

## *Yukon Legislative Assembly*

Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

### **In recognition of the Yukon Fish and Game Association**

#### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to the Yukon Fish and Game Association as they celebrate 75 years of ensuring sound, long-term management of fish and wildlife and outdoor recreational resources in the best interests of all Yukoners.

A bit of history — on February 7, 1945, 13 residents got together in the Whitehorse parish hall to discuss the fish and game situation in the Yukon and the desirability of starting a movement to protect our wildlife. The Yukon Fish and Game Association was created for the purpose of propagating and protecting fish and wildlife in the Yukon in response to the potential impacts to come from the construction of the Alaska Highway. The first president was G.R. Bidlake, the first vice-president was F.H.R. Jackson, and the secretary was W.D. MacBride. Membership fees were set at \$1.

Credit for founding the organization goes to Gene Garrow, who had been working for the US Army Corps of Engineers on the Canol Road. Gene was instrumental in getting the organization operational in the early days. Policy of the day dictated that First Nation people could not be members of a social organization. However, it was decided at the first meeting to open up the membership, as Gene was an indigenous man. A motion was also made to open up the membership to women.

The association was active in the day, lobbying for changes to the fish and game regulations, some of which included:

- that the sale of game meats and fowl by hunters and the licensing of game dealers be cancelled, at least in the town of Whitehorse;
- that steps be taken to import mule deer, black-tailed deer, white-tailed deer, elk, and buffalo; that an effort be made to provide additional game guardians to secure adequate enforcement of the game laws; and
- that resident hunting licences be raised to \$2 and fishing licences begin at \$2.

Long before charcoal and gas BBQs became popular, members of the Yukon Fish and Game Association were treated annually to an outdoor wild-game barbecue, second to none, and the outfitters of the day provided meat from their caches or from early season hunts. Of course, now the annual banquet is sold out way in advance, with an opportunity to try wild game of all sorts. Mr. Speaker, I enjoy the many different recipes and how they are prepared.

Outfitters involved in some way over the years were Johnny Johns, Mike Nolan, Alex Van Bibber, Curly and Belle Desrosiers, Joe Jacquot, and Alec Davis — names that many Yukoners will know.

Today, the Yukon Fish and Game Association has grown considerably. The membership is up to around 1,500. The association plays a direct and significant role in the development of Yukon hunting and fishing regulations. They represent a large portion of hunters and anglers in the Yukon, and I would also note that they listen to many anglers

and many hunters who do not have membership but who do have concerns, questions, or suggestions. Today, the association has a very busy agenda, hosting many courses, workshops, and events.

I mentioned the popular annual Wild Game Banquet, which includes a silent auction and awards, but there are so many more: Big Bull Night, the Bird and Bat Box Building Day, the Family Fishing Days, the field dressing course, and the Wolf Creek salmon fry release.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to highlight two programs that are offered through the organization that are particularly well subscribed to and highly anticipated each year.

The Yukon Outdoor Women program held toward the end of May or the beginning of June brings women together for a weekend full of workshops, firearm safety and marksmanship, photography, field dressing, archery, fishing, and more. It is a wonderful opportunity for applicants to learn new skills and break into outdoor pursuits.

The other one I wanted to highlight is the Youth Outdoor Education Camp held in early June or July. It allows youth between the ages of 13 and 16 to learn outdoor skills, including hunting, fishing, survival, and environmental stewardship. Youth are selected through an application process, and of course, the costs are covered through the organization's annual truck raffle.

So, while these events and others were unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, cancelled in 2020, we sure hope to see them able to go ahead this coming year in addition to all of the other incredible courses, workshops, and events offered throughout the year.

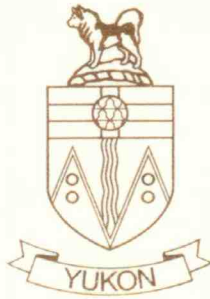
Mr. Speaker, while I was looking through the Yukon Fish and Game Association website photos — and you can scroll through them on the top — I saw one of a friend of mine, Alex Van Bibber. He is sadly missed, but he was a lifetime member of the association. He was tying down a set of moose horns, and it got me to thinking of what an advocate Alex was for the Yukon Fish and Game Association. He loved the youth outdoor education program, and he worked and mentored youth from the time it started — I believe back in the early 1980s. This got me to thinking that Alex probably never knew that he was passing on so much valuable information that would change the lives of so many individuals. As I scrolled through the rest of the other pictures, I realized that every other member of the association in those pictures — the same goes for you. You are passing on so much valuable information that would change and will change the lives of so many individuals.

There are too many people to name throughout the 75 years of the association, but all should know that their efforts are very much appreciated. I do want to thank President Chuck Shewen, Vice-President Bryce Bekar, all those who serve on the Yukon Fish and Game Association board, and Don Aubin, who is the 75th anniversary event manager.

Mr. Speaker, the future of the Yukon includes healthy lakes and forests, bountiful fish and wildlife, and opportunities for all Yukoners to share our passion for hunting, fishing, and conservation. So, we thank the Yukon Fish and Game Association for being a big part of that. Congratulations on 75 years and many more years.

*Tribute of December 17, 2020  
Read by MLA Wade Istchenko  
Yukon Legislative Assembly*





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