

Arctic Relief Well Drilling

The Inuvialuit Perspective

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Chair – Inuvialuit Game Council

The Inuvialuit

- Present-day Inuvialuit came from Alaska with 19th century whalers
- Still very strong family ties with Inupiat
- Inuvialuit now mainly live in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR)



Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA)

- Aboriginal land claim settlement between the Inuvialuit and Government of Canada
 - Signed in 1984
- IFA takes precedence over all existing and future legislation to the extent of any inconsistency
- IFA provides the basis for a system of integrated wildlife management

Goals of the IFA

- To preserve Inuvialuit cultural identity and values within a changing northern society
- To enable Inuvialuit to be equal and meaningful participants in the northern and national economies and society



Joint Secretariat/Steven Baryluk

Goals of the IFA

- To protect and preserve the arctic wildlife, environment, and biological productivity



Photograph by Paul Nicklen

Vanishing Sea Ice
National Geographic, June 2007
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Environmental bodies established under the IFA

- Six Hunters and Trappers Committees
- Inuvialuit Game Council
- Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT)
- Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)
- Fisheries Joint Management Committee
- Environmental Impact Screening Committee
- Environmental Impact Review Board

Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC)

- Represents the collective Inuvialuit interest in wildlife and wildlife habitat
- Appoints the Inuvialuit members to co-management boards and other bodies with an interest in wildlife in the ISR
- Advises the government on wildlife issues
- Allocates wildlife quotas among the communities
- Assigns community hunting and trapping areas

INUVIALUIT ORGANIZATIONS

CO-MANAGEMENT GROUPS

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Aklavik
HTC

Inuvik
HTC

Olokhaktomiut
HTC

Paulatuk
HTC

Sachs Harbour
HTC

Tuktoyaktuk
HTC

IGC

EISC

EIRB

FJMC

WMAC(NS)

WMAC(NWT)

Canada

Government of the NWT

Yukon Territorial Government

Canada

Government of the NWT

Yukon Territorial Government

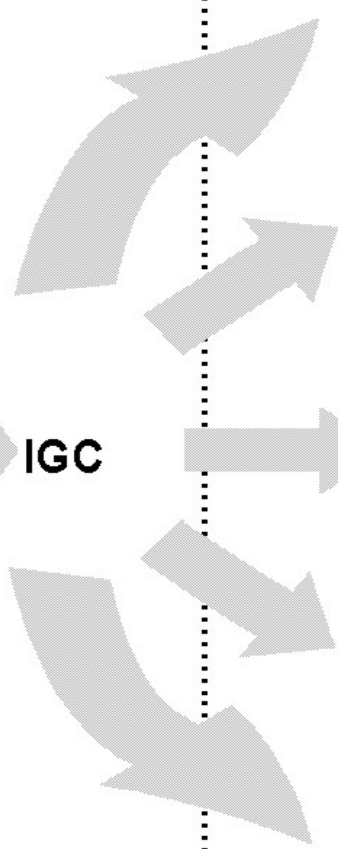
Canada (DFO)

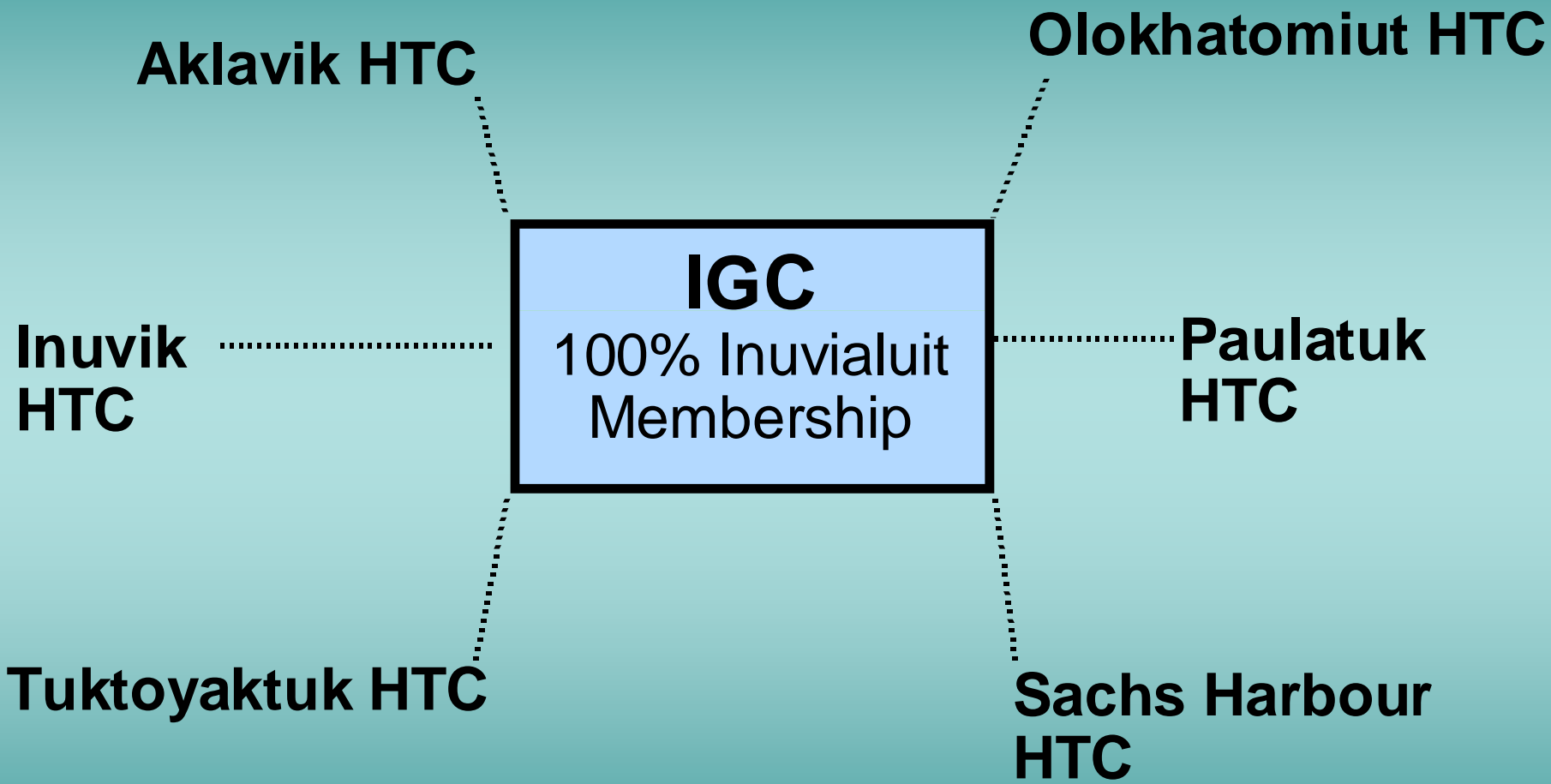
Canada (DOE-CWS)

Yukon Territorial Government

Canada (DOE-CWS)

Government of the NWT





Aklavik HTC

Olokhatomiut HTC

IGC

100% Inuvialuit
Membership

**Inuvik
HTC**

**Paulatuk
HTC**

Tuktoyaktuk HTC

**Sachs Harbour
HTC**

Importance of Land and Sea

- Ocean and land are very important
 - Transportation
 - Food
 - Migratory species
- Coastal zone very biologically active



Oil and Gas Industry in the ISR

- Inuvialuit are familiar with oil and gas development in the region
- Exploratory work in the 1970s and '80s
- Many Inuvialuit worked for industry



Oil and Gas Industry in the ISR

- Inuvialuit were, and still are, concerned about the possibility of an oil spill – however small – and the associated impacts on the environment and traditional lifestyle
- Low-lying coast line in the ISR may be more damaged by clean-up efforts than by oil itself

Oil and Gas Industry in the ISR

- Major concern of Inuvialuit, Industry, and Government was impact of a late-season uncontrolled blow-out releasing oil into broken ice, or under ice



Oil and Gas Industry in the ISR

- Concerns stem from:
 - Pristine, remote and challenging environment
 - Situation where an oil spill may continue into the winter
 - Difficulties of oil spill containment and clean up in late winter

Oil and Gas Industry in the ISR



- There is no longer the infrastructure in the region to deal with an offshore oil spill
- Limited availability of arctic class drilling and support vessels

Same Season Relief Well

- The federal government recognized these concerns and implemented a Same Season Relief Well (SSRW) policy
- Requires a second drilling system, such as a second “stand-by” ice pad
- Continuous drilling of the relief well to kill the blowout when all other measures fail

Same Season Relief Well

- No relief well was needed in the previous era of drilling in the Beaufort Sea
- Drilling was done in shallower waters (<100 m)
- New exploration and drilling is proposed for the deeper slope (700-1000 m depth)

Same Season Relief Well

- SSRW policy cannot apply in deeper waters
- Wells expected to take up to three years to drill
- SSRW policy does allow for “equivalency”



Same Season Relief Well

- An “equivalency” must offer the same, or a lesser level of risk
- Must be equivalent in terms of :
 - Safety
 - Environmental protection
 - Conservation of the resource



Same Season Relief Well

- Inuvialuit have been made aware of, and are tracking the development of the SSRW policy
- Inuvialuit are also tracking the development of different solutions that are striving for an “equivalency” under the SSRW policy

Conclusion

- Inuvialuit have constitutionally protected rights under their land claim agreement
- Land and ocean are both very important to the traditional lifestyle of Inuvialuit
- Long history of oil and gas industrial activity in the ISR, with Inuvialuit involvement
- Inuvialuit concerned over potential impacts of an oil spill in the region, especially in an ice-covered environment
 - Situation of a late season blow-out releasing oil into or under ice
 - Difficulties with containment and clean-up
 - Potential for more damage to environment from clean-up efforts

Conclusion

- Federal government has Same Season Relief Well policy in place – allows for “equivalency”
- Inuvialuit have been engaged in discussions about the SSRW policy, and the development of newer technology for several years



Thank You!
Quyanainni!

