

PRESERVING THE HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF THE CEREMONIAL POTLATCH, STICKDANCE

WHEREAS, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is an Alaska Native tribal health and social services consortium established by the Interior Alaska tribes and tribal communities, to provide a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development and culture of the Interior Alaska Native; and

WHEREAS, Nulato and Kaltag are both Tribal Governments served by the Tanana Chief Conference; and

WHEREAS, While the traditional ceremonial potlatch known as Stickdance is only practiced today in the villages of Nulato and Kaltag, shared oral history provides the ceremony was likely practiced by many of tribes/clans in some form prior to western contact; and

WHEREAS, The Stickdance ceremony consists of one full week of potlatches, dancing and traditional practices that are conducted in the lower Koyukuk Athabaskan dialect. While other TCC villages and communities may not practice the Stickdance, they do all practice ceremonial potlatches that are of great cultural and community significance; and

WHEREAS, The Traditional practices and processes of the Stickdance are very powerful, and the history and the practices have been carried down orally for generations, with minimal written documentation of the ceremony; and

WHEREAS, Nulato and Kaltag, similar to other tribal communities, have lost many elders and culture bearers in the last decade. The lower Koyukuk Athabaskan language and the traditional history and practices of the Stickdance ceremony are eroding and pieces of the language and ceremony are in jeopardy of being lost permanently if not stored and revitalized for the next generation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors hereby directs staff, subject to available funding, to assist the villages of Nulato and Kaltag, and other villages as requested, to archive and preserve the history and traditions of the Stickdance and other ceremonial potlatches.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this resolution was duly passed by the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors on March 16, 2023 at Fairbanks, Alaska and a quorum was duly established.



Charlie Wright
Secretary/Treasurer



Submitted by: Nulato Tribal Council