



Colville Lake Community Wellness Plan

2024 - 2029

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Colville Lake is the northernmost community in the Sahtu Settlement Area and is among the most remote communities in the Northwest Territories. Nearly all the approximately 150 residents are Dehla Got'ine Dene.

The Behdzi Ahda First Nation (the Band) operates as an Indian Act band that delivers municipal services in Colville Lake. The Band works closely with Ayoni Keh Land Corporation, which represents rights of Dehla Got'ine under the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement, on community and self-determination initiatives including the negotiation of a self-government agreement.

Public Engagement

The Band hosted a public engagement meeting on June 19th, 2023 to gather input for this Plan. The engagement strategy for the meeting was developed collaboratively by the Band and Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) staff with help from a professional facilitator.

In addition to a facilitated discussion at the meeting feedback was also gathered via written survey responses.

Community input centered around six broad questions:

- What is community wellness?
- What are your community wellness concerns?
- What would you prioritize to achieve community wellness?
- What wellness changes would you like to see?
- What community wellness ideas worked well in the past?
- What do we require to achieve community wellness changes?

Additional facilitated discussion led to seven key themes for a Plan:

1. Having a wellness coordinator responsible for producing community events wellness programming.
2. Being at home on our land and practicing our culture.
3. Developing healthier connections within our community.
4. Investing in parents and young families.
5. Creating a dedicated facility for wellness, sports and community gatherings.
6. Learning new ways to care for people struggling with addictions.
7. Healing together.

Colville Lake is a community with strong traditional values that prioritizes connection and being together.

Many of the wellness concerns stem from feelings of isolation, lack of funding and resources, and overall feeling left out of development in the region. The community lacks GNWT services which are administered through or delivered in other communities. But Colville Lake is a community that knows its strength and value and is ready to share it.

Consistent approaches are needed to address community wellness, addictions and treatment. Colville Lake needs a dedicated facility for wellness, sports and community gathering that can act as a place to house programming and welcome visitors.

Colville Lake also needs dedicated staff working on developing and delivering wellness and recreation programming. Hiring a staff person to work on community wellness is a key first step in implementing this plan.

Dehla Got'ine are land-based people. The community is born and raised on their land and continue to occupy the area as many generations have before them. They will continue their way of life as Dehla Got'ine.



Hiring a Wellness Coordinator

Vision

A full-time Community Wellness Coordinator lives and works in Colville Lake. This person’s entire job is dedicated to implementing and advancing the community’s holistic vision of community wellness. They actively seek funding for programming and infrastructure, oversee the organization and delivery of wellness and recreation programming, support volunteerism, and work with partner organizations where appropriate.

Priority Goals

1. Create opportunities for youth to explore and develop skills as this has worked in the past to advance wellness with youth.
2. Youth have regular access to recreation programming.
3. Youth have access to healthy and positive gathering opportunities with other youth in the region.
4. Deliver regular wellness programming for all residents to ensure regular engagement for the entire community.
5. Community Wellness staff take a holistic approach to wellness that targets youth, Elders and all residents, and expands beyond recreation programming to include other supports like in-community counselling, and training and employment opportunities.

Programs and Plans to Address Goals

- Hire a full-time Community Wellness worker.
- Undertake an action planning workshop to further develop a mandate for the Community Wellness worker position. This position may have to split its time between organizing recreation programs, creating education and training opportunities, supporting volunteerism, and seeking additional funding for programming, infrastructure and staff. Action planning is needed to determine the scope of work and priority areas. This planning could include participation of potential partner organizations.
- A priority for this position will be to seek additional sources of funding and in-kind support to advance the community’s wellness vision.

Being at Home on Our Land and Practicing Our Culture

Vision

Wellness for Dehla Got’ine means maintaining a strong connection to their land and culture. The entire community actively works together on the land to maintain their connection with the land and each other. Families take the lead on teaching land-based culture and skills to youth.

Priority Goals

1. Ongoing opportunities for community-wide on-the-land programming to maintain connection to culture and the land, and to learn about Dene culture and medicines.

Programs and Plans to Address Goals

- Continue with self-funded on-the-land programming for the community. Programs could include community hunts, fish camps, canoe trips, and trapping education for youth.
- Find partnership opportunities to support on-the-land programming. For example, Junior Rangers supports opportunities for youth to go on the land with experienced land users.

Developing Healthier Connections Within Our Community

Vision

Colville Lake is a lively place to live where residents regularly gather together for healthy activities. This regular connection creates a supportive environment where everyone cares for each other.

Priority Goals

1. Host regular events throughout the seasons so residents have opportunities to gather together for healthy activities.
2. Organize wellness gatherings for Elders and youth to facilitate healthy connections between these two groups.

Programs and Plans to Address Goals

- Create a calendar of events detailing existing gatherings and activities open to the entire community. Work to fill in the gaps to ensure there is at least one community gathering each month.
- Focus on creating gatherings dedicated to bringing youth and Elders together.

Investing in Parents and Young Families

Vision

Health and wellness begins with children. Young parents and families are supported by the community in building the skills and experience needed to raise healthy and happy children.

Priority Goals

- 1. Develop and deliver workshops for young parents.
- 2. Host activities for young children and their parents to support child development.

Programs and Plans to Address Goals

- Review past programs directed at supporting new parents to determine if past programs are sufficient or if new programming options are needed. Develop new programming as needed.
- Seek funding for programming dedicated to supporting new parents and young children.

Creating a Dedicated Facility for Wellness and Gathering

Vision

Colville Lake has a facility dedicated to supporting the community’s holistic vision for community wellness, including community gathering spaces, education and training, and sport and recreation.

Priority Goals

- 1. Provide a facility dedicated to community wellness. The facility would include space for consistent wellness programming, sport and recreation, community gatherings, and training programs.

Programs and Plans to Address Goals

- Develop a plan for building a new community wellness facility or repurposing existing infrastructure to meet these needs. This plan will have to address required funding and options for raising necessary funds.

Learning New Ways to Care for People Struggling with Addictions

Vision

Residents are aware of the risks of drug and alcohol use, and people struggling with addictions have reliable access to the healing supports they need and want.

Priority Goals

- 1. Increase awareness of the impacts of addictions.
- 2. Direct available resources to people struggling with addictions.

Programs and Plans to Address Goals

- Work with partner organizations (e.g., Colville Lake School) to develop and deliver drug and alcohol awareness programs in the community.
- Review existing support services available to people who struggle with addictions and promote awareness of these services. This includes ensuring residents have access to mental health and addictions counsellors.
- Organize regular Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in the community.



Healing Together

Vision

Residents have a balance in their life that promotes physical, mental and spiritual health.
Residents are safe and happy, and come together to create a healthy community.

Priority Goals

- 1. Promote healthy lifestyle habits for all residents.
- 2. Support people in healing from trauma.
- 3. Promote systemic reform that ensures people have immediate access to supports when needed including while waiting for admission to treatment or other support programs.

Programs and Plans to Address Goals

- Review existing support services available to people who are healing from past and inter-generational trauma and promote awareness of these services. This includes ensuring residents have access to mental health counsellors.
- Create a plan to offer regular community-wide programming that supports all residents to have access to accessible physical activity and healthy food choices. This could include programming to teach people about healthy eating diet choices. This should also include regular opportunities for residents to participate in sports.



