issue. Overhaul
Dump Truck	Gasoline	Unknown Issues
Red Connex		Fire Department Located by generator
Unusable Frame		No Longer Usable After Fire Damage
Well (To School)	Electrician needed to set up heat for it.	Not currently operable
Internet Satellite	Disk is Operable	
JD Dozer 450 C		
JD Dozer 450 C		
Dumptruck 1	1984 GMC C7D064	
Dumptruck 2 /fuel truck		
Old grater		
D6 loader	Cat IT28G	
D8 loader		
Kubota Loader		
Brand new village loader		
JD Backhoe		

10-Cubic Yard Dump Truck which needs new headlights;

- John Deer 450C bulldozer which needs some electrical repairs. The solenoid has been replaced multiple times, and the bulldozer will only work for a day at a time which suggests an additional solution is needed;

- Case 580C Backhoe in good working order;

- CAT IT28G loader with 5-Cubic Yard bucket and forks in good working order; and

- Champion 740 road grader which needs a new transmission and tires

## Resources:

<http://ankn.uaf.edu/ANCR/Values/athabasca.html> (photo)

<http://explorenorth.com/library/communities/alaska/bl-BirchCreek.htm> (akphoto)

<https://dccc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=13d352b822704d33b8a010b7c04e2730>

<http://www.wrightairservice.com/flying-with-us/airfares/>

<http://www.wrightairservice.com/flying-with-us/freight-prices/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/blmalaska/36277813436>

<https://www.doyon.com/our-corporation/our-lands/birch-creek/>

<http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/alari/details.cfm?yr=2016&dst=01&dst=03&dst=04&dst=06&dst=07&r=3&b=29&p=34>

[https://www.fws.gov/uploadedImages/Region\\_7/NWRS/Zone\\_1/Yukon\\_Flats/PDF/YF%20Villages.jpg](https://www.fws.gov/uploadedImages/Region_7/NWRS/Zone_1/Yukon_Flats/PDF/YF%20Villages.jpg)

<http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/cip/stip/needslist/index.cfm>

## Contact Information

### **Denduu Gwich'in Tribal Council Office**

615 Bidwell Ave Suite 123

Fairbanks, AK 99701

P.O. Box 73505

Fairbanks, AK 99707

Phone: (907)-374-9925

Fax: (907)-374-9909

[admin@birchcreektribe.org](mailto:admin@birchcreektribe.org)

### **Birch Creek Clinic**

Phone (907)-221-2537

Fax: (907)-221-2536

### **Tihteet'Aii Incorporated**

P.O. Box 71919

Fairbanks, AK 99707

Phone: (907)-455-8484 ext: 104

### **Tanana Chiefs Conference**

122 1<sup>st</sup> Ave Fairbanks, AK 99701

(907)-452-8251

1-(800)-478-6822

### **Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center**

Phone: 1-(800)-478-6682

### **Counseling Center**

Phone: 1-(800)-478-4741

### **Main Office**

Phone: 1-(800)-478-6822

### **Yukon Flats School District**

P.O. Box 350

Fort Yukon, 99740