



Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference

# The Council

Incorporated as Dena' Nena' Henash  
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## NO AMBLER ROAD! A Monumental Step Forward

### Tanana Chiefs Conference Applauds the Biden Administration's **No Action on Ambler Road Project**

The Biden Administration announced on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 that after a thorough environmental analysis, it is recommending a "No Action" alternative regarding the Ambler Road Project. Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) believes this is not only the right decision but a meaningful step in honoring our Tribes' relationships with the land, animals and water, recognizing tribal stewardship, and respecting the rightful place of Indigenous Knowledge in federal decision making.

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Supplemental Environmental

Impact Statement (SEIS), released in October of 2023, reinforced TCC's opposition to the proposed Ambler industrial mining road. Spanning 211 miles across the Brooks Range, crossing 11 major river systems and cutting through tens of thousands of acres of migratory animal territory, the road would have threatened fish spawning and rearing habitat and would have further compromised the already at-risk Chinook salmon population as well as the Western Arctic caribou herd.

"This is a historic win for the Alaska

Native community. It reaffirms that our voices matter, that our knowledge is invaluable, and that our lands and animals deserve protection," says Brian Ridley, Chief of Tanana Chiefs Conference, "The Biden Administration's choice to reject the Ambler Road Project is a monumental step forward in the fight for Indigenous rights and environmental justice. The previous Administration did not consult with Tribal leaders years ago when the Ambler Road proposal was brought forth, and TCC is very

**Continued On Page 4**

#### ALFRED KETZLER SR. THE LIFE AND LEGACY

In March, TCC premiered a short documentary film about the life and legacy of the late Al Ketzler Sr.. This video delves into Al's formative years, his time serving in the U.S. Military, and his pivotal role in the historical context of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and the formation of TCC.

The video will premiere on Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> on our social media at 6:00pm. To watch, scan the QR code or visit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6g95o8nLKQ>



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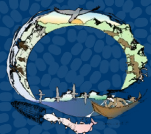


## Mission

Tanana Chiefs Conference provides 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 people.

## Vision

Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes



Tanana  
Chiefs  
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## Executive Board

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Yukon Koyukuk

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Elder Advisor

Mackenzie Englishoe, Gwichyaa Zhee  
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## Letter from the Chief

Dear Tribes and Tribal Members,

As many of you are already aware, last month President Biden recommended a "No Action" alternative regarding the Ambler Road Project. This achievement stands as a testament to the power of our collective voices, the dedication of our Tribal Leaders, and the unwavering support of our advocates. So many times we are told that the battles we are up against are impossible - that we shouldn't try because our voices will go unheard. It is clear that this is not true and that what is right is always worth fighting for. Let us carry this knowledge forward as we continue our advocacy for our hunting and fishing rights.



Speaking of the fight to protect our salmon, I had the privilege of providing testimony at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meeting in Anchorage last month. Alongside Vivian Korthuis of Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) and Melanie Bahnke of Kawerak, I urged the Council to address the issue of bycatch and to integrate Indigenous knowledge into their decision-making processes. I am so grateful for the amazing partnerships that we have with other areas of the State. Our collective voices are powerful and we will only grow stronger as we work together.

Furthermore, I had the honor of attending the Self-Governance Conference in Arizona, during which the Alaska Area engaged in discussions with Indian Health Services (IHS) on various critical topics vital to Alaska, such as Behavioral Health, Water and Sanitation, Pharmacy Benefits Managers (PBMs), Drug Shortages, and more. Additionally, I, alongside our Health Services leadership, had the opportunity to meet directly with IHS Director Roselyn Tso and her staff to discuss the Community Health Aide Program to ensure that we are not overlooked in the nationalization of the program.

Last month, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced their intention to move forward with the release of Wood Bison in the Minto Flats despite opposition from our Tribes, per Full Board Resolution 2024-27. This decision reflects another disappointing and uninformed choice made by the State in its attempt to address its failure to responsibly manage existing animal populations. They should be consulting with our Tribes, who have successfully managed our land and waterways for thousands of years, to ensure the preservation of our natural resources for future generations.

Lastly, as the weather warms, so does the risk of flooding. It is crucial to have a go-bag ready in the event of a flood and to familiarize ourselves with our community's evacuation plan. For more information on flood preparedness, please visit <https://www.tananachiefs.org/flood-preparedness/> and follow us on Facebook for more tips and updates.

**Mahsi' Choo,**  
Chief Brian Ridley



## 2024 TCC Calendars Now Available!

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## Interior Tribes Oppose State's Decision to Introduce Wood Bison on the Lower Tanana

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is disappointed that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has decided to move forward with the release of Wood Bison in the Minto Flats State Game Refuge despite direct opposition from Tribal leadership in nearby villages that would be impacted.

While recognizing the importance of wildlife management initiatives, TCC has urged careful consideration and comprehensive planning in light of several critical issues. During the 2024 Full Board of Directors Meeting, TCC Tribes unanimously passed resolution 2024-27 opposing the release of Wood Bison in the Lower Tanana area, and makes the following factual declarations:

- The Environmental Assessment utilized by the ADF&G in guiding the bison restoration project is over a decade old and lacks integration with current environmental impacts and consequences.
- A lack of proper government-to-government consultation with federally recognized Tribes, outlined by the ADF&G Tribal Consultation policy and recently passed state legislation recognizing Tribes.
- Tribes in the TCC region are already facing food security challenges due to the Yukon River salmon disaster. Introducing Wood

Bison without addressing these issues could exacerbate food scarcity and trespass concerns.

- Wood Bison are not part of the oral history or cultural narratives of local tribes, raising questions about their introduction into traditional lands.
- Introducing additional animals into the ecosystem without adequate management of current populations could further strain already limited resources.

Nonetheless, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has announced its decision to move forward with the release of Wood Bison in the Minto Flats State Game Refuge, beginning by transporting bison in the summer of 2024. Despite TCC's emphasis on the need for transparent dialogue and collaborative decision-making to address these complex issues, TCC stakeholders and Tribes have not experienced meaningful engagement with ADF&G on this matter, which affects the land, wildlife habitat, and sustainability of subsistence living for residents of the lower Tanana region.

"It is disappointing that the State has moved forward with the implementation of Wood Bison in the Lower Tanana despite the consistent opposition voiced in numerous meetings by Tribal leaders," says Chief Brian Ridley, "Interior Tribes are already

confronting a critical food security crisis due to the declining Yukon River Salmon population. Introducing a new species when ADF&G has failed in its duty to responsibly manage the existing animal populations on our ancestral lands is deeply troubling. The State's continuous attempts to replace dwindling salmon, moose, and caribou populations with other species like wood bison and hatchery fish is not the solution."

The implementation of wood bison in the lower Innoko-Yukon area failed due to adverse weather conditions that caused ice layers in snowpack, making it difficult for Wood Bison to obtain food and reducing the herd by 70%. These same weather conditions occurred two years ago in the Minto Flats area, which means there is no guarantee that this herd will be successful and could meet the same fate of the Innoko herd.

"In a meeting between TCC and Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, the Commissioner told TCC that if the bison go off of State land into our Tribal lands, we can just shoot them," Chief Ridley adds, highlighting the dismissive and disrespectful attitude toward tribal concerns regarding the introduction of Wood Bison.

TCC urges ADF&G to hear Tribes and stop the implementation of Wood Bison in the Lower Tanana.

### TCC Shuttle Service

TCC's complementary Patient Shuttle Service now has extended hours to meet the needs of patients traveling to Fairbanks for medical appointments.

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# TCC Applauds The Biden Administration's Decision, Continued

Continued From Page 1

appreciative of the efforts of Tracy Stone-Manning, Director of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and her team for meaningful consultation with TCC and its member Tribes. It is proof that our collective voices are powerful and that we must continue to speak up to protect our ways of life."

United States Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland cites the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to restoring an appropriate balance between conservation and development as a weighing factor in the decision. "There is no question, using the best available science and incorporating Indigenous Knowledge practiced over millennia, that these decisions will help biological, cultural, historic, and subsistence resources, safeguarding the way of life for the Indigenous people who have called this special place home since time immemorial," Haaland says.

Julie Roberts-Hyslop, First Chief of the Native Village of Tanana, says that this is a time for Tribes to rejoice. "Listening to the people closest to the land and animals is critical," said

Roberts-Hyslop, "For years we have been sounding the alarm – the salmon are no longer returning to our rivers, climate change is altering the planet. It is time for us as a human race to

**It is time for us as a human race to take responsibility for what we are leaving to future generations.**

- Julie Roberts-Hyslop, First Chief of the Native Village of Tanana -

meeting and reviewing all necessary information needed to make this important decision."

The Tribes of TCC have strongly advocated for a robust SEIS statement, with the goal of informing the Biden Administration of the unprecedented detriment the Ambler Road project would have inflicted on the people, lands, and wildlife in the region. For years, TCC Tribal leaders have partnered with sister organizations, supporters, and like-minded individuals to raise Tribal concerns in various forums with leaders from the state and federal government about the importance of protecting tribal lands, subsistence, and the harmful impact of this proposed industrial road. Today's decision shows that these pleas have not been ignored, and emphasizes the importance of continued Tribal

consultation.

"The Ambler Road was permitted expediently under the Trump administration and was poorly justified with a deeply flawed Environmental Impact Statement," said First Chief of Evansville Frank Thompson. "President Biden, the Secretary of the Interior, and BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning have done their job well to reverse this insane decision and stop the proposed Ambler road. Thank you to all that have helped in this fight for our survival."

TCC's Full Board of Directors, which consists of 42 member Tribes and Tribal organizations, passed resolutions in 2014 and 2021 directing TCC to protect the Koyukuk River and surrounding areas from the harmful impacts of the Ambler Road Project. TCC has worked tirelessly to inform local, state, and federal government entities of the true costs of a road that would forever alter an entire watershed. Tanana Chiefs Conference would like to acknowledge the endless dedication of our Tribal leaders, Elders, advocates, and Indigenous knowledge bearers in protecting our land and animals. "I urge everyone to continue to provide testimony, show up to meetings, and raise your voices in the protection and preservation of our land and animals for all future generations," says Chief Ridley.

## Introducing Interior Native Vote!

INV, formerly Get Out The Native Vote - Interior, is a non-partisan effort between Doyon, Limited, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and Fairbanks Native Association to engage Alaska Natives, shareholders, and Tribal members in voting!

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## North Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting: A Call for Salmon Conservation

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Meeting was held in Anchorage at the beginning of April, where over 100 people signed up to testify before the Council advocating for the need to address the issue of salmon bycatch.

During the meeting, Chief Brian Ridley of Tanana Chiefs Conference, Vivian Korthuis, CEO of Association of Village Council Presidents, and Melanie Bahnke, CEO of Kawerak Inc., sat side-by-side to offer their testimonies. Together they represented 113 out of 229 Tribes in Alaska. Their presence served as a beacon of hope for the protection of Indigenous ways of life intertwined with the fate of the Yukon River salmon.

Chief Ridley underlined the consequences of continued bycatch and the failure to meet escapement goals. Drawing attention to the salmon crisis faced by Tribal communities along the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers, Chief Ridley called for immediate action to address the root causes of salmon decline.

"We are facing a salmon crisis," Chief Ridley declared. "Yet, you continue to allow bycatch and do not acknowledge the cumulative impacts of bycatch over decades of commercial fishing," he criticized, urging the Coun-

cil to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and Tribal perspectives into their decision-making processes.

Chief Ridley stressed the need for meaningful alternatives that would result in tangible reductions in bycatch levels. "TCC urges the Council to modify its alternatives by integrating Indigenous knowledge and Tribal comments from affected in-river communities," he asserted, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts between Indigenous communities and regulatory bodies in ensuring the survival of Yukon River salmon.

Among the voices heard was Mackenzie Englishhoe, Chair of the TCC Emerging Leaders Youth Advisory Council, representing the youth of 42 communities in the Interior. Mackenzie's testimony emphasized the profound loss experienced by her generation due to the decline in salmon populations, outlining the inability to participate in traditional fishing practices that have sustained her ancestors for generations.

"We want to conserve not just chum that will return this year, but also immature chum, as dead fish cannot

spawn in our rivers in the future," Mackenzie stated.

Highlighting the devastating impact of salmon depletion on both cultural heritage and physical well-being, Mackenzie urged the Council to consider the holistic interconnectedness of humans and salmon in their decision-making process. "Salmon cannot recover if they cannot make it to the spawning grounds. Every salmon counts, and there is a critical need to err on the side of conservation during severely depressed escapements," she emphasized.

The testimonies provided at the NPFMC Meeting serve as a reminder of the critical importance of salmon conservation and the imperative for collaborative efforts between Indigenous communities and regulatory bodies. As discussions continue, it is essential for the Council to heed the voices of Indigenous peoples and take decisive action to ensure the survival of Yukon River salmon for generations to come.



**We want to conserve not just chum that will return this year, but also immature chum, as dead fish cannot spawn in our rivers in the future.**

**- Mackenzie Englishhoe, Emerging Leaders Youth Advisory Council Chair -**



**Scan to Stay Up-To-Date on Future Advocacy Opportunities:**



<https://tinyurl.com/YukonSalmon>





## Talking Circle Healing Gathering Addresses Boarding School Trauma

The Talking Circle Healing Gathering, hosted by Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), took place on April 11th and 12th in Fairbanks. This event aimed to provide a safe space for Elders to share their experiences and address the trauma caused by the boarding school era.

The event, organized by the TCC Divisions of Wellness & Prevention and Behavioral Health, emphasized the importance of acknowledging and understanding the historical trauma inflicted upon Indigenous communities. Chief Kenny Blacksmith, representing Gathering Nations International, shared his personal journey of recovery from trauma, offering insight and inspiration to attendees.

A crucial aspect of the gathering was the opportunity for Elders to speak openly about their boarding school experiences. The talking circle, facilitated by Will Mayo, past TCC President, encouraged listening and support from the community. Many Elders bravely stepped forward to break the silence surrounding this deeply impactful chapter in Native history.

Peter Demoski of Nulato, who serves as the Elder Advisor to TCC's Executive Board, shared, "They were strict disciplinarians... They washed children's mouths out with lye soap whenever they spoke their Native language. Their pastime was beating us kids... They were so strict, when I got out of high school, I joined the Navy. The discipline in the military was easy for me. I was already brought up in the Holy Cross Mission where you got

beat up for everything." He went on to share about his life now: "I live in Nulato. I do love my people even though I cannot speak my Native language. I love them with all my heart."

The agenda included informative sessions on the history of Alaska's boarding school era, presented by Benjamin Jacuk-Dolchuk of the Alaska Native Heritage Center. Additionally, Jim Labelle provided an update on the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, highlighting ongoing efforts to address the legacy of boarding school trauma nationwide.

Throughout the gathering, attendees participated in breakout sessions and activities aimed at promoting healing and resilience. Roxanne

Frank, TCC Trauma and Grief Recovery Specialist, led discussions on healing from trauma and provided vital behavioral health support resources.

The event concluded with reflections from Elders, guidance, and prayers led by Della Cheney, Jim LaBelle, and Dr. Reverend Anna Frank. Attendees expressed their gratitude to the Elders for their courage in sharing their stories and were honored for their contributions to the healing process.

The event served as a powerful reminder of the resilience and strength of Indigenous communities. By coming together to acknowledge and address the trauma of the past, attendees took an important step towards healing and reconciliation. It underscored the importance of creating spaces for healing and dialogue, paving the way for a brighter future.





# Preserving Heritage, Building Futures at the 2024 Education Summit

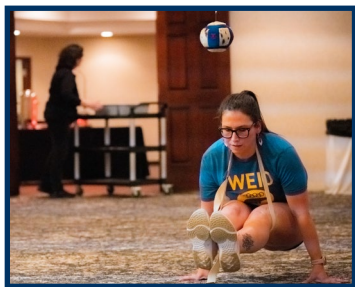
By Stephanie Hinz, Education & Indigenous Learning Manager

The Education Summit is a region-wide forum for representatives from Tribal communities, urban and rural school districts, postsecondary institutions and legislators to come together to discuss educational issues of mutual concern.

This year's event included over 70 representatives from multiple Tribes, six of the seven school districts in the TCC region, instructors and staff from University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) and University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), the Fairbanks Native Association, the Alaska Association of School Boards, and the Alaska Humanities Forum, as well as members of the Fairbanks community.

Presenters spoke on topics, including Tribal compacting of education, the impacts of the boarding school era, programming for student success, teacher recruitment & retention issues, and various programs available to communities and Tribes.

Attendees were treated to special performances by the Dene Eslaanh' Dance Group and an Alaska Native games demonstration by World Eskimo Indian Olympics (WEIO) competitors, Amber Vaska and Leah Evans on Tuesday night. The event also featured a special presentation from students from Effie Kokrine Charter School on their moose hide tanning projects.



Materials from the  
Summit can be found  
online here:



<https://tinyurl.com/2024EducationSummit>





# Syphilis on the Rise in Alaska: Take Action Today!

By Dr. Michael R. Brumage, TCC Director of Clinical Services

Syphilis is a growing problem in Alaska and across the United States. In 2016, Alaska had only 20 cases, but by 2022, that number skyrocketed to 424 cases. This increase is alarming, especially because it means more babies are being born with this preventable infection.

The good news is that healthcare providers can test for and treat syphilis. By getting tested, you can help protect yourself and our Tribal community.

## What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacterium called *Treponema pallidum*. It can affect anyone who is or has ever been sexually active, regardless of age. The tricky part is that you might not know you have it because symptoms can be subtle or even absent.

## Symptoms:

- Small, painless sores on the body, including the genitals and rectum.
- Swollen lymph nodes near the groin.
- Later stages can have more severe symptoms or none at all, making it harder to detect.

## Complications:

Untreated syphilis can lead to serious complications, including severe neurological and cardiovascular issues. Pregnant women with untreated syphilis can pass the infection to their babies, causing stillbirth, premature birth, birth defects, and other long-term health problems.

## Prevention and Treatment:

Early detection is crucial. Testing for syphilis usually involves a simple blood test done by your healthcare provider. The good news is that syphilis is treatable with antibiotics, especially penicillin. Treatment depends on the stage of the infection, and it's essential to complete the full course of antibiotics as prescribed.

For those allergic to penicillin, alternative antibiotics can be used. Regular follow-up testing is necessary to ensure the infection is fully cleared.

Syphilis can also be treated in its later stages, even though the process is more complex. It is important that *everyone* get tested, even people who have been in stable relationships for a long time or who have not been sexually active in years. You may have been infected many years before and not show symptoms until much later when your symptoms could be very severe. Get tested for yourself and for those you love the most!

## What Can We Do?

To tackle the rise of syphilis cases, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) healthcare providers are taking action. They are promoting testing, raising awareness through educational campaigns, and integrating syphilis screening into routine healthcare services.

By improving testing, offering treatment options, and raising awareness, we can fight syphilis together, protect our babies, and improve the health of our community. You can help by prioritizing your sexual health, getting tested regularly, and practicing safer sex. Together, we can keep our Tribal community healthy and strong!

MISSING



Lorraine Ginnis



Willis Derendoff



Doren Sanford



Debbie Nictune



Frank Minano

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# Dental Waitlist: Education & Updates

By Dr. Toby Imler, TCC Dental Director

We receive many questions about the Dental Waitlist in the Dental Department. What is it and how does it work? Why do we even have the waitlist? I'd like to take a few moments to share the importance of the waitlist, outline how it works, and share the progress we've made over the past year.

## What is the waitlist?

The waitlist serves two significant purposes. First, it serves as our recall exam list, reminding us of when patients are due for their follow up exam. Each patient's recall timeframe is unique to them and based on a number of factors, but most often, our patients will have a two-year recall. Patients with diabetes, children, and certain other unique circumstances may be given a one- year recall.

The second role of the waitlist is to help us set exam appointments fairly and consistently. We want to make sure that those patients who have been waiting the longest are the next ones contacted for an appointment. When making appointments, Dental staff call patients from the waitlist in the order they were put on. If we are unable to reach someone, we will leave a message and try again before moving down the list. Don't worry, though- if we miss you and you call us back later, you will retain your place at the top of the waitlist and will be given the next available appointment.

## How does the waitlist work?

If during your exam, your dentist determines that you require additional treatments (a filling, root canal, etc.), you will be able to schedule an appointment that will occur in a timely manner. Once that treatment is

complete, you are eligible to be added back to the exam waitlist, but you need to ask the Dental Front Desk to be added. If you forget to ask at the end of your appointment, just reach out to the Dental Front Desk, and we will get you added. If at any time you have a dental concern or urgent need, our Dental Urgent Care Clinic is available for same day appointments whether you have a current exam or not.

The process of the exam waitlist worked very well under normal circumstances. When a patient's exam and all of their work was completed, they were added back to the waitlist. Usually, treatment was completed in 1-3 months. The patient was then put back on the waitlist, and they were contacted two years later for their next regular exam with minimal to no wait.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted this system, as normal appointments were not completed for almost a year. Additionally, clinic capacity was reduced by half compared to what it was before. While we are still working through the disruptions caused by those challenges, we've made significant progress in increasing access and decreasing wait times over the past year.

## Our current progress

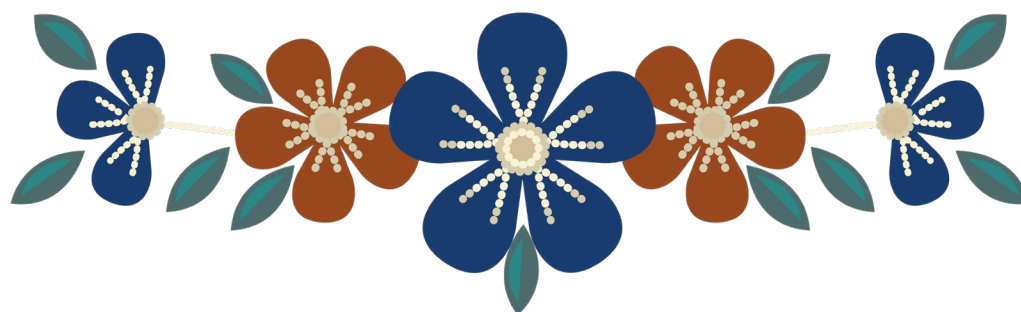
The progress on the exam waitlist is ongoing but is trending in a positive direction. In June 2023, the wait for a dental exam was 28 months for adults and 19 months for children. In March of 2024, the wait was reduced to 15 months for adults and 14 months for kids. While these advances are significant, we still have further to go before achieving our goal of a six

month or less wait time for a dental exam. If current trends continue and staffing levels remain consistent, we expect to achieve this goal by March 2025.

This increase in services was made possible by improvements in staffing levels. Since January 2023, TCC hired three dentists and ten dental assistants. Five of the dental assistants hired were part of our "grow our own" initiative where we provided on the job training to applicants. These individuals are from our communities and are now providing excellent care to our beneficiaries. Our recruitment activities and training programs are ongoing, and we continue to seek people who are passionate about serving in the dental field.

Additionally, one student graduated from the Dental Health Aide Therapy (DHAT) training program during the summer of 2023 and a second is scheduled to graduate in the summer of 2024. This will increase access to appointments for our rural patients by increasing the number of villages visited and the number of weeks that those services will be provided.

TCC Dental Clinic is incredibly grateful for the continued trust you put in us as we strive to meet our shared goals. Our first priority is serving you, our patients with the highest levels of care. While the past couple of years have been difficult, the changes implemented are yielding positive results. We are committed to seeing the waitlist for services further reduced and are working tirelessly to accomplish that. We thank you for your patience through this lengthy process. If you have any questions about your status on the Dental exam waitlist or would like to have your name added to the list, please reach out to the Dental Front Desk at 907-451-6682 ext. 3200.





# Tribal Resource Stewardship Corner

## Wind Beneath Their Wings: Turbines & Migrating Birds



By Betty Ross, Tribal Client Services Deputy Director

With the increase of turbines in this age of wind energy, there have been a few studies conducted on the impact of the turbines on migratory birds. According to the MIT Climate Portal Writing Team (2023), studies of bird deaths in the United States from a decade ago indicate about 680,000 birds have died due to wind turbine collisions. That was ten years ago! Imagine what the numbers are now.

The National Audubon Society, an American non-profit environmental organization, answers key questions associated with wind turbines and birds as well as Just Energy, an electricity, natural gas, and green energy provider. The major advantages and disadvantages are as follows.

### Advantages:

- A renewable energy source
- Avoids air pollution (clean energy)
- Reduces dependency on fossil fuels
- Does not cause planet warming

### Disadvantages:

- Dangerous to some wildlife
- Noisy
- Expensive upfront costs
- Wind can be unreliable/unpredictable

Inexpensive renewable energy is helpful to any area, creating an environment that reduces air pollution and will not contribute to global warming. Additionally, wind energy is an alternative to other forms of energy while reducing dependency on fossil fuels. The downside is that wind turbines have been known to harm a large number of birds during their migration period. Depending on the size of the turbine, this could be a costly effort.

There is a risk that the wind turbines will “degrade or destroy habitat, cause disturbance and displacement, and disrupt important ecological links” (National Audubon Society, 2020).

Considering the pros and cons of wind turbines, it would be in the best

interest of energy firms to recognize the impact on wildlife as well as what the structures will do to the land. According to the Bureau of Land Management’s Environmental Impact Study “construction of a turbine can disturb as much as three acres, with tower foundation extending 35 to 40 feet below the surface” (PEIS, 69 FR 175, p. 5-7). No doubt since the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), measures have been taken to improve the construction impact. There are different sized wind turbines, and the smaller turbines may cause less harm.

### Resources:

- Bureau of Land Management. (n.d.). Wind Energy Development Programmatic EIS Information Center.
- National Audubon Society. (2020). Wind Power and Birds.
- Just Energy. (2023). Wind Energy: Pros and Cons.

## TCC Allocates \$10,000 per Tribe for Culture Camps

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) has taken a significant step to preserve Indigenous traditions by offering financial support for culture camps throughout the region. At the August meeting last year, the TCC Executive Board approved funding for these camps, providing each Tribe with up to \$10,000 annually starting in 2024.

Culture camps are vital for passing down ancestral knowledge and traditions to younger generations. They offer immersive experiences in traditional practices, language, and crafts, fostering a strong sense of

cultural identity, community pride and promote healthy activities.

TCC encourages Tribes in the region to take advantage of this opportunity if they plan to host a culture camp in their community. Tribes interested in accessing these funds can reach out to their Self Governance Coordinator for assistance.

By investing in culture camps, TCC demonstrates its commitment to preserving our cultures and promoting community well-being. This support enables Tribes to continue the important work of passing on indigenous knowledge to future generations.



### Do You Have Your Alaska Real ID Card?

Starting May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, all Alaska Residents will need a Real ID to fly on commercial airlines, visit or work on a military base or other federal property.

For more information on REAL ID, visit [www.dhs.gov/real-id](http://www.dhs.gov/real-id)



## Tribal Resource Stewardship Convention Report

During the 2024 TCC Annual Convention, the Tribal Resource Stewardship team hosted a special session that brought Tribal members together to learn and strategize about upcoming opportunities to advocate for our way of life. They also had the opportunity to meet with Holly Carroll, US Fish & Wildlife Service (F&WS) Yukon Subsistence Fishery Manager, Keith Herron, US F&WS Assistant Fishery Manager & Tribal Liaison, and Doug Vincent Lang, Commissioner for the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G).

Attendees were entered to win door prizes throughout this event. Mahsi' Choo to everyone who came to listen and to share at this event!



US F&WS Assistant Fishery Manager & Tribal Liaison, Keith Herron, and Holly Carroll giving an update on Yukon River Fishery Management.



ADF&G Commissioner, Doug Vincent Lang speaking to participants on March 14<sup>th</sup>.



ADF&G Commissioner Lang speaking with community members before joining the General Convention in the Gold Room on March 14<sup>th</sup>.



2<sup>nd</sup> Traditional Chief Andy Jimmie won beaver mittens.

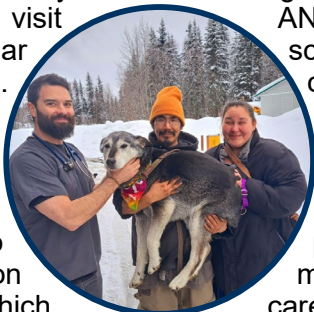
## TCC Partners with Alaska Native Rural Veterinary for Rural Village Care

In a joint mission to bring veterinary care to rural interior Alaskan villages, TCC has contracted with Alaska Native Rural Veterinary, Inc. (ANRV) with a goal to visit 14 communities each year for the next three years. Wellness exams, spay/neuter services, parasite control and vaccinations will be offered. These procedures help to prevent the overpopulation of stray dogs which reduces the risk of dog bites/injuries and diseases that affect not only pets but people as well.

"Veterinary services are vital to keeping our pets and working animals healthy," says Brian Ridley, Chief of TCC, "We are excited to align with Alaska Native Rural Veterinary on this project, because we know that this will

prevent the spread of disease among the animals in our rural communities, and contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of the entire community."

ANRV is working on a schedule and will contact the communities to make the arrangements to set up the visits, and TCC will assist in circulation of information. "ANRV is honored to partner with TCC to bring much needed veterinary care to the communities within their region," says Angie Fitch, Executive Director of ANRV, "Veterinary care is essential to the public health of rural Alaska. We appreciate the relationships that have developed between us and many of these communities over the years and we are excited to be able to continue to offer this valuable service."



## Celebrate Our 2024 Graduates!

### Alaska Gateway School District

Eagle – May 17, TBD  
Northway – May 18, 1:00 PM  
Tok – May 17, 5:00 PM  
Tetlin – May 16, TBD

### Galena City School

May 16, time TBD

### Iditarod Area School District

McGrath – May 8, 6:00 PM  
Taketna – May 10, 7:00 PM

### Nenana City School

May 18 – 1:00 PM

### Yukon Flats School District

Tsuk Taih (Chalkyitsik) – May 16, time TBD  
Fort Yukon – May 10, 2:00 PM  
John Fredson School (Venetie) – May 17, time TBD

### Yukon-Koyukuk School District

Allakaket – May 21, time TBD  
Hughes – May 22, 11:00 AM (kindergarten only)  
Huslia – May 17, 6:00 PM  
Kaltag – May 20, 6:00 PM  
Koyukuk – May 21 (8th grade only), time TBD  
Minto – May 17, 4:00 PM  
Nulato – May 4 (kindergarten) 6:00 PM, Seniors May 17 at 7:00 PM  
Rampart – May 20, 6:00 PM (8th grade only)  
Ruby – May 15 (pre-K and Kindergarten), May 16 (8th grade), time TBD  
Tanana – May 21, time TBD

### Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

Effie Kokrine Charter School – May 10, 7:00 PM  
Lathrop – May 14, 7:00 PM (Carlson Center)  
West Valley – May 15, 7:00 PM (Carlson Center)  
North Pole – May 16, 7:00 PM (Carlson Center)  
Hutchinson – May 13, 7:00 PM (Hering Auditorium)  
Ben Eielson – May 15, 7:00 PM





# May is Children's Mental Health Awareness Month

By Karen Kallen-Brown, LPC Children's Services Clinician

Years ago, the Denakkanaaga Elders identified twenty-one values to guide us in being healthy, strong, caring, and connected people. Wherever I am, I hear many concerns about the struggles that our children face. The COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of schools, the move to online learning, the disruption to family activities, routines, and traditions coupled with the surge in use of technology have increased stressors that are impacting our children and our communities. We see this played out in emotional and behavioral ways that cause suffering. If we want to change this, we need to consider what promotes wellness and what we can do to create safety nets for our children who are not well. It takes a village to raise healthy children and the Denakkanaaga Elders spelled it out for us: love for children, family relations, village cooperation, sharing, caring, responsibility, and respect.

## How can we tell when a child or teen needs help?

Assessing a child or teen's need for support involves various factors. We need to consider how our children are doing relative to these values:

- **Connection:** Are they connected to family and community?
- **Cooperation:** Do they work well with others?
- **Kindness and Caring:** Do they demonstrate empathy and compassion?
- **Initiative:** Do they willingly do age-appropriate chores and tasks?
- **Responsibility:** Are they accountable for their actions and strive to learn from mistakes?
- **Respect for Boundaries:** Do they honor personal and property boundaries?
- **Curiosity and Learning:** Are

they engaged in exploring and learning about the world? (in and out of school)?

- **Overall Happiness:** Do they seem happy most of the time?

If you can confidently answer yes to these questions, it suggests the child is likely experiencing mental wellness. They are functioning well at home, in school, and in the community.

Life can be challenging. Children, like all of us, sometimes get stuck when they experience painful, scary, confusing, or unpleasant experiences. Experiencing bullying is often a factor in developing extreme behaviors and negative thoughts and feelings. It is very important that adults ensure children are physically and emotionally safe if we want them to grow into healthy adults. Bullying is not friendly teasing. It is done to harm someone and is about violating a person's safety. It is about taking power away from a person. To make our schools, homes, and communities safe for everyone, we need to reconnect to those values of kindness and caring. That means each and every adult has to step in when we see or hear bullying. Ignoring it will not make it go away.

## Prompt Support: Essential for Children's Well-being

When children get stuck in the survival reaction to a scary, confusing, painful or unpleasant experience, seeking help promptly accelerates their (and their caregivers') recovery. A fast response will help them suffer less. When children are struggling with strong feelings, negative thoughts, or behaviors that interfere with their successful functioning at home, school, or in the community for more than a couple of weeks, it is time to seek help. Delaying help can interfere with

children reaching their developmental milestones, developing positive social skills, and coping with problems. Without help, they can develop harmful habits that can escalate and may lead to physical health problems, injuries, hopelessness, substance abuse, despair, and even suicidal and self-harming behaviors.

## Early Intervention for Children's Mental Health

When children are struggling, people see it. Often, we don't know what to do, so we try to ignore it or hope the child will outgrow it. By the time we realize it wasn't just a passing stage, the child's entire nervous system can be stuck in states that interfere with living the values we strive for. There are chemical changes in the brain that can get stuck and result in diagnosable mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and others. Early identification and treatment can stabilize the brain chemistry and help the child get back on track for healthy development. When in doubt, check in with a children's behavioral health clinician or pediatrician who should be able to help you know whether the behaviors are typical or not for the child's age. They can help you understand what your child's needs are and support you in finding ways to meet those needs.

We love our children, yet when children are stuck in unhealthy mental states, they cannot feel our love. In these times, children cannot feel safe and connected, and they feel that they are alone in their suffering. Let's remove the stigma and shame and focus on doing our best to meet each child's needs so they can thrive and become resilient, able to handle life's ups and downs safely.

If a child you love has been showing these symptoms, call TCC Behavioral Health at 907-459-3800. We are here for you!



# TCC's BIA Housing Improvement Program (HIP)

## Your Path to Affordable Homeownership!

Explore our Category D Home Buyership Down Payment Assistance section, providing crucial support for Alaska Natives to secure lower mortgages and reduced APRs. Join us in building a brighter future, one home at a time.

	Category C New Home		Cat. D Down Payment Assistance
Comparison of Priority Based on Points	Elder	Young Family	Young Family
Age	15	0	0
Income	20	5	5
Disabilities	10	10	10
Dependents	0	15	15
Overcrowding	0	5	5
Veteran	10	0	0
Selecting Down Payment Assistance	0	0	25
Total Points	55	35	60

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less waiting time to get a home</li> <li>Lower Payment/APR</li> <li>Choose your home</li> <li>No limit on purchase price</li> <li>Less expensive than renting</li> <li>Own your home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilities</li> <li>Maintenance</li> <li>Repairs</li> <li>Property Taxes</li> <li>Insurance</li> <li>Foreclosure</li> </ul>

	Rental	Cat C New Home	Cat D Purchase Home
Mortgage	\$2,500	\$0	\$1,100
Insurance & Property Tax	\$0	\$0	\$200
Communication	\$150	\$200	\$150
Heating	\$500	\$2,500	\$500
Water/Sewer	\$150	\$0	\$150
Total Per Month	\$3,450	\$3,200	\$2,250
Wait Time to Get Into Home	1 Month	2-3 Years	6-9 Months

Rental	Category C New Home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher Monthly Payments</li> <li>Utilities Not Included In Rent</li> <li>Contract Lease Agreements</li> <li>Risk of Eviction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free – No Rent Payment</li> <li>Longer Wait Times</li> <li>Highest Utilities Costs</li> <li>Tailored Mainly To Elders</li> <li>Will Home To Heirs</li> </ul>
Category D New Home	Scenario
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anyone Can Qualify If Under The Income Limit</li> <li>Lower Mortgage Payment</li> <li>Shorter Wait Times</li> <li>Officially A Homeowner</li> <li>Build Personal Credit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$75k Down Payment Assistance</li> <li>30-Year Note @ 7% APR</li> <li>Payments Include Insurance &amp; Taxes</li> </ul>

### Your Journey to Becoming a Homeowner



Decide To Become A Homeowner



Contact TCC Housing Program



Fill Out BIA Application



Obtain Pre-Approval Letter



Check For \$75K is Cut



\$75K Check For Down Payment and Closing Costs is Delivered to Lender for Purchase



You Are Now A Homeowner!

 **Questions? Contact:**

Mitchell Shewfelt

907-452-8251 ext. 3319

Scan the QR Code to visit our webpage for more details!



<https://www.tananachiefs.org/services/housing/>

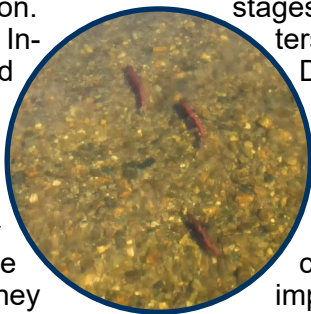


# The Importance of Gravel-to-Gravel Initiatives in Salmon Restoration: A Comprehensive Exploration

By Gale K. Vick, Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee Member

The phrase “gravel-to-gravel” is becoming more important in managing salmon as their populations decline in Alaska, particularly in the AYK (Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim) region.

The Department of the Interior recently explained “gravel-to-gravel” as the cyclical journey of salmon. This journey begins with their birth and continues as they return each year from the sea to spawn in the very gravel beds where they were hatched. These gravel nests serve as crucial incubators for their eggs, providing a place where they hope their eggs survive natural challenges. These gravel beds represent home, marking the beginning and end of the salmon’s life cycle. As the gravel beds move with the river’s flow, the salmon’s habitat is replenished with



each passing current.

But “gravel-to-gravel” isn’t just about salmon; it’s a plan for everyone to understand salmon in all their life stages, starting from the headwaters of each stream. The U.S. Department of the Interior / Bureau of Land Management (BLM) highlights the importance of headwaters, the source stream for our river systems, where changes like mining can impact waterways, affecting salmon downstream.

“Maintaining healthy and productive habitats begins with a comprehensive understanding of resource conditions and how they are changing over time,” the BLM report states.

But data is lacking. Identifying salmon-bearing streams and conditions in the AYK watershed is a huge task, re-

quiring actions like restoring streams and monitoring salmon health.

Government agencies can’t do this alone. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management are working with Tribes and others to sustain salmon and natural resources, using both traditional knowledge and science.

But salmon conservation isn’t just about rivers; it’s about their entire life cycle, including marine journeys and return trips. International agreements and research, like the Yukon River Agreement and the Alaska Salmon Research Task Force, are emphasizing the need for attention to every part of a salmon’s life.

This effort involves multiple groups and will take years to see results. The future of wild salmon depends on our commitment to “gravel-to-gravel” conservation.

## Voice Your Opinions Head Start Home Visiting Program Survey

Tanana Chiefs Conference Head Start is a birth to age five program that provides high quality educational services to children and families. Due to workforce challenges, Head Start is recreating our home visiting program to serve more children and families. One of the most creative options that the program would like to offer is a virtual home visiting program. This would allow a home visitor to work in one location and serve as a regional home visitor.

The model that the program is looking to create would include weekly 1.5 hour virtual home visit with a Parents as Teachers certified home visitor. This home visitor would travel to their sites every 4-6 week to host family nights to bring families together for food and fun. While on site, the home visitor would offer families an in-person home visit either in the family’s home or at the agreed upon location (Tribal Hall, Clinic, Head Start).

When families enroll into the program, they receive an abundance of comprehensive support.

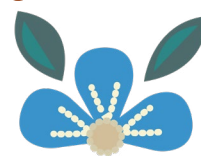
### Your Voice Matters! Take the Survey Today!

#### SURVEY QUESTIONS:

1. **Does your community have a birth to five early childhood program?**  
If yes, what kind of program is it?
2. **Would your community benefit from a virtual home visiting program?**  
If yes, what community are you in?
3. **Does your community have space for office use?**  
If yes, where would this office be located?
4. **Do you know how many children are in your community that are between 0-4?**  
If so, how many?
5. **If you would like to have a Head Start program in your community, who should be contacted about a program?**

#### Questions? Contact:

Jennifer Russell, Head Start Manager  
907-452-8251 ext. 3797 | jennifer.russell@tananachiefs.org



### Benefits of a Head Start Home Visiting Program

- Facilitated learning activities with the parent and child
- Educational activities for the parent and child
- Developmental & health screenings
- Family nights
- Social and emotional support
- Comprehensive family services and support

Access the survey by scanning QR code or by visiting:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SYJYRQK>



SCAN ME FOR SURVEY!





## TCC Seeks Boat Drivers for the 2024 Partners Boat Trip

Tanana Chiefs Conference is planning a boat trip for partners to experience three remote villages in Interior Alaska – Northway, Tetlin, and Tanacross on August 13, 14, & 15, 2024.

We are inviting qualified and experienced boat drivers to submit a letter of interest. Particularly, we seek those with experience navigating the Upper Tanana River to provide boat transportation for participants between Northway, Tetlin, and Tanacross.

### Boat drivers must meet the following requirements:

- Current 6-pack license and insurance
- Provide their own boat
- Current Coast Guard Medical certification
- Current First Aid/CPR Card

### Letters of Interest should include:

- Contact information
- Copy of 6-pack license and associated insurance coverage
- Proposed price and costs. Price should include and detail all costs of operating the boat (i.e., fuel costs, time of boat driver, lodging and meal costs, etc.)
- Proof of liability insurance

If you're interested in this opportunity, please submit a letter of interest by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 to:

Tanana Chiefs Conference

Attn: Shawna Hildebrand, Tribal Development Division Director

122 First Avenue

Fairbanks, AK 99709

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## Emergency Flood Assistance Here for You in Times of Need

Our Emergency Flood Assistance program is available to all Native households that have been displaced because of significant damage to their home, due to flooding.

head of the household has been inundated by flooding, and is uninhabitable causing household members to find shelter in another location.

indicated on the application.

### Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to receive assistance through this program, all of the following conditions must be met;

- A household is defined as "all individuals residing in the house."
- A Native household is a household in which the head of the household is a member of a federally recognized Tribe.
- A Native household that has been displaced because of significant damage to their home (due to flooding) is eligible to receive a one-time, emergency (flood) assistance benefit of \$1,000.
- "Significant damage" means that the current home of the

### How to Apply for Assistance

Individual Tribal members who feel that they meet this criteria should complete a brief application, which is at their local Tribal office, on the TCC website and at the TCC office in Fairbanks.

Completed applications should be submitted at the Tanana Chiefs Conference Office in Fairbanks (or at your Tribal Office if you are currently in the village).

Authorized Tribal staff will review and verify the information included in the application.

### How to Receive Your Check

Benefit checks to households which meet the criteria above will be distributed to the head of the household

### Contact Information

We hope that no one needs this service this coming spring, but if you do, the TCC Emergency Flood Assistance program can be reached at:

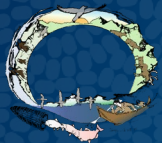
- Fairbanks: 907-452-8251 ext 3086
- Toll Free: 1-800-478-6682
- Fax: 907-459-3870

Scan for the Emergency Flood Assistance Application



<https://tinyurl.com/TCCFloodAssist>





Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference

## The Council Newsletter

(907) 452-8251 ext. 3424  
communications\_dept@tananachiefs.org  
[www.tananachiefs.org](http://www.tananachiefs.org)

Communications Division  
122 First Avenue, Suite 600  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701



Sign-Up to receive  
our E-Newsletter!  
Get important  
updates straight  
to your inbox.



# FIND YOUR PURPOSE

## *Join Our Team!*

### New Vacancies

<b>Eagle</b>	Home Care Provider
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Physician - Women's Health
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Dental Health Aide (DHAT) - Preceptor
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Diabetes & WIC Program Manager
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Health Informatics Specialist
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Phlebotomist
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Travel Coordinator
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Digital Workplace Services Manager
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Environmental Services Technician I
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Environmental Services Technician II
<b>Fairbanks</b>	OEH Sanitation Facility Operation and Maintenance Manager
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Apprentice Optician I
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Registered Nurse III - Oncology Nurse Navigator
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Physician - Urgent Care
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Urgent Care RN Advanced
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Administrative Assistant II - Behavioral Health
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Certified Nurse Assistant
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Behavioral Health Clinical Associate I
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Infection Prevention & Control Program Manager
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Substance Abuse Prevention Program Manager
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Residential Care Coordinator I - Graf
<b>Fairbanks</b>	Administrative Assistant II - Tribal Resource Stewardship
<b>Fort Yukon</b>	Home Care Provider
<b>Huslia</b>	Dental Assistant Intern
<b>Huslia</b>	Community Health Aide/Practitioner
<b>McGrath</b>	Village Public Safety Officer
<b>Nikolai</b>	Tribal Administrator
<b>Old Minto</b>	OMFRC Camp Laborer
<b>Region-Wide</b>	Healthy Transitions Youth & Young Adult Coordinator
<b>Telida</b>	Tribal Administrator
<b>Tok</b>	UTHC Environmental Services Technician I



### Apply Online or Learn About Our Benefits!

Visit our website at [www.tananachiefs.org/careers](http://www.tananachiefs.org/careers) to see a full list of open positions and learn more about the benefits available through Tanana Chiefs Conference.

JOBS LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF APRIL 23, 2024

## Do You Have Medicaid?

Don't Miss This Letter!



## Medicaid Renewal Letters

Medicaid renewal has started the annual renewal process, and the Division of Public Assistance will be reaching out to households to verify information to renew medicaid coverage.

### Questions?

Contact Alternate Resources at  
907-451-6682 ext. 3100

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAY  
6-8**

### 40th Alaska Tribal Court Conference

Westmark • Fairbanks, AK  
Registration Required: <https://bit.ly/48dhlvem>

**MAY  
15-16**

### Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission Annual Meeting

Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall • Fairbanks, AK

**MAY  
22-23**

### Executive Board Meeting

More details to come.

**MAY  
27**

### TCC Offices Closed

Memorial Day

**JUNE  
1-6**

### NCAI Mid-Year Convention

Cherokee, NC