

# KOBUK RIVER INTERTRIBAL WATERSHED COUNCIL

## Kobuk River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council Accord

### **PREAMBLE**

We the Kobuk River tribes are the Indigenous nations that predate the United States Constitution and the State of Alaska and who have always governed ourselves on our Traditional Ancestral lands and as the Indigenous Peoples of the Kobuk River and its tributaries, hereinafter known as the Watershed parties to this Accord,

- 1) Aware that we have always been responsible to respect our lands and our waters according to our traditional laws. For the well being of our descendants, we speak for those who are not here, for our future generations.
- 2) Conscious of the value and the sacredness of the Watershed and of the urgent need to maintain, protect and enhance the life and quality of the Watershed,
- 3) Alarmed by the contamination of the Watershed and its air with toxic and solid wastes, chemicals, sewage and other forms of pollution, and increasingly erratic climate change, as well as increased human activity in the watershed, which is causing environmental impacts including cysts, deformities and other anomalies in the wildlife resources of the Watershed, and high rates of cancer and other diseases in the villages within the Watershed,
- 4) Aware that the Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed in every generation have initiated the effort to protect the environmental integrity of the Watershed and cultural vitality of the indigenous communities that are dependent upon and part of the Watershed,
- 5) Aware that our relationship with the Watershed is reciprocal and that the sacred river provides for us as we continue to assist in its caretaking,
- 6) Recognizing that that the Indigenous Peoples signatory to this Accord have titles and interests with respect to traditional territories, and that we affirm our right to self-determination, by virtue of which we continue to freely determine our political status and freely pursue our economic, social, cultural, and traditional development,
- 7) Affirming that WE, as Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed, have the right to fully participate in all levels of decision-making, through our own governments in matters

which may affect the rights, status, or destinies of the signatories to this Accord, and asserting our Government to Government relationship with each other and with other governments,

8) Being determined to recover, maintain and strengthen our distinctive spiritual, cultural, traditional and material relationship with the lands, waters and other resources that we have traditionally owned or other wise occupied or used, including access to our lands, waters and resources, and to uphold our responsibilities to present and future generations in this regard,

9) Recognizing and affirming that We, the Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed, maintain contacts, relationships and cooperation presently, and have maintained these relationships since long before the establishments of other governments over us,

10) Affirming the need to promote cooperation, communication and education among the Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed in the planning, management, and protection of the Watershed for our peoples and future generations, Have agreed as follows:

## **PURPOSES OF THE ACCORD**

### Article I.- Purpose.

We, the Indigenous Peoples of the Kobuk River and its tributaries, having been placed here by our Creator, do hereby endorse this Accord to initiate and continue the protection and restoration of the Watershed for the welfare of our own and future generations and for the continuation of our way of life. The purpose of this Accord is to plan, monitor, protect, and enhance the environmental integrity of the Watershed and the cultural vitality of its Indigenous peoples through cooperation, communication and education.

### Article II- Cooperation

The Indigenous Peoples signatory to this Accord, agree to consult and cooperate with each other

In planning and implementing specific projects to carry out the purposes of this Accord. All cooperative action taken pursuant to this Accord will recognize and respect the authority and self determination of the signatories.

### Article III.- Communication and Education

1)The Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed will encourage understanding of the importance of , and the measures required for, the protection and promotion of the environmental integrity of the Watershed, and will make best efforts to coordinate and

cooperate with other Indigenous Peoples and with other approved cooperating entities in developing educational and public awareness programs.

2) The Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed will facilitate the development and exchange of information, from all publicly available sources relevant to the protection and promotion of the environmental integrity of the Watershed, including technical, scientific, and socio-economic research, as well as information on training and surveying programs, specialized knowledge, and traditional and local knowledge as appropriate.

## **CARRYING OUT THE PURPOSES OF THIS ACCORD**

### **Article IV – The Kobuk River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (KRITWC)**

The Indigenous Peoples hereby approve the establishment of the Kobuk River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council, pursuant to the summit of Indigenous Peoples at Anchorage, Alaska, on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011, provided that the Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws and mission statement of the KRITWC are amended and clarified to conform with the terms of this Accord, and provided the KRITWC faithfully carries out the directions agreed upon by the Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed and its tributaries, carries on its work with full respect for the authority of the Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed and its tributaries, and reports regularly to them.

### **Article V.- Summit Meetings**

The Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed, as a means for carrying out the purposes of this Accord, agree that they will meet in Leadership meetings each quarter of the first year then in Annual Summits thereafter. The Indigenous People signatory to this Accord may schedule additional Summits or other meetings as needed. The time and place of the summit meetings will be determined by the Kobuk River Intertribal Watershed Council in consultation with the Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed.

### **Article VI.- Amendment of the Accord**

Amendments to this Accord may be proposed by any of the Indigenous Peoples signatory to this Accord. Amendments may be adopted only by consensus at a summit of Indigenous Peoples. The KRITWC shall inform all signatories to the accord of any proposed amendments at least thirty days in advance of the summit meeting, unless otherwise agreed. Amendments will be implemented upon ratification of the Indigenous Peoples signatory to the Accord.

### **Article VII.- Implementation of this Accord**

This Accord shall take effect upon signing by the Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed, and will remain open to future signatories.

#### Articles VIII.- Withdrawals

At any time any signatory may withdraw from the Accord by giving written notification to the KRITWC , which will inform the other Indigenous Peoples of the Watershed.

#### Article IX.- Disclaimers

This Accord will strengthen the ability of signatory Indigenous Peoples to resolve issues of mutual concern through cooperation, communication and education. This Accord will not be used in any court of law against any signatory.

### **Definitions**

**Board of Directors** - The Board of Directors of the Kobuk River Inter Tribal Watershed Council

Consists of Chiefs, Presidents or designated representatives from the Tribal Governments that have signed the Inter-Tribal Watershed Accord. They shall number two per Tribal Government and be appointed by their Chief or President with their respective councils.

**Indigenous Peoples** - The Tribes of the Kobuk River Watershed and its tributaries, as represented through their Tribal Governments.

**Leadership Meetings-** Leadership meetings is the term for the meeting of at least one of the two appointed Board of Directors from each Tribal Government, which will meet quarterly during the first year and as necessary thereafter and will be in addition to the annual Summit meeting of the entire Board of Directors.

**Summit meeting – Summit Meeting** is a term for the for the meeting of the Board of Directors

only, which shall take place annually. At the “Summit” meeting more people than just the Board of Directors are expected to attend. For example environmental technicians and staff , and elders and youth are encouraged to attend.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors consists of one member from each signatory Tribal Government, chosen by the entire Board of Directors to represent them and

Guide the Kobuk River Inter Tribal Watershed Council during the time between annual Summit meetings The members of the of the Executive Committee each represent their signatory Tribal Government and are chosen initially by the Board of Directors for appointment for one year then reselected annually or replaced. Any vacancy occurring on the Executive Committee in between annual Summit meetings shall be filled by the affirmative consensus of the remaining Executive Committee members. Interim Executive Committee appointments shall be reviewed by the full Board of Directors at the next Summit meeting.

Kobuk River Watershed- the Kobuk River from the headwaters to its mouth, including all of its tributaries.

AS WRITTEN THIS December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011

Signatory Representative with Authorizing Resolution from Tribal Government.

Native Village of Kobuk \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and printed title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Date

Native Village of Shungnak \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and printed title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Date

Native Village of Ambler \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and printed title

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Signature and Date

Native Village of \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and printed title

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Signature and Date

Native Village of \_\_\_\_\_  
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