

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 26, 2024

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Accepts Gift of Chief Isaac Statue

On Saturday, August 24, 2024, members of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in General Assembly gathered on the Yukon River in Dawson for the unveiling of a new statue of Hähkè (Chief) Isaac, one of the Hän nation's most influential and revered leaders. The concrete and metal statue was created by artists Halin de Repentigny and Jake Armstrong and gifted to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in by M2 Mining; a placer mining operation based in Dawson.

The statue was placed in Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Territory with Hähkè Isaac's likeness looking down towards Moosehide village, a traditional and contemporary gathering place for the Hän nation. Several Hähkè Isaac's descendants were present, including his granddaughter, who thanked the artists and donor on behalf of her family and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people.

Hähkè Darren Taylor, the current Chief of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in recalled Hähkè Isaac's contributions and legacy to the community of Dawson, noting that he was a leader who sought to build understanding between Klondike Gold Rush stampeders and Hän people.

"Hähkè Isaac was our leader during a period of unprecedented upheaval for our people. When 30,000 foreigners stampeded into our traditional territory at the height of the Klondike Gold Rush, he led us in welcoming them and teaching them our way while also looking out for the wellbeing of his people. ...[And] when he sent the songs and dances that house our culture to be stored for safekeeping with our relatives in Alaska...he did so informed by a lesson present in so many of our traditional stories: there is danger both in the refusal to adapt and in failing consider future generations in our decisions. Thanks to his connection to the teachings of his ancestors, we still have our songs and dances today."

A plaque recognizing the contributions of past and contemporary Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in leaders is slated to be added to the statue later this year.

-30-

Contact

Elaine Corden
Director of Communications and Policy,
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
(604) 345-2140

