September 15, 2015
Aklavik, Northwest Territories

Promoting and Preserving Culture: Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute
Launches Place Name Maps and Interactive Atlas

The Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute (GSCI) will officially launch a topographical map set, a wall map, and an interactive online atlas during the Gwich’in Tribal Council’s Annual General Assembly on September 15th in Aklavik.

The culmination of more than two decades of extensive fieldwork and consultation with elders, the set consists of twenty-two topographical maps for traveling on the land in the Gwich’in Settlement Region that includes Gwich’in traditional lands in both the Northwest Territories and Yukon. Scaled at 1:250,000, the maps are comprehensive guides of traditional land use as well as functional trail maps. A large place names wall map (5ft. X 7ft) showcasing names was also created for display in schools and public offices. These maps are among the few complete place name map sets ever created by an Indigenous group in Canada for their traditional land use area.

In 1992, GSCI began working with elders from Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik, Aklavik, and Fort McPherson to record named places, trails, and historical and archeological sites. The topographical maps and accompanying ‘talking map’ – an Interactive Atlas – showcases more than 900 place names.

Alestine Andre, GSCI Heritage Researcher, has been working on the mapping project since 1992, along with Ingrid Kritsch and elders. "Our Gwich'in people relate to maps really well. Maps are among the most important instruments to keep Gwich'in history and knowledge of the land alive.”

Working with Carleton University’s Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre, GSCI’s Interactive Atlas uses the Centre's Nunaliit Atlas framework to create a map that integrates historical information and oral histories behind place names. The online atlas

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includes that allows users to hear how names sound in Gwich’in, plus photos, videos and documents to illustrate knowledge about the named places.

The topographical map sets and Interactive Atlas will be launched during the Gwich’in Tribal Council General Assembly and be made available for the public on September 15, 2015.

Visit the Interactive Atlas here: http://atlas.gwichin.ca/

For more information, please contact:

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**Sharon Snowshoe, Executive Director 867-952-2524 (from Mon Sept. 21-Fri. Sept. 25)**

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