



**Inuvik resident Naomi Peterson, left, joins Stephanie Young from Yellowknife, Iqaluit's Carmen Barrieau, Raven Firth from Inuvik, Whitehorse resident Aletta Leitch, Teresa Tufts from Iqaluit and Fort Smith resident Alex James outside the legislative assembly on Aug. 28. The women were involved in last month's Young Leaders Summit on Northern Climate Change.**

John McFadden/NNSL photo

# Young Northern leaders hold summit on climate change

*All-female group travels the NWT learning about impacts of climate change, issues declaration calling on politicians and citizens to do more*

by John McFadden  
Northern News Services  
Somba K'e/Yellowknife

Eight young women from across the NWT say they have a much better understanding of climate change and its effects on the North after they took a caravan around the territory late last month.

The group, participants in the young leaders summit on Northern climate change, travelled by van from Yellowknife to Fort Providence, Kakisa, Enterprise, Hay River, K'atloodeeche First Nation and Behchoko to learn first hand about climate change in the North. They camped along the way.

On Aug. 28, they gathered at the teepee outside the legislative assembly in Yellowknife to talk about what they learned and issue a declaration on climate change. Their tour was sponsored by Ecology North.

In a news release, the group stated the people of the North are already experiencing climate change with milder winters, more frequent and severe forest fires, low water levels and damaged infrastructure due to permafrost thaw. They pointed out that refusing to act on climate change means increasing social, environmental and economic costs on the people of the North.

Participant Aletta Leitch of Whitehorse said she has been interested in climate change for years and learns something new about the issue on a regular basis.

"Eyes are on the North. We're talked about as the canary in the coal mine and

people are looking to us to see what's changing," Leitch said. "But as they look to us we can also show them how we are responding so we're in a perfect place to be a role model for the rest of the world."

Inuvik resident Naomi Peterson, who is originally from Aklavik, was also part of the group.

"Gwich'in people are really fighting to protect the Peel (River and watershed) and that's why I wanted to come here and get a better understanding of how important it is that it be protected," Peterson said. "One thing that really stuck out for me was when we went to the local community farm in Hay River. It really sparked the fire inside of me to learn more about where our food comes from and how industrial farms actually work."

Teresa Tufts, who lives in Iqaluit, said her eyes were really opened after talking to elders in Hay River.

"They spoke about how they grew up and their traditional ways of life and how they rely on the animals and the land," she said, adding elders say they've seen changes in the species of animals in the Hay River area, leading to a decrease in cultural practices because they can't harvest the same animals they used to.

"They've also seen an increase in diseases in animals, an increase in the frequency of forest fires and a decrease in fish," she said.

The declaration issued by the group included an encouragement to strengthen local

agricultural and animal harvesting systems, improved climate change education in schools, the need to increase renewable energy use and the importance of territorial governments taking a leadership role in responding to climate change.

One thing that stood out when the group got together was that they were all females.

Ecology North's Katharine Thomas was among those who went through the applications and helped select the members of the group.

"We got a lot of applications from the three territories but we didn't get very many young men applying for the summit," she said. "It just happened that the strongest applications and cover let-

ters just happened to be from women. We would have loved to have young men but it didn't turn out that way. Young men aren't stepping up for these kinds of things."

Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley met with the group a couple of times in Yellowknife.

He agreed that young men were conspicuous in their

absence but added that maybe next time it will be all all-male group.

"It has been a man's world in terms of our industry but I think women play a very special role. They are the ones that give birth and have the most innate and inherent understanding of the importance of having a healthy environment," Bromley said.



## Assemblée générale annuelle CDÉTNO

### Annual general meeting CDETNO

**Quand:** Jeudi, le 17 septembre à 17h30

**When:** Thursday, September 17, at 5:30PM

**Où:** Elks Club, 4919, 49e rue, Yellowknife

**Where:** Elks Club, 4919, 49th street, Yellowknife

Un poste est à pourvoir au sein du conseil d'administration. Nous vous invitons à déposer votre candidature par courriel: [direction@cdetno.com](mailto:direction@cdetno.com).

A position is open on CDETNO's board. Applicants must be French speakers. To submit your application: [direction@cdetno.com](mailto:direction@cdetno.com).

[www.cdetno.com](http://www.cdetno.com)



## Yellowknife Goju-Ryu Karate Club



A member of the International Karatedo Gojukai Association, the NWT Karate Association and Karate Canada.

Instructors hold IKGA Canada Black Belt Certification.

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### Fall Session Registration

September 10, 2015  
7:00 pm

École St. Joseph School

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(Age 7 and older)

Classes:  
Monday & Thursday

Youth  
7:00 - 8:00 pm  
Teen/Adult  
7:00 - 9:00 pm

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