



NOURISHING OUR FUTURE:

An Adaptive Food Security Strategy to Ensure the Cultural and Physical Well-Being of the Kluane First Nation Against the Impacts of Climate Change in the Yukon

Produced by: Kluane First Nation
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Arctic Institute of
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YUKON, CANADA



Nourishing Our Future Kluane First Nation Food Security Project



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Community History

Before the Alaska Highway was built in the 1940s, there was not a permanent settlement in Burwash. Our ancestors moved around our traditional territory acquiring their food from the land and from trading. Below is a story of how our community came to be, described by Mary Jane Johnson.

“...probably the first people that really stayed in this area was Grandpa Jimmy Johnson’s dad, Old Man Johnson and his wife and his family. They travelled up and through this area and travelled all through the mountains and that... Up and through this area and that, it wasn’t — nobody really lived, like, permanent settlements. It was camps, camps, camps all over. Camp up in the Grizzly Creek, camp over on the Big Hor, camp down on the Steele Creek, camp up in Tepee Lake, camp down at the Donjek, camp down at 1118. Camp down— over down below, down here, where the Kluane River goes out— down below there. And then camp over across the lake and camp at Ptarmigan Heart and then camps down at the south end of this lake here, Klu’an Man— and then camps down on the Kaskawulsh, going down toward the coast. That’s how people travel from camp to camp to camp like that.

First people that started to build here was Tom Dickson. Tom Dickson was RCMP down at Dyea during the Gold Rush time. And he met Grandma Louise and they had four kids.... He moved up in this valley here, up in through to the Donjek and he built a homestead up at Wolverine Creek— where Wolverine Creek comes down and then where Rabbit Creek comes down in through there. He built that homestead, and meantime people is travelling and they met up with Tom and Louise. That’s where my Grandma Sue was born— up in the Wolverine Creek. This is the first people that build any kind of a house around here. Meantime, down in Lynx City, that big community down there, some houses went up down through that area too from those Gold Rush people coming and used it as a little bit of like a trading post.

Around 1903, Eugene Jacquot and them came. Eugene Jacquot and Old Louis Jacquot came and they made a trading post down here at Burwash. They looked around this whole country, you know, to see where’s a good place to make a trading post. They set up trading post down there... Old Louis— he got married to Copper Joe’s daughter, Mary Joe— Mary Copper Joe. Eugene Jacquot— he got married to Tom Dickson and Louise George’s daughter, Ruth Jacquot — Ruth Donnelly. Everybody call her “Grandma Pete”... Meantime, Tom Dickson and Grandma Louise built a house down below at Jeta li and Grandpa Jimmy Johnson met up with them and then they became close friends. So Grandpa Jimmy Johnson built a house down here on the beach... They built a house down here and he was married to Big Grandma. Big Grandma’s dad is Tlingit Clan... Big Grandma had four children and she got sick... Old Copper Joe— Copper George Joe came to Grandpa Jimmy Johnson and he said, ‘You got four children. Your wife is sick. How are you going to look after your four kids? They’re all small. You take my daughter for your wife’... So Grandpa Jimmy Johnson— he’s married to Big Grandma, he’s got four kids— he’s got Grandma Copper Lily now as his wife. And Grandma Copper Lily and Grandpa Jimmy Johnson had 14 kids. Big Grandma and Grandpa Jimmy Johnson had 11 kids— 25 kids altogether.

So that’s where all of us come from.”

After the Alaska Highway was built in the 1940s, market food from other communities became much more accessible to us. Now, we rely on both market and traditional foods.

The Project

Many Kluane First Nation citizens and other Kluane Lake residents have noticed changes on the land, such as the melting of glaciers, the thawing of ice on the lake in the winter, and the drying up of rivers and creeks. These changes are affecting our traditional food sources; we are very concerned about the decline in moose, caribou, salmon and trout populations. Not only are our traditional foods becoming more difficult to find and access, but also buying groceries at the stores in Whitehorse and Tok is becoming more expensive, with rising gas and market food prices. As a result, Kluane First Nation has prioritized the development of a **community food security strategy** that will maintain our current traditional food sources, enhance our ability to grow our own food, and contribute to making our community more food secure for the future.

Food Security: When all people at all times have enough access to affordable, nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods.



Objectives

- Gather information about local experiences with climate change and lifestyle changes related to food and nutrition.
- Find ways KFN citizens and other residents can adapt to ensure there will be local, nutritious food available for the community now and into the future.
- Identify ancient methods of conservation for moose and other important food species.
- Discuss options for a community food security strategy.

Team Food Security



To guide the project team in their research, a local Advisory Committee called *Team Food Security* was formed. Committee members included Elders, KFN staff, and community members from Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay. Members were invited to participate based on their local expertise in the areas of KFN lands, gardening, harvesting, infrastructure and public works, knowledge of regional food security, and agriculture.

Team Food Security members included: Herb Danroth, Mary Easterson, Marsha Flumerfelt, Sam Gallagher, Mary Jane Johnson, and Sandy Johnson.

The Project Team

Norma Kassi: Principal Investigator,
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Mallory Coletta: Research Assistant,
*Arctic Institute of Community-Based
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Brenda Carson: Community
Coordinator

Jared Dulac: Youth Research
Assistant
and Videographer, *KFN*

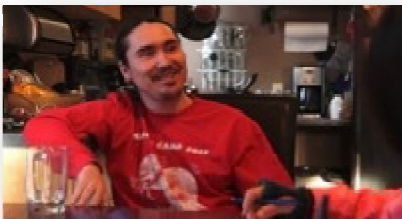
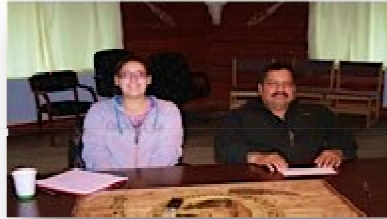
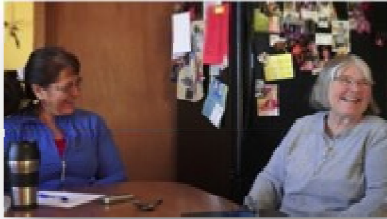
Alanna Dickson: Youth Research Assistant, *KFN*

Arthur (Tookie) Mercredi and Yudii Mercredi: Additional Videography and DVD production.



The Research Process

The *Nourishing Our Future* food security project took place in 2014. The project team held focus groups and did over 30 interviews with community members in Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay and Silver City, to learn about their ideas for a sustainable food security plan and to listen to stories about what life was like before the Alaska highway was built.



Interview and Focus Group Discussions

At the beginning of each interview and focus group, Norma provided background information on the project as it related to local food security in the KFN community.

“Your Leadership has proposed to the Health Canada Climate Change and Adaptation program for funds to develop a Food Security Strategy for KFN. They’re worried about all the environmental changes in your homelands, and the declining traditional food sources such as salmon, caribou and moose. They’re also concerned about the rising costs of transportation, energy, oil and gas and about how all this is affecting your food sources from the markets as well as the food you get from the land. So in order to develop a long term plan to ensure that there will be enough healthy foods available for the people living here in your traditional territory now and in the future, they are now collecting as much information from the people as they can to create this plan.”

Questions Asked:

- What needs to happen to ensure the community continues to be food secure in the future?
- How is sharing working now and how can it work in the future? What steps do we need to take to ensure equal distribution?
- What kinds of environmental changes have you seen that have affected traditional food sources?
- What kinds of foods do you think could replace moose, caribou, and salmon?
- How has hunting changed?
- For the future, in times of need, do you think the community could consider community harvesting and distribution of traditional foods?
- How can we ensure everyone, especially single mothers and children, have access to traditional and nutritious foods in the long term?
- What do you think of having a community garden or greenhouse? How do you think this could work? What kinds of things would you like to see grown?
- Do you think Burwash could have a community store? Would you shop there? What kinds of foods do you think should be sold?
- How can we ensure that cultural education continues for the youth?

Project-related Capacity Building Towards the Community's Future

In order to raise awareness about local food security issues and the project, the Project Team engaged community members in several capacity building activities. **(A timeline of these events is included in appendix 1.)**

Presentations and Discussions

Norma and Jody Butler Walker (AICBR Executive Director) gave presentations to the Elders Council, Team Food Security and the youth researchers on food security and climate change.



Youth Training Workshop

Alanna Dickson and Jared Dulac were hired as youth research assistants to help Norma and Mallory with interviews and with developing a DVD for the project. In January 2014, Norma and Mallory conducted a two-day workshop with Alanna and Jared to prepare them for conducting community research. They had discussions on climate change and food security at the global, national, and local levels. They also learned how to conduct interviews using active listening skills and probing questions, and how to seek to understand what people are saying. From the training, Jared and Alanna learned how to communicate in ways that demonstrate confidence as a researcher and respect for the interview participants.

Alanna and Jared wrote summaries on what they learned in the workshop.



"In these past two days, I have learned about past traditions, what our future might look like, and what I can do to help right now. I may not have learned how to change the climate, but I have learned ways to help KFN members get what they want out of the 'Nourishing Our Future' project. There are a lot of projects that would be good for our community to have, such as a greenhouse or gardens I look forward to helping out my friends and the families of Burwash."

---Alanna Dickson



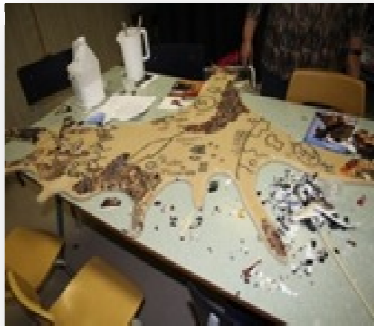
"I was a little concerned about joining this workshop with this nourishing food project only because I was hesitant to participate. But now that I have a little more clarity about the purpose of this project, I'm glad that I'll have an opportunity to express my opinion about the project through my expertise in filming. Coming up with a final video was simple enough. After Norma's presentation on the first day of training, I was inspired enough to actually have an idea for the final video. Two videos will have to be made: the first video being a short two minute, inspiring, awareness video; the second being longer with insightful, controversial video for to people to get worked up on--- getting close with elders and the younger people.

It'll be stressful like most productions are, but at least I'm doing something for my community and my land in hopes that a very strong message will be sent."

---Jared Dulac

School-Based Project

Working with local, Yukon artist, Corrie Atkinson McLeod, the Kluane Lake School kids created a mosaic art piece related to food security in their community. After a discussion with the kids and their teachers on what a sustainable food system means to them and our community, Corrie came up with a design for the mural based on the kids' ideas. The antler represents the kids' perspective of their community, home and their hunting traditions and culture. Corrie and the children worked collaboratively to put the mosaic together, which has been installed in Jacquot Hall.



Community Gardening Workshop

In March 2014, Sandy Johnson, Marsha Flumerfelt, Alanna and Jared were invited to a community gardening workshop in Whitehorse, where they connected with other Yukon gardeners and gathered useful information on how to manage and sustain a community garden. The workshop was co-hosted by AICBR and the Yukon Government Agriculture Branch. Consultation with these individuals will be essential for planning and developing a community garden in our community.



Film Training

Jared and Alanna, along with Yudii Mercredi, attended a film making workshop conducted by Arthur (Tookie) Mercredi in Whitehorse. Here, they learned how to shoot, produce, and edit a film. They used this training to produce the final DVD for this project.



Alanna and Jared's Reflections of the Project

After the research was completed, Alanna and Jared wrote about their experiences and what they learned from working on this project. Below are excerpts from their reflection pieces.

“Working on the interviews, I have learned a lot. I was able to help with interviews, learn more about the effects of global warming in my country, and more about my fellow citizens. I got to hear stories I’ve never heard before. I enjoyed them a lot. Food security to me is not just about keeping our traditional foods. It’s a gateway opportunity to bring back the traditions our Elders learned and lived by.”

---Alanna Dickson



“Living this far from any true civilization, gives both a positive outlook [and] a negative atmosphere. Like any other community trying to reconnect lost ties with each other, it has its toll. Becoming self-sufficient is the legitimate key to success and happiness...”

When I was younger, stories [from] elders was always a treat. I could listen to elders all day if I could... These remarkable, insightful elders won’t be here much longer [and] neither will their wisdom. Being able to record these teachings and saving them forever is what makes my job so fascinating.”

---Jared Dulac

Ongoing KFN Community Capacity Building: What's happening now?

Developing a sustainable food system is a priority for KFN, which is why we have put on many different events and activities for the community to come together to learn and celebrate. It is also why we have created opportunities for the youth to learn about their culture and build connections with Elders and other knowledge holders. The following are some of these initiatives that are related to community food security.

Community Activities

Skills Development Workshops

A few people have expressed some concerns regarding food wastage; in particular, the discarding of freezer burned meat. In an effort to address this issue and encourage community sharing, KFN, in collaboration with the Dän Keyi Renewable Resources Council (DKRRC), organized some skills development workshops that focused on different methods of processing and preserving meat.

“This year we thought we would try for the first time an attempt at teaching people a new skill along with utilizing the moose and distributing it to a wide audience... you know, how you can use your subsistence harvest more thoroughly, and instead of freezer-burned meat going to be discarded at the end of August, when you go hunt your next moose, then hey, that's still really good for sausage-making.”

Moose Stew-Jarring



KFN received donations of moose meat from Ruby Range Outfitters and Dickson Outfitters. The meat donated by Ruby Range was used for a moose stew-jarring workshop held in Burwash Landing in January 2014. Using pressure cookers, workshop participants cooked and preserved several jars of moose-meat stew. For many, this was a new learning experience. The jars were distributed among participants and given to other community members. The meat donated by Dickson Outfitters was used for a KFN citizen's potlatch. KFN thanks Ruby Range Outfitters and Dickson Outfitters for their continued donations!

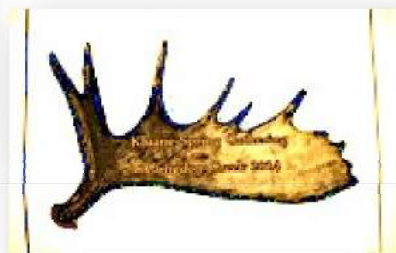
Sausage-Making



In February 2014, the DKRRC brought in a butcher from Whitehorse to instruct a sausage-making workshop held at the RRC building in Destruction Bay. Twenty-five community members, including youth, participated and took home the sausages they made.

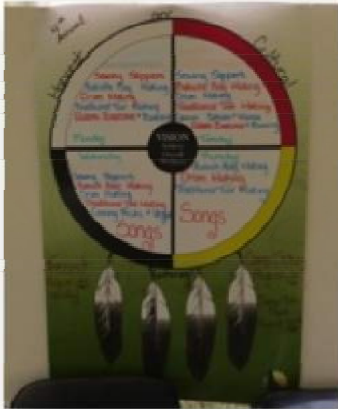
Spring Gathering, 2014

Many people have expressed concerns about the low moose population in the Duke River area, which is now at critically low numbers. In response to this, a committee was formed to create a strategy that will address these concerns. The committee consists of KFN staff members, the Dän Keyi Renewable Resources Council, members from Parks Canada, and staff from Environment Yukon. On May 10th, 2014, the committee hosted a gathering at Congdon Creek Campground with the purpose of bringing the community and other concerned citizens together to discuss ideas and concerns about moose hunting in the Duke River area. The committee presented a draft of the proposed Moose Management Strategy and received feedback from the community and other people who attended the gathering.



Harvest Camp

For the last four years, KFN has held a harvest camp at the end of August where everyone comes together to participate in harvesting activities and celebrate. Over the years, activities have included: gopher hunting, drum making, moccasin sewing and babiche making, traditional tool and jewelry making from sheep horn, cutting and drying salmon and moose, canning fruits and vegetables, bannock making, feasting, and celebrating. This camp provides a wonderful opportunity for young people and Elders to learn from each other, experience traditional cultural activities, and do things together on the land.



“Everything that we are doing right now is preparing ourselves for the winter. So whether that be making moccasins to warm our feet to keep us warm, even our loved ones are making us moccasins... We also have drum making and that’s very important because the drumbeat is the heartbeat of our people. So that’s very cool to see that many of our people are making drums and coming out with a finished product that they can be proud of... We also have a fish shack where we are smoking fish and canning fish and that’s preparing for the winter months. And we’re also canning berries and fruit that have been collected as well. So those cans, that canned salmon, and those canned berries, will last for a long time, and they will last us into the winter months. Today we use cans, but a long time ago they would have to use different methods of preserving throughout the winter months.”

“You know chatting and smiling; the kids are there, the adults are there. It’s, really — I really like harvest camp. I think it’s... just brings people together and... in a relaxed setting.”

Youth-focused Activities

Day Care Language and Cultural Lessons

The daycare incorporates language and cultural lessons into their curriculum. The children are learning Southern Tutchone, traditional songs and dances, and they get to try many different traditional foods, such as dried salmon and moose meat. The children enjoy these activities and feel proud of their culture.

“That’s what I’m teaching those young kids: to be proud to sing that Southern Tutchone song. They yell at the top of their voices in that daycare when they’re singing. That’s strength; that’s power; that’s everything... what I teach those little kids over there is be proud to sing that song. This is part of Kluane.”

“I just tell them that ‘Okay, today we’re going to have salmon and this is what I’m going to do.’ I bring a whole fish in, fillet it and I talk to them about, you know, what you can do with the salmon. You can dry it, you can jar it and I’ll show them the samples. I actually dried some salmon for them and brought it back and gave it to them and they loved it. They did. They ate it. They just gobbled it right up.”

Summer Camp Cultural Lessons



The summer day camp manager integrates traditional cultural activities into camp programming. Elders and other community members are brought in to lead different cultural activities, such as preserving meat and fish, gardening, fishing, as well as harvesting berries, and plant identification. Traditional activities are also one of the focuses of Cultus Camp.



Muskrat Camp

From March 31st- April 4th 2014, Kluane Lake School hosted its annual Muskrat Camp at Lake Creek Campground. The camp is structured around active, hands-on learning using both traditional knowledge and western science to teach young people the importance of their food from both traditional and modern ways of knowing. School subjects, such as science, language and social studies, are taught with the focus on muskrats and other outdoor activities.



Muskrat Camp not only provides young people with a unique learning experience, but also acts as a community building exercise, where students, Elders, and many other community members come together to teach and learn.

“Right now we’re doing a muskrat harvest camp, right, so this is very important. If the children can go out, they need to know everything from preserving the fur right through to even eating and how to cook the meat properly. So these types of camps are very important.”



“Now what we see is that the community trusts the organization of what is happening enough that they’re saying, ‘You know, I know how to do this. Are you interested — can I be part of that camp? Can I show my skills to this camp — my knowledge?’”

Kids in the Kitchen



This program was a hands-on cooking and nutrition education program, which was funded by Yukon Government Health and Social Services during 2013-2014. In Kluane Lake School in Destruction Bay, kids aged 6-11 participated in ten cooking sessions, where they worked right in the kitchen learning to prepare nutritious food. They also learned about nutrition and about the importance of sharing. Many youth and other community members have said they would like to have programs like this one continue to further develop their cooking skills.

Day Care and After School Program Greenhouse

Sandy Johnson and Marsha Flumerfelt applied for funding in Spring 2014 to buy a small greenhouse and start a gardening program with the daycare. This project stemmed from an idea raised by the community to start educating the children at a very young age about growing food. The kids are enjoying growing food and learning about gardening.



What Did People Say?

The following is an overview of the recommendations for actions that came out of the interviews and focus groups.

1. Climate Change: Protecting Our Homelands

- Promote and encourage conservation and protection of Kluane First Nation traditional territory.
- Continue monitoring key areas showing signs of climate change in the KFN territory, as well as the effects on traditional food resources in these areas.

2. Sharing

- Increase traditional sharing practices with a focus on community-wide sharing of traditional foods, including sharing in the harvesting, preparing, and distributing of food.
- Work to increase trading between families, communities, and Nations, as it was done in the past.

3. Community Hunts and Fishing

- Organize the harvesting and equal distribution of traditional foods throughout the community with a focus on children and single parents.
- Develop and implement a plan for processing, distributing, and storing meat from Outfitter donations and community hunts.

4. Ancient Methods of Conservation

- Encourage ancient methods of conservation for declining animal populations, such as moose, caribou, sheep and trout (i.e. no hunting in specific areas for a period of time to allow for replenishment of fish and wildlife populations).
- Promote eating other species, such as bison, as a way to conserve moose.

5. Outfitting Concessions in KFN Territory

- Look for ways to have greater control over hunting and conservation in Kluane First Nation traditional territory.
- Develop a plan for picking up, processing and storing meat given to the community from Outfitters.

6. Youth Empowerment and Mentorship

- Continue to create opportunities for relationship building and mentoring between youth and Elders and specific knowledge holders.
- Build on existing opportunities for youth to engage in more traditional cultural activities and practices.
- Continue hosting activities with youth that are seasonally appropriate.
- Develop a plan to involve and engage more children, youth and young adults in land and water based activities.

7. Healthy Eating

- Increase opportunities in the community for young children to eat a wider range of traditional foods.
- Create more opportunities to eat both traditional and locally produced foods as part of a regular diet.
- Raise awareness about the importance of healthy eating practices.

8. A Community Garden

- Encourage home gardening with community members.
- Assess soil quality in the region and create quality soil, possibly by composting, or bring in fertile soil from somewhere else.
- Provide opportunities for experiential training and education related to growing food, using local gardeners as teachers.
- Consider managing a community garden as an economic initiative, employing skilled and experienced growers and business managers.

9. A Community Greenhouse

- Encourage home gardening with community members.
- Assess soil quality in the region and create quality soil, possibly by composting, or bring in fertile soil from somewhere else.
- Provide opportunities for experiential training and education related to growing food, using local gardeners as teachers.
- Consider building and managing a community garden as an economic initiative, employing skilled and experienced growers and business managers.

10. Agricultural Projects

- Encourage more organized agricultural activities in the community, such as producing eggs and pork.
- Continue to support community members trying to raise animals for food and encourage others to try.
- Provide opportunities for hands-on training and education related to raising animals for food.

11. Community Store and Storage

- Determine the possibility of opening a small store which sells locally produced foods and staples to the community.
- Ensure that any store manager hired is experienced and knowledgeable in running a small, rural business/co-op.
- Explore options of community ownership of a storage facility and freezers.
- Encourage community members to continue to stock basic supplies.

12. Community Celebrations and Get-togethers

- Increase the number of occasions for the community to come together and participate in cultural activities focusing on traditional dances, songs, and honouring ceremonies.
- Continue to engage children and youth in cultural traditions and teach them about the importance of maintaining traditional lifestyles.

Results

This section is a detailed summary of the results based on the project interviews and focus group. All the interviews and the focus group were recorded and transcribed. Norma and Mallory analyzed this material and organized it into themes that emerged as important issues. These results were then presented to Chief and Council and *Team Food Security* for verification. Overall, there were 12 major themes. The following is a summary of these themes, including quotes from several community members and recommended actions to take to put the food security strategy into action.

Climate Change: Protecting Our Homelands

Kluane First Nation peoples have a deep connection to the land and water in our traditional territory. It is the source of our traditional foods and is at the centre of our cultural and spiritual traditions. Climate change not only has an impact on the regional environment, but also threatens our survival as First Nation people. Because of this, our Elders emphasized the importance of protecting our homelands, our waters, and the resources within them.



“We need to take care of the animals in this world because they rely on us and we rely on them to survive.”

“We have a connection to the land. The land teaches us many things and we have a spiritual connection in terms of everything... the animals, the trees... everything in this world is sacred. It’s supposed to be sacred and we’re supposed to take care of it and we’re supposed to protect it for the future generations.”



Climate Change Actions

- Promote and encourage conservation and protection of Kluane First Nation traditional territory.
- Continue monitoring key areas showing signs of climate change in the KFN territory, as well as the effects on traditional food resources in these areas.
- Continue educating and raising awareness on the effects of climate change in our traditional homelands.

Sharing

Right now, sharing is a strong practice within families; however, several people have expressed the desire to go back to community-wide sharing practices.

“Got to learn to share. When I was growing up, person kill one moose in the village, everybody share it so you don’t have to kill two, three.”

“I remember my dad and my mom always had meat in their fish frame. They used to camp up at Christmas Creek hill and my dad would have meat hanging. We can remember people coming and just cutting meat off and my mom and dad would just sit back. I walked up to my dad one day and I said, ‘Dad, why are you letting everybody take meat from your fish frame?’ He said, ‘I’m not worried because the more I give, the more I get back.’...I always remember that.”



“It’s not like the olden days where they would get a moose and then everybody would have a piece of it. To me, I think that’s one of the big changes of sharing — you know, everybody brings stuff home and put it in their deep freeze and then that’s about the extent of it.”

It was also recommended that sharing and trading traditional food within the Southern Tutchone Nation and with other Yukon First, Alaska and Northern British Columbia First Nations happen more often.



“We’ve got the Southern Tutchone Tribal Council that acts a liaison for Champagne and Aishihik, KFN, and Ta’an. So I think if something was identified that Ta’an people don’t have any sheep and they need some, I’m sure we could probably share some sheep.”

“But that’s — people traded. They traded up and through to Copper Center. They traded down there at Coffee Creek and they traded down Fort Selkirk when that trading post went down through that way and then they traded down over here at Carmacks. Those were the big trading areas...”

“If we strengthen ties with communities through food, then you probably have won half the battle on building strong relationships with your neighbours. I mean, just changing the way that we think about each other and food and our relationship and that it’s important. It’s really important.”

Sharing Actions

- Increase traditional sharing practices with a focus on community-wide sharing of traditional foods, including sharing in the harvesting, preparing, and distributing of food.
- Work to increase trading between families, communities, and Nations, as it was done in the past.
- Discuss and develop a plan for sharing traditional food sources.

Community Hunts and Fishing

Several community members have suggested that in times of need, a community hunt be organized. This is where hunters are hired to harvest food for the community and have it distributed equally to community members, ensuring that families with small children be a priority. As well, when meat is brought into the community from these hunts, a plan needs to be in place for processing, storing and distributing it.



“I guess more or less just going out on the land and doing it ourselves would be nice. But maybe having it scheduled, having certain days of the season where we actually just go out as a few people and gather the food ourselves... It would have to be arranged. If we could do that, I think there would be abundant supplies of food for us to store away in the freezer.”

“The other thing, too, is I think the Band should have is Band hunters... If at fall time, certain time of the year... You have three or four Band hunters. They go out there. They bring the moose in, whatever. You give it to everybody in the village who needs it.”

Community Hunting and Fishing Actions

- Organize the harvesting and equal distribution of traditional foods throughout the community with a focus on children and single parents in times of need.
- Develop and implement a plan for processing, distributing, and storing meat from Outfitter donations and community hunts.

Ancient Methods of Conservation



Community members have expressed that ancient methods of conservation be put in place, such as no hunting or fishing for a few years, in areas where the animals or fish are in decline. People are specifically concerned about the decline of the moose population in the Duke River area and about the trout population in Kluane Lake.

“Closing off the Donjek for hunting for two or three years. That would help so much it’s not even funny because everybody goes there now and part of the reason is because there’s easy access in there. It’s right off the highway; there’s a road that goes right in there and everybody is going in there and pegging off whatever they can, right? It’s really abundant place but it won’t be for long if this keeps up so I like the idea of changing locations for sure.”

“You can’t continually go to the same hotspot; you have to adapt to the changing environment, right? There used to be lots of moose in the Duke River. Now they’re down at the Koidern River, right? You have to adapt to that and find them.”

“...a long time ago when I was small, we used to be able to go across the lake and take 300 fish out of fish net. You’re lucky today you’re taking four or five or seven.”

Several people have suggested that the community focus on other protein sources, such as bison, and reduce the number of moose being taken. It was recommended that they go back to eating more small animals, such as fish, rabbits, gophers, porcupines and beavers in order to conserve the moose population.

“I think people have to start liking bison meat because there’s lots of it... so if we’re having a moose problem that people should be ready, prepared to switch over.”

“Like, you can target different animals. There’s bison out there. We’re having issues with moose right now, so why not hunt bison?”



“Our parents always say, “You hunt and take the moose here now but in springtime you don’t get cows or no moose.” Hardly any moose at all in the springtime. You just survive on fish, other little animals like rabbits, gophers and maybe porcupine. People eat beaver so that save our moose till the fall time.”

Conservation Actions

- Encourage ancient methods of conservation for declining animal populations, such as moose, caribou, sheep and trout (i.e. no hunting in specific areas for a period of time to allow for replenishment of fish and wildlife populations).
- Promote eating other species, such as bison, as a way to conserve the moose.

Outfitting Concessions within KFN Territory

Several people have suggested that KFN look at purchasing the two outfitters in the region as a means to gain more control over their lands and as a way to conserve traditional food sources.



“Outfitting used to be the main staple to our people here... that’s what all our grandpas did around here. That’s how they made their money.”

“And I think that’s the best use that you can ever find for those hunting outfits is to buy them out and you keep the license...”

“...you know, everybody here hunted at one time in the outfits, right?.. That’s the way we

made our living here. And you know, I think if you want to control the area... you control the outfitting.”

Several people have also expressed the need for a plan for processing and storing the meat that is brought into the community from donations from outfitters.

“There has to be some kind of a game plan once the meat comes in.”

Outfitting Actions

- Look for ways to have greater control over hunting and conservation in Kluane First Nation traditional territory.
- Develop a plan for processing and storing meat given to the community from Outfitters.

Youth Empowerment and Mentorship

Many people are concerned that the children and youth are becoming disconnected from our Southern Tutchone heritage. Elders are concerned that our community might lose our culture and our traditional knowledge if it is not passed onto our young people before the Elders are gone.

“We don’t have very many Elders left to teach these teachings on... Right now we have two oldest Elders that know the Southern Tutchone language through and through. And what happens after they’re gone?”



“It is kind of the world that we are living in. We can’t always be home and we can’t always go out and talk to them, because Elders — they need time to open up as well, right, but maybe it’s like some people who are in the community can start with the Elders and say, ‘Hey, we want to do this camp with youth’...having them to be ready for when youth do come home, so then it would kind of be a crash course — a week out on the land with our Elders and you know, things are ready and stuff like that. That’s exactly — that’s the reality of it is like we’re not there but we want to do things when we do come home.”

Everyone really appreciates Muskrat Camp, Harvest Camp, and Cultus Camp. Several people want there to be more activities like these that engage young people in KFN traditional culture. It was suggested that a strategic plan be developed for educating youth on the traditional ways of hunting, culture, customs and language.



“If we don’t teach the younger generation about our culture, our language, there’s no way that they’re going to survive without it... it’s all going to die out and they won’t be able to live off the land.”

“It’s really critical that we now focus on the younger generation to ensure that they have the knowledge that we have, that we start handing down the knowledge. If we don’t... they’re going to be lost in the future because

they don’t have the foundation... the spiritual connection to the land and the water... They need to see the path of their ancestors.”

“We got to train our small ones. We got to train them in the traditional way of life.”

Hunters, fishers and gardeners in the community have offered to mentor the youth when they go out onto the land to do these things.

“If they have the willingness to learn, I guarantee that our age group would be willing to take those kids under our wing and say, ‘Okay, you guys have the willingness; you want to learn the traditional way of life? We will teach you the best we can of what we know, and hopefully you’ll be able to pass that on to your children.’”



“I would like to – I can hang fishnets and mend them and all that. I would like to get a net and hang it with the youth – teach them. I can cut holes in that net and I’ll show them how to fix it back up.”

“My heart is open to anybody, especially the young people. That’s where I’m geared toward is the younger generation and I’m willing to step up to the plate and work with them.”

Youth Empowerment Actions

- Continue to create opportunities for relationship building and mentoring between youth and Elders and specific knowledge holders.
- Build on existing opportunities for youth to engage in more traditional cultural activities and practices.
- Continue hosting activities with youth that are seasonally appropriate.

Healthy Eating

Traditional foods are still an important part of the local diet, especially for the Elders. Several people claimed it is the high consumption of fish that has helped to keep the community healthy in the past.

“We ate a lot of fish it seems like and we did. We ate rabbits, gophers, porcupine, moose and ate a lot of it — like, on a weekly basis. Not too much processed food back, you know, when I was a kid. I think that’s why a lot of our Elders get to be old and they never had no diabetes. Diabetes just started coming in after, I think, a lot of the processed food started showing up. I think that had a lot to do with it — the country foods.”





“Kids who get marrow... that’s iron in the moose leg. That’s why they got tough legs — bone — if you feed us like that and see we have strong bones. They usually [eat] bone soup too... It got calcium in it they say. Make your bones strong. Boil it a long time. Get all of the calcium out of the bone and then you drink sometime...”

Many have expressed concern, however, that the younger generation is eating more processed, store-bought foods than they are traditional and some are worried about how this food is impacting their health.

“The kids are going away for school and I’ve seen it myself that you’re perfectly accustomed to the gopher and the dried meat and all the traditional foods, but after a whole winter of McDonald’s, that doesn’t sound so appealing when you’re coming to grandma’s house anymore. It takes a whole summer’s effort to bring them back to ‘this is good; you like this.’ ... You feel like you have to start over every spring, you know, and reintroduce those kind of concepts and those teachings.”



“It’s the understanding about how food is treated now and what it can do to you if you consume too much of one thing or unhealthy things and these long-term effects, right?... You know that’s like everything from the food you’re eating – high sugars, like refined carbohydrates, dairy even and things like toxic things, like the processed food is toxic.”

Several people have suggested that more education on the nutrition of foods, traditional, locally grown, and store-bought, is needed.

“I think the thing that we lack is an understanding about nutrition because if you take like traditional foods, there is not really a scientific breakdown that we talk about when we eat moose meat or if you – why would you boil, you know, stomach or anything like that? But there is a reason behind all of these – the things traditionally that we eat.”



“So in order for us to educate our little ones to eat traditional foods — it starts from home, educating the children and saying, ‘You know, we have to learn to eat moose, caribou, whatever.’ Whatever the traditional foods are, they have to learn to eat it at home.”

Healthy Eating Actions

- Increase opportunities in the community for young children to eat a wider range of traditional foods.
- Create more opportunities to eat both traditional and locally produced foods as part of a regular diet.
- Raise awareness about the importance of healthy eating practices.

A Community Garden

The Kluane Lake region has a vibrant history of growing and there is record of locally produced vegetables being grown over a long period of time before the Alaska Highway was built. Today, some people are interested in reviving a growing culture.

“Historically, I look back on how this place survived before the highway and how they had things figured out...they didn’t need power; they didn’t need cars. They had huge gardens that fed many people.”



“When we first came here I think — Betty and Leland still owned the lodge, so yeah, they always had this huge garden. They would pretty well feed all of the community with their garden.”

“We really have to also change the way we think of a traditional lifestyle or a healthy lifestyle too because traditionally we’re not growers; we’re harvesters. But we have to become growers because the land is just not providing enough and we’re not as mobile as we were before...”

For a community greenhouse and a community garden, local gardeners have advised that adequate soil be brought in. It was also noted that there is quality topsoil near Silver City Road, which could be used in the community (Hik, D., Arctic Institute of North America in Silver City, personal communication, July 30, 2014).

“You need the soil. The soil we have here is – its got lots of clay. We have to look at trucked-in soil.”

“...you really need to bring in some decent soil, like and it’s – I went to that master gardener course one year, and this particular area, Kluane, has the fewest frost free days, the most wind, the least fertile soil. It’s a really difficult place to grow here, so you’d really have to invest money to bring in some compost, probably from the dump in Whitehorse.”

Many people suggested having both a large community garden for a commercial operation as well as having individual plots for people to grow their own food. Like the greenhouse, it is felt that a few dedicated and trained people would need to be regularly managing it, and what is grown should be based on what people want to eat and on market demands.



“The only way it’s going to work is if there’s some training involved, it’s run by some kind of a program with funding, and that they can put their produce out for sale.”

“I would foresee a community garden that potentially can have plots for individuals but I would see a community garden as a place of employment. I would see it as a business and one that would supply food to the First Nation for their various social programs; that would supply food potentially to the school; that could supply food to Elders and community members...”

“Grow what you need and can use and you know that it’s going to work, then go with it. If you can sell it, if there’s a market, which there could be with Talbot Arms and if this store here ever got up and running. So you could have a market for it in the locals.”

Community Garden Actions

- Encourage home gardening with community members.
- Assess soil quality in the region and create quality soil, possibly by composting, or bring in fertile soil from somewhere else.
- Provide opportunities for experiential training and education related to growing food, using local gardeners as teachers.
- Consider managing a community garden as an economic initiative, employing skilled and experienced growers and business managers.

A Community Greenhouse

A feasibility study conducted by Kluane Community Development Corporation was completed under this project. Three key recommendations included:

- Using the geothermal well will be very useful in making the greenhouse a commercial operation.
- Training and skills development need to be incorporated into the original greenhouse plan to ensure its sustainability.
- If the purpose of the greenhouse is to generate profits, this should be the focus of the operation. Other objectives, such as increasing employment, lowering food prices, and health and wellness programming, could be incorporated after the greenhouse has reached its goal of generating an income for the community.

For all of the recommendations, see the full report, which can be accessed at the Kluane Community Development Corporation.

Some citizens have suggested starting with a small greenhouse and to grow things based on what people want to eat. Many people have concerns about the management and functioning ability of a community greenhouse if volunteers run it alone. However, if KFN can obtain the commitment of a few dedicated people or hire a greenhouse gardener/manager, they feel it is a viable project.



“...to get that greenhouse thing going – and this is from looking at how different things have worked in the past – you need to have a committed master gardener or master gardeners.”

“I think it would work well as long as we have dedicated and committed people to going up there and weeding and watering and taking care of it. I think it would be really beneficial — fresh vegetables — like that would be great.”

“You take into account the amount of people that are in Burwash and then tailor your greenhouse just to fit those needs.”

In general, people think using the geothermal well as a way to heat the greenhouse is a good idea, but there is concern about contaminants in the water of the well; this would need to be dealt with before it could be used to grow food. Several people have said they like the idea of being able to extend the growing season by using the geothermal well to heat a greenhouse.

“And by using that greenhouse – a well-designed greenhouse – possibly along with that geothermal heat, you could extend your growing season on the side – the winter and fall season so you can plant earlier and harvest – you keep harvesting later until possibly even until November. You could even start growing in March so how long will that give you? You could extend your growing season by maybe two or three months.”

It is felt that a community greenhouse could be successful as an economic initiative if there is community support and buy-in. People have said they think it should start as a small-scale operation and be expanded as it is able to produce more. A local restaurant owner has also said she would purchase locally grown produce if enough was available—this could be a potential economic initiative.

“But what might work is a small – like a greenhouse on a small scale.”

“Yeah. I don’t know. I love it. Again, history says it’s a wonderful idea. It works well, but I know just from talking to people about attempts in the past that for various reasons it hasn’t necessarily worked. So I feel like you need the whole community to kind of get on board with it and feel like some ownership behind that idea.”



“And it would be fantastic if a community greenhouse could supply fresh vegetables to the community and that would be the go-to place where it would be sort of great if it was — if we started thinking, ‘Okay, I need to get carrots’ and then the garden doesn’t have carrots. ‘Okay so my last resort will be to buy something from the store.’”

People want to grow root vegetables (i.e. potatoes, carrots, and turnip), as well as tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, lettuce and kale.

Community Greenhouse Actions

- Use the recommendations from the Kluane Community Development Corporation Feasibility Study to begin planning the building of a greenhouse.
- Employ skilled and experienced growers and a business manager to run the greenhouse.
- Start small and expand as the greenhouse becomes more successful.
- Explore the possibility of using the geothermal well as a way to heat the greenhouse and extend the growing season.

Agricultural Projects

There has been quite a bit of local farming and animal husbandry in the Kluane area in the last century, such as raising chickens for eggs and for meat, as well as pigs and turkeys.

“Allingers used to raise cows because we used to get our grass-fed beef when we lived at Beaver Creek. It was good beef.”

“Walter here grew awesome pigs. He raised awesome, awesome pigs. We fed them for a couple of years – everybody was packing him fireweed and that would be the best, sweetest, pink meat you’ve ever eaten in your life.”

“Oh definitely. We used to sell eggs and turkeys and chickens... Our turkeys were between 20 and 25 pounds.”



Many of the community’s older, experienced farmers are positive that this can be done again; however, education and training is needed.

“You can’t make farmers out of just anybody; it’s a skill.”

“It would be pretty nice if somebody raised chickens.”

There are a few community members who are currently venturing into raising animals and have aspirations to raise animals for their families.



“We have a young couple here that just have an agricultural lease up the road and that’s what they’re going to do; they’re going to have pigs and chickens and the whole shebang.”

“Yeah, I think for sure we’ll have chickens next year and probably do the same thing — maybe sell eggs locally, take orders for cuts of pigs.”

Agriculture Actions

- Encourage more organized agricultural activities in the community, such as producing eggs and pork.
- Continue to support community members trying to raise animals for food and encourage others to try.
- Provide opportunities for hands-on training and education related to raising animals for food.

Community Store and Storage Facility

Many people said they would support a local store because they would like to reduce the number of trips they have to make to Whitehorse. It was suggested, if a store were opened, it would need to be well planned out and run by someone who has experience and knowledge in running a business. Some people felt that a local grocery store would need to be either privatized or follow a co-op model.



“I’d love to see a store here. I would love to. But I realize the logistics of it and how difficult it is to do...You really need to know what you’re doing...”

“But just a store in general would be really, really nice, then we wouldn’t have to drive three-and-a-half hours or however long it takes the average person to get to Whitehorse.”

“How can it cost a little more if you can get it here? I got to go to Whitehorse. It’s three hours in. I got to eat in the café unless I bring my own food. I might have to stay overnight and come back the next day. It’s a six-hour trip. Then you shop till you’re ready to scream. You’re dead from exhaustion. So if I need something I go to Gary’s — not Gary’s — Talbot Arm — Suzanne’s — and buy it because it’s cheaper for me to buy it there, even if I pay twice the price, than it is to drive all the way to Whitehorse and back.”

Most people suggested that a local store would need to have the basic necessities, such as milk, eggs, butter, bread, sugar, flour, etc.

“It definitely has to be stocked with the staples. It has to be well understood — the grocery business. People cycle through milk, butter, eggs quite quickly whereas some of the specialized items we don’t cycle through too quickly so it’s a matter of having the right balance of stock inventory.”

Several community members suggested revisiting the use of root cellars for community storage of vegetables that are locally grown. To prevent misuse and ensure fair usage within the community, a community owned storage facility would need local buy-in.

“If we’re going to have a big kind of gardening going on?[We need] a root cellar.”

“And we had root house to keep them because we had nowhere to keep them — you know, root house in the ground they call them — in the bank — and kept it that way for the winter.”



“It was the Allingers that had their own gardens and you know, they grew all their vegetables. They had root cellars so they stored all of their staples for the winter.”

“People have to buy into it and they’re not going to go in there if they run out of potatoes in their house, they’re not going to go in there and just, you know, help themselves.”

In cases of emergency, for example if the roads to grocery stores wash out or there is a food shortage, it was recommended that KFN develop an emergency plan to ensure all community members will have access to food. It was also recommended that community members stockpile basic supplies for their families.

Community Store and Storage Actions

- Determine the possibility of opening a small store which sells locally produced foods and staples to the community.
- Ensure that any store manager hired is experienced and knowledgeable in running a small, rural business/co-op.
- Explore options of community ownership of a storage facility and freezers.
- Encourage community members to continue to stock basic supplies.
- Develop a plan to ensure the community has access to enough food in times of emergency.

Community Celebrations and Get-Togethers

In the past, ceremonial potlatches, including naming, honouring the hunter, and marriage ceremonies, were a regular occurrence in the community. Traditional songs, dances, and storytelling were practiced often. These activities brought people together and encouraged the celebration of Kluane First Nation culture. Many people talked about the need to bring back these celebrations and to have them more often. In particular, educating the youth on the significance of these traditions and encouraging them to participate in cultural activities were considered to be very important.



“They need to learn the songs and our ceremonies. All those things need to be passed down to the next generation, and if not, they will be lost.”

“In my time, when someone got a moose, everybody was there. The whole community gathered together. They shared everything. Everything was given out to the individual families. They had a big feast. They honoured whoever — whatever young person shot that moose and they had drumming, singing, you know. They had like a little ceremony that happened because of that.”

“We have the potlatch ceremony, we have the naming ceremony; we used to have a marriage ceremony as well, when you’re getting married and you pass on the moccasins...They need to learn all this stuff otherwise they will have a difficult time in the future.”

“If we don’t have all these things that make us First Nation, then who are we? Then, we will completely die out.”

“We need to start getting together, doing our language, singing our songs, bringing that back into our hearts. It’s all here, in our heart.”

Many people noted the importance of even small get-togethers, such as playing cards, games and visiting.



“Right now everybody just lives in their own houses and there’s no stuff like there used to be, like card games and visiting and going out together and doing things, right?”

“That’s how everybody — we grew up loving and care and look after one another.”

In order to be a healthy, safe community and food secure for the future, the community has to cooperate and care for one another to make this happen. We need to move forward as a united community.

“It’s got to be community involved and the community has got to get along.”

“Wellness and healing and everything else in the community to bring people back together is really important.”

“You’re stronger as a community than just by yourself.”



Community Get-togethers Actions

- Increase the number of occasions for the community to come together and participate in cultural activities focusing on traditional dances, songs, and honouring ceremonies.
- Continue to engage children and youth in cultural traditions and teach them about the importance of maintaining traditional lifestyles.

Conclusion

Kluane First Nation is already taking many steps to ensure our future food security. We know what needs to be done and have shared our knowledge and ideas to strengthen our community. In order to maintain this effort, we need to start implementing our ideas, as highlighted in this report. Furthermore, we need to work together as a community to ensure our actions will be sustainable.



Materials Produced

- A literature review on the traditional lifestyle of Kluane First Nation as it relates to traditional foods and sustainable living.
- A greenhouse feasibility study (done by the Kluane Community Development Corporation).
- An article introducing the project for the community newsletter.
- 2 posters discussing the project.
- 2 videos showcasing the project: one short and one long.
- A large poster of the project presented at the Spring Gathering and CYFN General Assembly.
- Youth training package, including PowerPoint presentations and hand-outs discussing research and active listening skills.
- PowerPoint presentations introducing the project and consent forms, and providing updates on the research.
- School Mosaic Mural
- Many photos

Timeline of Events

Month	Activity
Oct. 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Alatini and Norma discussed the project, and the possibility of bringing on AICBR as a project partner.
Nov- Dec 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KFN asked AICBR to implement the project. • Jody Butler Walker (Executive Director of AICBR) and Norma met with KFN to discuss the project. • AICBR presented to the Elders Council. • KFN and AICBR signed and agreement.
Jan 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Food Security was established, and Norma and Mallory met with them for the first time. • Norma and Mallory conducted a two-day training workshop with Jared Dulac and Alanna Dickson. Training and education continued throughout the research process. • Stew-jarring workshop took place. • A local Yukon artist was contracted to produce a food security related mural with the Kluane Lake School children. • AICBR wrote and submitted an application to Canada's Research Ethics Board (REB) for a review of the research proposal. • The research team wrote an article about the project and submitted it to KFN to put in the community newsletter.
Feb- Mar 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jody Butler Walker and KFN Executive Director presented the project proposal to the REB, which included several revision requests. After these changes were made, the REB approved AICBR to proceed with the research. • The research team conducted and filmed interviews with individuals who work within the KFN food system, such as growers, hunters, gatherers, community kitchen coordinators, as well as with Elders and other interested individuals. • A focus group was held with KFN staff/community members. • The research team conducted more interviews. • Jared filmed community activities related to the project.
Apr 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project team attended Muskrat Camp. Jared filmed the camp, and three more interviews were conducted.
May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interviews were conducted. • Project team attended the Spring Gathering to present poster of the project and distributed handouts (See Appendix H for Poster). • The preliminary results from the interviews and focus group were verified with the Chief and Council, as well as with Team Food Security. • Norma and Jody met with the Executive Director of the Kluane Community Development Corporation, Geordan Clark, to discuss and plan the Community Greenhouse Feasibility Plan.
June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norma presented the project poster at the Council of Yukon First Nations' General Assembly in Haines Junction and discussed Yukon food security issues. • Food Security mural was completed • KCDC completed the greenhouse feasibility plan (See attachment #1 for full report). • Jared collected more film footage.

Jul- Aug 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alanna, Jared, and a third youth (from outside the community with prior film experience) attended film training at AICBR office in Whitehorse.• The three youth filmed different parts of Kluane Lake region.• More interviews were conducted and filmed.• Final interview results were presented Jared Dulac and Norma Kassi and verified at KFN General Assembly.• Wrote final reports.• Filmed Harvest Camp for DVD.• Finished filming for final DVD.
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