



Figure 14 Cotton wood tree in the Fall Photo taken by Crystal Tom September 2012

Fall- (September - October)

Fall is the last two months to collect and store food before the long winter months set in. Hunting various animals is a must to survive over the winter, moose are preferred because of the amount of meat and preference of taste. The late arrival of huckleberries in the mountains are an added treat to the beginning of the season. Spiritually this is when mulgwas is ready to be picked but only by the people that are lucky enough to see them, elders say that unlucky people will not be able to find mulgwas and lucky people will find mulgwas easily. Trappers start to prepare for their up coming season.

Moose

Prayer:

Creator, Thank you for all the animals on the land, the birds that fly.

Thank you for the trees that keep us warm and the rivers that flow.

Thank you for the food that strengthens our bodies.

Amen

Sim mogit luu taa't tsim lax hagi. Niin ant amgwiitxw sa tun. Toyasa'y niin ahl tsuuts dipagw't ganhl yatsaxw.

Toyasa'y niin ahl gangan lit'wit ganhl ax baahat.

Toyasa'y niin ahl gwineex ant si dax gyathl tkamu'um.

Nit dim gan wilt

Significance to the Gitxsan:



Gitxsan hunting tracking moose.wlmp



Gitxsan moose gutting.wlmp



Gitxsan moose meat preparation.wlmp

The moose are an important part of the Gitxsan way of life. Because they are so important the animal is treated with a tremendous amount of respect. Before a person can go hunting there is a strong belief that they must cleanse themselves spiritually. This can be done by dipping in a creek, smudging with cedar or mulgwas and sleeping separately from their significant other. The gun that will be used to hunt also needs to be cleansed by mulgwas. This is used two fold; cleansing the gun and making sure that the barrel does not have anything in it. This same belief of cleansing the gun with mulgwas branches off to another belief that when a women is on her menstrual cycle she is not allowed to eat moose meat because she is too strong during this time and will give bad luck to the hunter that shot the moose. The women on her menstrual cycle might also have something done to her body if she eats fresh moose meat; some people believe that they have gone sterile (unable to have children) because of eating moose meat during their first year of menstruating.

After cleansing and preparing yourself for hunting the night before supplies are also prepared. Supplies are gun, warm breathable clothing, proper walking boots (we prefer Mucks), pack boards, meat saw or axe, knife, tarp, lunch/snacks/water, bright orange toques, personal backpack with lighter, garbage bags, knives, string, tissue, file/sharpener and marking ribbon.

The best time of day to hunt is in the morning and a few hours before sunset because the moose are moving around more and bedding down or resting.

When looking for signs of moose you look for young alder trees that are missing the bark and leaves, the bark of cotton wood, tops of hazelnut trees, the tips of willow trees. In the fall look for young pine trees that have been scraped on by the moose antlers to remove the velvet. Fresh moose dung and tracks are also a sign that moose are near. The best places to look for moose are near swamps or natural salt licks.

When starting to hunt for moose you have to know which way the wind is blowing; you should keep downwind of where you will be looking for moose. This is where the lighter can be used to test which way the wind is blowing. Moose have a strong sense of smell and are also very skittish; if they smell you they will run.

There are also three different moose calls that you can do; bull moose, cow and calf. In the fall it is best to do a cow call because of mating season – a bull will answer and come to the sound or if a female has a calf she will not run away. If you do a bull moose call when a cow is near with a calf she will run immediately because the bull moose will kill her calf.

In the fall when the air starts to get cold and the first snowfall has happened it is a good time to hunt as well. The air is so cold that the moose get cold sores in their nose making it hard for them to smell. At first light is best to go to a swampy area or a small clearing and do moose calls to call a moose to you.

If you have to leave your kill overnight there is a certain protocol to follow to keep other animals like bears and wolves away. If you have a shirt hang it by your kill with mulgwas in a pocket or hang the mulgwas around the kill. Tie a long hazelnut tree to the kill with marking ribbon at the tip and if it is set off another animal has been there or might still be

there. Putting up marking ribbon to your kill is also recommended and doubling your ribbon when you are getting closer to your kill just in case there is an animal nearby. It is highly recommended that you pack the moose out the same day because of wolves or grizzly bears in the area. If a grizzly bear finds you kill they will cover the kill with dirt and will be extremely territorial.

Translation in Gitx̱san:

Nit hadidil tsim muus, kookx dim sa yee silinaxw gyat. Hogyam luu yuxw dim ayookhl gan ni ye'etxw'm. Dim wil nithl goohl wil bax ax, mi'indihl luup nit. Di mi yo wilt ahl kaba luu hoyit ahl silinasxw di.

Li hoodi sgihl geenix hanak dim gan neemdi hanwiltxw't. Neem dit guubihl smax yuuk tsa ha'walxw't.

Gwil dim goothl gyat hla yuuk ja sa yeet dim silinasxw't. Dim tax yukxw dim hahoyasxw, buuts (ahl Mucks dim an win) gyat, galdim wa'lix, tuutsxw, gam'in, akxs 'malwin, anlee'tyasxw.

Anuu hiiluxw dim mil sa'yin, wil nit wil wihl unlo'ohl muus.

Nda mil gigitx'n ahl muus dim wihl si wihl si wihl gyant'nhl wil tookx dit lax gang an, yans ganhl am'mal.

Dim si ii gyat ndahl hla bahasxw dim hoyan ma'tsis ganhl liki lighter. Neem dit wilaxhl muus nda la aatix'n.

Lix silt gyat la luutuxwhl muus wakx, da'yo, dibe.

Nit wil hi lakhl, maasxw nit wil ap sim gya am't. Gan-nda wil sak nit wil sga loolaxhl tsakhl muus. Needi 'ta'akxwhl dim haneekx dit niin.

Nda wil geena skihl smax, dim ni 'tox'n ligi gwittaat sin loot ganhl malgwasxw. Di mi hoyaxhl na' ta'al go'wil sgihlx tsa'gasin.

Gan neem dit dashl lik'I'nsxw ganhl gibuu.

How to use in the classroom:

Use the Movies “Gitxsan hunting/tracking”, “Gitxsan moose gutting”, and “Gitxsan moose meat preparation” to show how each is done within the Gitxsan culture, these can be found on YouTube.

Prescribed Learning Outcomes:

- Grade 4

Social Studies – Human and Physical Environment: describe Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with the land and natural resources

- Grade 1 to 7

Social Studies – Skills and Processes of Social Studies: gather a body of information from a variety of primary and secondary sources and create a presentation on a selected topic.

Activity: Study the moose videos on tracking and gutting a moose and create a presentation on either video.

Assessment: Does the presentation depict the importance of the moose to the Gitxsan? Are the proper steps on gutting a moose represented? Are the visuals?

Websites:

http://tip.cfans.umn.edu/prod/groups/cfans/@pub/@cfans/@agedtip/documents/article/cfans_article_255132.pdf. (Intermediate students)

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/moose/>(facts on moose – intermediate)

<http://www.mooseworld.com/> (excellent page dedicated to moose)

Trapping

Prayer:

Creator, Thank you for all the animals on the land, the birds that fly.

Thank you for the trees that keep us warm and the rivers that flow.

Thank you for the food that strengthens our bodies.

Amen

Sim mogit luu taa't tsim lax hagi. Niin ant amgwiitxw sa tun. Toyasa'y niin ahl tsuuts dipagw't ganhl yatsaxw.

Toyasa'y niin ahl gangan lit'wit ganhl ax baahat.

Toyasa'y niin ahl gwineex ant si dax gyathl tkamu'um.

Nit dim gan wilt

Introduction:

Descriptions of animals caught during trapping season

Beaver - → <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/kids/animal-facts/beaver.asp>

Otter - → http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/kids/animal-facts/sea_otter.asp

Muskrat - → <http://www.kaweahoaks.com/html/muskrat.html>

Rabbit - → <http://fohn.net/rabbit-pictures-facts/>

Marten - → <http://wildthingsultd.org/tracking-identification-guide/marten/>

Fisher - → <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/kids/animal-facts/fisher.asp>

Wolverine - → <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/kids/animal-facts/wolverine.asp>

Weasel - → <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/weasel-facts.html>

Lynx - → http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/kids/animal-facts/canada_lynx.asp

Tracks

https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:nUpQnbb0OjMJ:files.dnr.state.mn.us/education_safety/education/project_wild/animal-tracks.pdf+different+animal+tracks&hl=en&gl=ca&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEEShCxa2bwvuo6VHQFclN8y2Mg40BnyOKOW6ZqzD8LK9KUg74a25OlircRuabF4rEzvSq5Ld4R0l0t7cGCI79Zvaa4bTebDPbKF9LdG326w9TDq4RBAR7UKwEG0CdohpY_OZCzVIU&sig=AHIEtbSTUonNR-5tU883d5opAYBAu6h0-A

More tracks - <http://www.bear-tracker.com>

Significance to the Gitxsan:

Before trapping in the traditional lands of the Gitxsan people there is a protocol that must be followed. If you are to start trapping you must ask permission of the owner of the traditional trap line. Within the Gitxsan territories the area is divided amongst the people, the higher the Gitxsan name the more trap lines you have. Written or verbal permission of the person that holds the trap line must be given before entering on their land.

Trapping for smaller animals, like martin, mink, weasel, fisher and beaver, starts on November 20. Bigger animals; lynx, wolverine, wolf, fox and coyote, start on December 20. Before you leave to go check your traps you must make sure that all your supplies are prepared. Once you are out on the land there are no chances to go back home and get your supplies. This would be a waste of time and money that was used on fuel. Your supplies would include: a spare trap (in case the trap that is set is frozen closed), rope or a trap setter (in case the trap gets set on yourself), and lure, hammer, axe, fencing nails and leather gloves.

There are two basic types of traps used, metal traps and snares. Metal traps are square in shape and come in different sizes, 120 for martin, mink, fisher and weasel and 280 for wolverine, fox, coyote and linx. When setting a 120 trap you must have a certain box size that fits and the same for 280.

120 traps can be set on a small tree for smaller animals and the 280 traps can be set on the ground for bigger animals. With each size trap there must be a box that matches the size of the trap.



Figure 15.1, 15.2 120 Trap with running pole for Martin Photos used with permission from Norman Weget Jr.

The box is open at both ends but one side has chicken wire at one end to allow smaller animals to go in and out of the trap without setting it off. The animal's scent is left on the trap as well making it more alluring to bigger animals. When checking your trap it takes about 10 minutes for a 120 trap to take the animal off, reset the trap and add more lure or bait.



Figure 16.1, 16.2 Trap on the ground for bigger animals Photos used with permission from Norman Weget Jr.

Snares are like a wire cable and they have camlocks on them so once the snare is set off it does not loosen. A snare takes longer to set because you have to wear leather gloves so no scent gets on the snare. The bigger the loop set the bigger the animal you will catch. When setting a snare there must be only one trail going into the area so the animal you are trying to catch follows that one trail.

Any other scent will also scare the animals away from the area. It takes approximately 30 minutes to set a snare because of all the precautions. Old moose meat or hide can be used as bait or beaver meat is usually ideal because of how oily and fatty it is. Traps and snares are usually checked every 2-3 days. Ideal spots for traps or snares are near creeks or swamps which are water and food sources for animals. Set near a tree in a bushy wooded area where animals feel more comfortable.



Figure 17 Snare trap Photo used with permission from Norman Weget Jr.

To set the trap find two dry trees that are close to each other, young trees will have sap and may get on the fur and down grade the fur. The box will go on one side and the trap will be anchored on the other with a fencing nail. There is a certain way to set the trap within the box so the trap catches the animal and does not damage the fur (refer to the video and pictures). Once the trap is set in the box find a small twig and dip it in the martin lure and drop it in the box. Break a small branch/tree and line it up to your trap/box for a running pole for the animal to get easier access to your trap. Place cedar bows on top of the trap to make it look more like an animal home (martin are scavengers and look for easy meals) and to hide the trap.

Once the animal is taken off the trap it gets placed in a paper or an old rice bag. Once you get home spray an insect killer in the bag and let it sit overnight, this is to kill all the ticks or fleas on the fur. To prepare the fur you first clean the animal out. Turn the fur inside out to clean off any excess fat or meat. Turn right side in and place the fur on a stretcher and let it dry this way.

To clean the trap or snare wire you can boil them in water and baking soda to clean the scent, animal bits and rust off. The trap is then put into a rice bag with cedar, spruce or pine branches. Traps can be held and set with your bare hands but a snare has to be scent free. Leather gloves must be used when setting or cleaning a snare because if human scent gets on there the animal will not go near it.

The ideal time to trap animals is during the winter months because the fur is fluffy, darker and thicker. In the summer or the warmer months the fur is thinner and light with regards to weight.

Before going out to set or check traps it is recommended to cleanse or sleep separately from your significant other. This will ensure that nothing bad happens when checking your traps and that your fur is good quality. This is one of the traditions and beliefs of the Gitxsan men to ensure safety and good fortune when in the forest. Asking for protection and guidance when hunting and trapping is of great importance. When hunting or trapping a special root called mulgwas is carried to scare off bad omens or certain animals that you do not want near you and for safety reasons.

Translation in Gitxsan:

Skiihl ayookhl Gitxsan dim wil'dit hli gook dim hooyax dit lax yip hli kyul dit.

Am kyul simoogyat wil luu sgihl dax gyat ant amagyaa diihl lax yip.

Gidaxhl na dim ant hoyahl alax yip, dim mi 'tamxwhl sa'winsxw loot. Sitaatxwhl Haapxwhl kuba yatsaxw hla 20 Lasa Gwineekxw.

La sa yin dim hapxw'n dim yagyat gwildim goot niin. Wil hagetxw gas gil dawhl sa. 'Tax yuuk't dinhl kiinhl hapxw, gwi'luuxw, dakhil haguutxw, 'tapxw'hansxw, tsiit. Gilbil wila gitgyadihl gan hapxw kiiyhl hapxw ii kiiyhl hoogas't. Txalpx amuuwas't lixsi gyathl kap dit. Kyap di kyap wil gilbil wil kyap. 120 ahl ha't,

Gilbil di kyap gando'olt wil kyap ahl nageets, kala' wa'a, os'm spagyat gan, ganh weex. Ndeem mil het'nhl kyap di kya'p jayeehl sgihl xbeest dim hoyan, ho wihl, gilbil di kyap gando'olt wil kyap.

Gan kakhil xbeest, dim gan laxji gol kuba yatsaxw. Ii sa wida yatsaxw dim hapxw't.

Hla hedinhl jayehl dim 'taa goohl spagyt apdihl gwalgwa gan. Dim gan needi daswihl sgan hli tkaahl yatsaxw A loohl hli smaxhl tsi milix amt wil needi dax hl hix't.

Yeexwhl ja'yeehl mahli gilbil ganhl ligi gwl'al sa.

Am goohl tax, go'ohl wil mitxw lax ganhl sgan ts'ak.

How to use in the classroom:

Prescribed Learning Outcomes:

- Grade 4

Social Studies – Economy and Technology: describe technologies used by Aboriginal people in BC and Canada

Social Studies – Human and Physical Environment: describe Aboriginal peoples' relationship with the land and natural resources

Activity: Study each animal that is trapped and have a knowledge holder come into the classroom to show what they know about trapping and furs.

Assessment: Does the child explain the importance of trapping to Gitksan people? Are they able to create an image that shows the variety of animals that are trapped? Is the child able to show/tell how to set a trap or snare and the precautions that are needed?

Websites:

<http://www.pc.gc.ca/>

→ lessons on the fur trade in British Columbia