

Nunavuut Provisional Government
Chariton Epchook, Chairman
Nikki Hoffman, Secretary

PRESS RELEASE

Yup'ik and Athabaskan Tribal leaders, youth and elders, of the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta met on August 1 - 3, 2017 and began the process of unifying the area's 56 tribes and creating a government to represent them. The name "Nunavuut" was chosen for the government: the Confederated Yupik and Athabaskan Tribes of the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta.

The Nunavuut Constitutional Convention implemented a 1976 AVCP call for the formation of a regional government, a March 2007 special convention order creating a Constitutional Steering Committee, an October 2015 AVCP Resolution calling for a special Convention in February 2016 for the same purpose. 2016 Calista Regional Committee report prepared by 33 tribes, and a call to final action on the issue by April 4, 2017, intertribal gathering in Bethel.

The jurisdiction being proposed is as large as the state of Oregon with over 40,000 Yup'ik and Athabaskan members living in 56 villages. It is historically culturally and geographically integrated and naturally bordered by the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers and the Bering Sea.

There are two major landowners in the region: the tribes, their regional and village corporations, and the federal government; the state has very little land here. Nunavuut is being organized under the inherent rights of the Yup'ik and Athabaskan Peoples and Federal Indian Law.

The government will have three branches: a unicameral Legislative Council comprised of the 56 democratically elected leaders of the tribes; the president, vice president, and the Secretary who will be democratically elected by all age eligible Nunavuut voters every 4 years; and, the judiciary.

The tribal leaders elected Chariton Epchook of Kwethluk chairman and Nikki Hoffman of Bethel Secretary/Treasurer to lead the campaign for ratification leading up to the November 7, 2017, election; they, and a 7 member steering council, comprise the Nunavuut Provisional government.

Epchook says that with the withdrawal of AVCP of all political matters it is "essential" that all tribes unify and allow their members to decide their own future by participating in the November 7, 2017, ratification election.

On November 7, 2017, the ballot will show candidates for President, Vice President, and Clerk. The President must be an enrolled Nunavuut tribal member and be 30 years of age or older; all candidates must provide full disclosure of financial and other personal information.

Epchook further states that with the withdrawal of AVCP of all political matters, and the decision by its board to operate solely as a "charitable" organization, it is critical that the tribes unify and fill the vacuum created by this decision by the AVCP's 12 member board.

"We cannot exist without a united voice, without a government to implement our laws and to advance our causes; the tribes have to unify. Nunavuut is the best alternative. The tribes have to allow their citizens vote in the November 7, election. Let them decide our future democratically."

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