



NWT
**RECREATION
& PARKS**
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25

The NWT Recreation & Parks Association (NWTRPA) was established in 1989 to promote the benefits of recreation. Today, the NWTRPA promotes quality accessible recreation across the NWT by supporting leaders, communities, and partners through training, advocacy, and networking.



Decolonization, Reconciliation, and Racial Equity

Goal: Continue to transform the NWTRPA through a commitment to decolonization, reconciliation, and racial equity.



Sharing Survivor Stories

On October 22, 2024, we launched *How I Survived*, a podcast about recreation at northern residential and day schools, at the Explorer Hotel in Sqómbak'è (Yellowknife, Northwest Territories).

Hosted by Paul Andrew and Crystal Gail Fraser, there are seven episodes in the first season of the podcast. In episode one, project co-leads Crystal Gail Fraser and Jess Dunkin introduce listeners to the project, podcast, and people and organizations who have contributed to *How I Survived*. They also provide an overview of the history of residential and day schooling in the Northwest Territories.

Each of the other six episodes features an in-depth interview with a Survivor about their life before, during, and after residential and/or day school. Season one features interviews with Rassi Nashalik, Dave Poitras, Beatrice Bernhardt, Ernie Bernhardt, the late Agnes Kuptana, and Sharon Anne Firth.

The *How I Survived* Podcast is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and the podcast website (www.howisurvived.ca).

“

“What I have always seen in this project is the resilience and spirit of the Dene through recreation because that has always been an important part of Dene upbringing and continues to be that. Even as kids, we found ways to survive residential schools. Even as kids, we found a way to survive in that environment. That’s where the interviews and podcast come in. They give people an opportunity to talk about those things. It is painful, but despite going through everything we are still sharing the stories.”

- Paul Andrew

”



7

Episodes



1,140

Downloads as of
March 31, 2025.

The How I Survived project and podcast would not be possible without the guidance, wisdom, and experience of the project’s advisory committee.



Back: Crystal Gail Fraser, Rebecca Gray, Lila Fraser Erasmus, Ada Gilday-Dunkin.
Front: Paul Andrew, Jess Dunkin, Lorna Storr, Sheena Tremblay, Sharon Anne Firth.
Missing: Amos Scott.

Communications and Advocacy

Goal: Promote understanding and recognition of the essential role recreation plays in fostering mental, physical, and community wellbeing.



Through our networks and communications channels, we help people in the NWT and beyond learn more about the importance of recreation, as well as job opportunities and activities happening in their community.

OUR REACH



↑ **12,430**
visitors to the
NWTRPA website



↑ **978**
engaged e-news
subscribers



↑ **20%**
increase in Facebook and
Instagram users reached by
NWTRPA content since last year

Bright Spots in Northern Recreation

The Bright Spots session at the NWTRPA's annual conference celebrates innovation and success in recreation and on the land programming in the NWT. It turns our attention to what northern organizations and communities are doing well.

This year, we celebrated two recreation and on the land programs at our annual conference, as well as through our website, newsletter, and social media channels.

Intercultural Centre NWT



The Intercultural Centre NWT in Yellowknife is a settlement and integration services hub for newcomers in the Northwest Territories. For the last two years, it has offered free Land-based activities to newcomers that introduce them to cultural activities like ice fishing, fur workshops, and Dene games.

Totally Arctic Wrestling

Based in Inuvik, Totally Arctic Wrestling is Canada's most northerly and only Inuvialuit-owned pro wrestling promotion.

Totally Arctic Wrestling is a wonderful example of community ownership of recreation. It also represents a different way of approaching recreation.



Training

Goal: Be a leader in recreation training for the Northwest Territories.



The NWTRPA offers a variety of training opportunities for recreation professionals in the NWT, including Recreation North, Recreation for Mental Health, and ICA Facilitators Training.

The Numbers



15

training events



314

participants



18

NWT communities represented

Activate NT: By Youth, For Youth

This year, we also secured funding from the Government of Canada's Canada Service Corps to launch a new grant program for youth: Activate NT.

Activate NT will provide grants of \$5,000 to youth to plan and deliver recreation projects in their communities.

We believe that youth are best positioned to identify their needs and design solutions. This program will empower them to do just that, while also developing their capacity in application and report writing and program planning and administration.



Training Youth, Building Capacity

In 2024, the NWTRPA launched the Foundations of Northern Youth Recreation Leadership (FNYRL) training program.

The Foundations of Northern Youth Recreation Leadership is a made-in-the-North training designed to support young people as they step into recreation leadership roles. This hands-on, practical training program introduces core leadership skills, builds confidence, and strengthens connections to community and culture. It's ideal for youth involved in summer programs, after-school activities, or local events.



2 pilot workshops



14 NWT youth trained

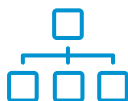
Employment Programs

This year, we managed two youth employment programs for the three territories. Through Green Jobs and the National Safe Swimming Recovery Program:



22

northern communities were supported with wage subsidies and training.



25

organizations were able to offer jobs in recreation and aquatics to youth.

On the Land

Goal: Remain a strong partner and champion for community-directed on the land programs.

The NWTRPA remains a vital member of the administrative team for the NWT On the Land Collaborative. This year we helped to distribute \$1,154,450 in grants to 54 projects across the territory that connect NWT residents with land, culture, and community.

The NWTRPA also offers in-kind training and program support to Collaborative grant recipients, including:



First Aid



Canoe Safety



Water Safety



Land Navigation



Incident Command Support

The Numbers



11

programs supported



9

training events



9

communities represented



113

training participants

A Journey of Growth and Connection

From June 23 to July 4, 2024, 12 youth from across the NWT embarked on an inspiring journey at the Gana River Leadership Camp. Organized by Northern Youth Leadership and supported by the NWTRPA and local partners, the camp provided a unique opportunity for youth to develop leadership skills, deepen their connection to the land, and build lasting friendships.

Throughout the camp, which took place at the Gana River Lodge on Palmer Lake, participants engaged in a variety of recreational activities, including paddle training, hiking, fishing, swimming, and wilderness survival skills, and cultural practices like smudging and storytelling. Evenings were filled with laughter, card games, and reflection around the campfire.

A highlight of the camp was the hike to the Stoneknife River viewpoint. Despite the heat, the youth pushed through, overcoming personal barriers and enjoying a refreshing stop at a glacier for snowball fights and glacier water, a rewarding experience that captured the spirit of adventure and perseverance.

The Gana River Leadership Camp 2024 showcased the power of recreation, the land, and culture to inspire young leaders, build confidence, and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Youth hiking in the Mackenzie Mountains, 2024. Photo courtesy of Northern Youth Leadership.



Participation

Goal: Improve the accessibility, diversity, and quality of community-based recreation programs so that NWT residents of all ages can choose active ways of living.



Active Communities is a diverse and dynamic program area that is dedicated to ensuring that quality recreation is available to everyone in NWT communities.



↑ **15**

NWT communities had residents trained in the Elders in Motion Active Living Exercise Program



↑ **3,920**

NWT residents participated in Get Active events in 20 NWT communities



↑ **2,837**

People participated in Walk to Tuk. Together, they completed 3.8M minutes of physical activity.



↑ **813**

NWT residents took part in Swim to Survive and water safety events funded with 15 NWTRPA grants

SHIFT: Supporting Active Transportation

During the summer of 2024, the NWTRPA supported SHIFT, a bike share program designed to encourage people to choose active transportation. The bicycle fleet included two upright city bikes, two e-city bikes, two cargo bikes, and two e-tricycles.

On scheduled Sundays in Sòmba K'è / Yellowknife, participants picked up bikes. Before heading off, program staff did bike fits, ensured they had safety gear, and provided guidance on planning commutes. Participants had exclusive use of the bicycles for two weeks at no cost. This gave them time to discover how easy it is to bike around town and develop the habit of riding instead of driving.

Fifty-five people used the bikes between July and October, many of whom went on to purchase their own bikes!



"It was a total blast and made zipping around town (with the kids) fun and easy!" - Two-week SHIFT participant

Recreation and Climate Change Adaptation



NWTRPA partnered with the NWT Association of Communities and Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to provide clean and cool air spaces in NWT communities to mitigate effects of climate change and poor air quality due to wildfire smoke.



NWTRPA facilitated the distribution of HEPA air purifiers, cooling systems, and real-time air quality monitoring units to nine communities, helping create cleaner and cooler air spaces during periods when smoke and extreme heat pose health risks.



NWTRPA distributed almost 65,000 N95 masks to NWT communities to mitigate the effects of wildfire smoke on recreation users and communities.

Organization

Goal: Ensure the NWTRPA remains an effectively and sustainably managed organization.



In 2024-25, we:



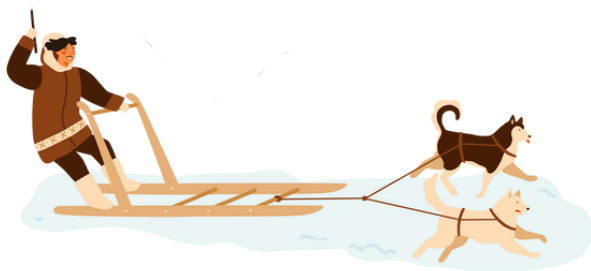
Reviewed and updated our employee handbook to ensure it aligns with the NWT Employment Standards Act and other applicable legislation.



Transitioned to a free membership model. Everyone participating in NWTRPA events or programs now becomes a member. Participants in paid events or programming receive a voting membership valid until the end of the term.



Met with NWT business leaders to explore alternative revenue generation models. Financial sustainability is important to the future of the NWTRPA.



Gratitude

We owe our successful year to the dedication of our Board of Directors, volunteers, staff, and our members. Thank you to our funders and sponsors who make our work possible. We look forward to another great year ahead!



Left to right: Mike Scott, Heather Atkins, Liz Pope, Johanna Elliot, Roxanne Mantla.
Missing: Luisa Ospina, Igor Cvetkovski.

2024-25 Board of Directors

Luisa Ospina (Inuvik) – President
Mike Scott (Hay River) – South Slave Regional Director
Liz Pope (Rádeyǀłkóé) – Director-at-Large
Heather Atkins (Łíídlı́ Kúę) – Dehcho Regional Director
Roxanne Mantla (Gamètì) – North Slave Regional Director
Johanna Elliot (Sòmba K'è) – Yellowknife Regional Director
Igor Cvetkovski (Tulít'a) – Sahtú Regional Director
Ethan Soltys (Inuvik) – Beaufort-Delta Regional

2024-25 Staff

Sheena Tremblay – Executive Director
Tim Van Dam – Interim Executive Director and Director, Active Communities
Nuka De Jocas – Director, Active Communities
David Brinston – Director, On the Land Programs
Adam Woogh – Director, Professional Development
Vince Ret – Membership & Communications Manager
Finnlay Rutherford-Simon – Special Project Coordinator, Environmental Resilience

Financials

Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31, 2025	Budget 2025	Actual 2025	Actual 2024
Revenue			
Contributions			
Corporate contributions	337,215	65,266	70,189
GNWT - Health and Social Services	139,007	132,577	65,949
GNWT - Municipal and Community Affairs	150,500	105,000	150,000
NWT/NU Western Canada Lottery Program	800,000	800,000	800,000
Tłıchq Government	15,000	20,000	37,500
Canada Parks and Recreation Association	23,300	24,223	72,004
Government of Canada funding	-	132,489	-
Fees	105,130	110,569	129,708
Membership income	2,000	520	2,400
Investment income	-	50,455	58,178
Rent in kind	-	21,000	21,000
	1,572,152	1,462,099	1,406,928
Add: Transfer from deferred revenue - prior year	259,695	298,909	231,358
Less: Transfer to deferred revenue - current year	-	(392,714)	(298,909)
Less: Transfer to contributions repayable	-	-	(11,229)
	1,831,847	1,368,294	1,328,148
Expenses			
Accounting and legal	42,500	74,255	63,848
Advertising and promotion	64,227	42,869	44,159
Amortization	-	23,881	20,598
Bad debts	-	24,807	2,238
Conferences and workshops	271,983	172,006	113,919
Dues and fees	11,714	7,904	8,400
Grants and contributions	301,500	106,717	82,739
Insurance	11,705	13,665	9,115
Interest and bank charges	2,500	10,201	3,189
Office	7,841	4,252	10,516
Program contractors	50,297	48,407	118,475
Program materials and supplies	99,606	59,180	56,707
Rent	-	21,000	21,000
Telephone and internet	21,530	26,433	16,673
Travel and accommodation	221,813	51,079	84,946
Wages and benefits	724,631	550,377	590,626
	1,831,847	1,237,033	1,247,148
Excess revenue	-	131,261	81,000

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended March 31, 2025	2025	2024
Assets		
Current		
Cash	874,102	826,385
Accounts receivable	12,394	79,271
Prepaid expenses	129,825	1,058
	1,016,321	906,714
Restricted investments - Legacy and Contingency Funds	565,487	513,872
Tangible capital assets	108,007	91,373
	1,689,815	1,511,959
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	94,068	130,837
Payroll liabilities	38,830	42,686
Government remittances payable	56,620	53,136
Contributions repayable	-	11,229
Deferred revenue	392,715	298,909
	582,233	536,797
Fund Balances		
Unrestricted Net Assets	310,532	245,660
Internally Restricted Tangible Capital Assets Fund	108,007	91,373
Internally Restricted Legacy Fund	510,097	460,342
Internally Restricted Contingency Fund	164,255	164,255
Endowment Rona Williams Tai Chi Fund	14,691	13,532
	1,107,582	975,162
	1,689,815	1,511,959

Audited financial statements prepared by Crowe McKay. No irregularities were found.

These statements have been reviewed and approved by the NWTRPA Board of Directors.



**NWT
RECREATION
& PARKS
ASSOCIATION**

**Get
Active**



**Elders in
Motion**



The NWT Recreation and Parks Association's physical office is located in Sòmba K'è on Chief Drygeese Territory in Treaty 8, the traditional home of the Yellowknives Dene and North Slave Métis, also known as Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

NWT Recreation and Parks Association
4908 49th Street (3rd Floor)
PO Box 841
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N6
Phone: 867 669-8375
Fax: 867 669-6791
Email: admin@nwtrpa.org

Recreation is Life!



nwtrpa.org

