

Children's book, Remember the Promise, tells tales of nature in North Slavey

by Dana Bowen
Northern News Services
Sahtu

COLLECTING STORIES from elders across the Sahtu, Remember the Promise teaches children about wildlife and respecting nature.

The book, written in part with the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board, is based off a workshop where elders spoke about wildlife, while interpreters translated their stories into English.

The book tells of when Dene first came onto the land and made a promise with the animals that they would respect each other.

"Now it's time for people of the Sahtu region to learn about this promise and work on ways of keeping the diversity of life in our land," wrote Michael Neyelle in the story's introduction.

The animals would offer themselves up as food as long as humans respected the wildlife.

But as time went on, the promise was forgotten.

As the story goes, Dene began building on the land and polluting the air.

In turn, the animals moved away and got sick which made people pay attention to what was happening.

The people began to discuss why the animals' behaviours changed and thought

of ways to help them again through committees.

The book is written in English with a few North Slavey words followed by a glossary defining them.

"The majority of the NWT population are all English speaking," said Lucy Jackson, who was a language specialist for the workshop. "We need to combine both English and Dene languages together for the children to learn."

"It's time for people of the Sahtu region to learn about this promise."

Michael Neyelle

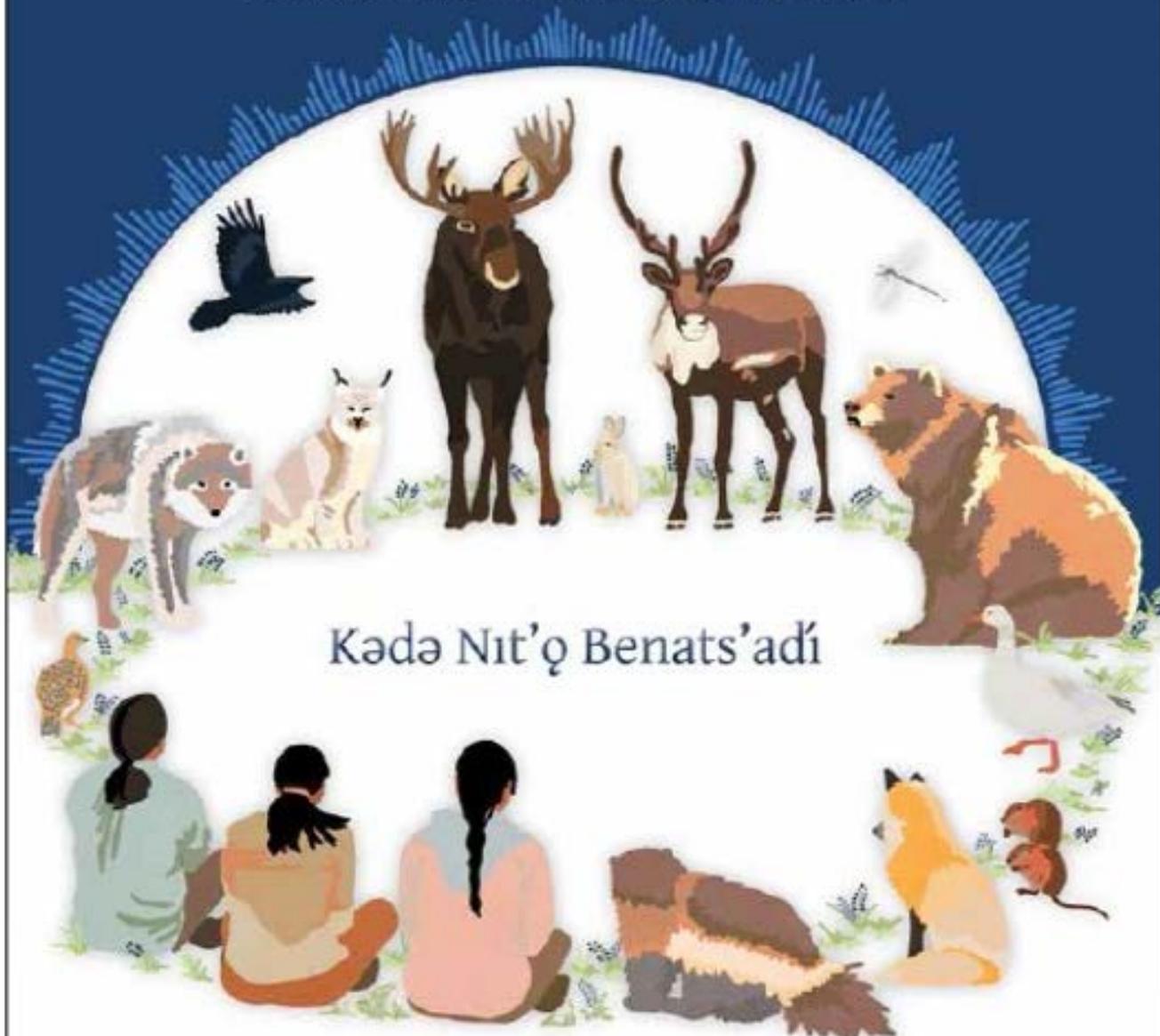
There are two versions reflecting multiple North Slave dialects spoken in Tulita and Fort Good Hope, said Deborah Simmons, executive director of the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board.

The idea was for the book to put legislative language in a Dene perspective, stated the press release from the renewable resources board.

"It's specific to the Sahtu region and to try to learn how Dene people think about wildlife and how this might inform people about species at risk," she said.

Drawings by Jean Polfus accompany each page showing bright cartoon images of animals and silhouettes of people. Remember the Promise is available on the Species At Risk page, at the Yellowknife's Book Cellar and in the Norman Wells Historical Centre.

Based on stories told by Sahtu Elders



Kədə Nit'q Benats'adi

REMEMBER THE PROMISE

photo courtesy of Deborah Simmons

The children's book Remember the Promise combines English and North Slavey to spread message of respecting nature