



## Working with the Tetlin Tribe

Dendeey shyuh iin (Athabascan) Indians have historically lived in the Tetlin area for more than 10,000 years, moving with the seasons between several hunting and fishing camps. In 1885, Lt. H.T. Allen found small groups of people living in Tetlin and, to the south, in Last Tetlin where the residents made numerous trips to trading posts as far away as the Yukon River. In 1912, villagers from Tetlin would also trade at the Tanana Crossing Trading Post. During the Chisana gold stampede in 1913, a trading post was established on the upper Tanana River, across the river from Tetlin. When two trading posts were opened in the village during the 1920s by John Hajdukovich and W.H. Newton, residents from Last Tetlin relocated to Tetlin. Last Tetlin remains as a summer and cultural camp. A school was constructed in 1929, and a post office was opened in 1932. President Hoover established the Tetlin Reserve containing approximately 768,000 acres by Executive Order 5365 on June 10, 1930. An airstrip was constructed in 1946 and an all-weather road linking the Tetlin village to the Alaska Hwy was completed in 1990. The community continues to live a traditional Athabascan culture and lifestyle. Approximately 127 people live in Tetlin village proper with approximately 300 other tribal members living in the surrounding communities of Tok, Tanacross, Dot lake and Northway.

When the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was passed in 1971, the reserve was revoked and the Tetlin Tribe opted for surface and subsurface title to the 768,000 acres of land making up the former reserve, rather than becoming aligned with one of the Regional Alaska Native Corporations (Doyon or Ahtna). Today the Village of Tetlin owns ~675,000 acres of fee simple surface and sub-surface title, while the Tetlin Native Corporation (TNC) owns the balance of lands in the Tanana River valley. Originally Contango ORE and now the Peak Gold LLC have a mining lease agreement with the Tetlin Village Tribal Council. There is no agreement on the adjacent lands owned by the TNC. For more information on the Tetlin Tribe, its people, and their way of life, please visit: [https://www.fws.gov/refuge/tetlin/about/local\\_culture.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/tetlin/about/local_culture.html)

The Mining Lease with the Tetlin Tribe was originally negotiated between Juneau Exploration controlled by Brad Juneau, and then subsequently transferred to Contango ORE, and then to the Peak Gold JV with Royal Gold, and currently to the Peak Gold LLC representing the 70-30 arrangement between Kinross (70% and Manager and Operator of the LLC) and Contango ORE with a 30% interest (see Quick-Link: Project History by Curt Freeman).

The Mining Lease between the Peak Gold LLC and the Tetlin Tribe provides Peak Gold the exclusive, complete, and unrestricted right to make any use or uses of the Leased Land to explore for, develop, mine, remove, treat and sell all ore and minerals on the Leased Land. Pursuant to the Lease, Peak Gold is required to make minimum expenditures in order to maintain the Lease in addition to making certain production royalty payments to the Tetlin Tribal Council. Peak Gold must spend a minimum of \$350,000 a year exploring, evaluating, or developing the Leased Land. Peak Gold makes annual advanced minimum royalty payments to the Tetlin Council of \$75,000 a year, plus an escalation adjustment equal to \$75,000 x the CPI percentage increase (as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) during the period from January 1, 2012 to the immediately preceding January 1 prior to the date of disbursement. Upon production being achieved, Peak Gold will pay the Tetlin Council a net production royalty (NPR).

The Contango ORE, the Peak Gold JV and the new Peak Gold LLC over the years have also been involved in many events to support the local Tetlin Communities. These include:

- Community meetings each year
- Community Support Funds to the Tribe to direct towards community programs/events
- Community Clean Up Days – clean up trash and remove old equipment for proper disposal
- Road Maintenance & Safety – each year we provide funding and safety awareness on the shared use of the Tetlin Road

- COVID-19 Relief Donations – additional \$40,000 this spring was donated to the Tetlin Village Council and the Upper Tanana Development Corporation
- Local Donations to the Tok Dog Musher’s Association annually
- UAF Courses offered locally in Tetlin – computer courses, employment readiness, etc.
- Newsletters distributed to all community residents and statewide stakeholders
- GED Preparation Program – offered in Tetlin and Tok to prepare residents for the GED exam
- Cultural Awareness Training annually during field crew training

