

# Yukon First Nations Defence and Security Industry Conference

**Dates:** Tuesday, April 22 and Wednesday, April 23, 2025

**Purpose:** This conference, hosted by Yukon Assembly of First Nations and Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce, brings together Yukon First Nation governments, development corporations, defence industry leaders, Armed Forces members, and government partners to explore collaboration in the growing defence and security sectors. With major investments underway, it is critical that Yukon First Nations are not just participants, but key decision-makers and partners. Yukon First Nations have a longstanding legacy of leadership and innovation in the North. This conference is a platform to build strategic partnerships, drive economic opportunities, and ensure First Nation priorities shape the future of Arctic defence.

**Location:** Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre, Whitehorse, Yukon

## Day 1

Time	Agenda Item
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8:00-9:00am	Light breakfast (provided)
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### Setting the Context

*Objective: To create understanding of the broader defence and security context, dispel myths and clarify misconceptions.*

9:00-9:30am	Opening Prayer and Reflections on Yukon Military History
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- ❖ Elder Chuck Hume, AFN Yukon Knowledge Keeper
- ❖ Elder Lorraine Netro, AFN Yukon Elders Circle

9:30-10:00am	Welcome
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- ❖ Chief Sean Smith, Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- ❖ Chief Ruth Massie, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
- ❖ Tiffany Eckert-Maret, Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Regional Chief Kluane Adamek, AFN Yukon Region

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**Conference Moderator:** Sam Alexander, Board Member, Gwich'in Council International; Department Chair for the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska (Fairbanks); Prior US Army Special Forces Major.

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10:00-11:15am

**Panel**

**Arctic Security and Defence: fact versus fiction?**

- *The state of threats facing the Arctic and the Yukon*
- *Yukon First Nation security and defence priorities*
- *How Crown governments are meeting the security concerns of Yukon First Nations*
- ❖ *Chief Pauline Frost, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (virtual)*
- ❖ *P. Whitney Lachenauer, NAADSN*

Moderated by: Sam Alexander

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11:15-11:30am

**Break**

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11:30am-12:00pm

**In Conversation**

**Reclaiming Arctic Security: First Nation Leadership in Northern Defence**

- Understanding First Nation worldviews on the definition of “security”
- How self-determination, sovereignty, collaboration, and lived experiences shape First Nation perspectives and priorities on defence.

Regional Chief Kluane Adamek, AFN Yukon Region

Moderated by: Tiffany Eckert-Maret, Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce

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12:00-12:30 pm

**Presentation and Q&A**

**Indigenous Women and Arctic Security: Leadership, Impact, and Inclusion**

- The role of Indigenous women in shaping Arctic security and defence
- Why gendered perspectives are essential to defence initiatives
- Lessons and models for meaningful inclusion

Madeleine Redfern, Interim CEO, Native Women's Association of Canada (virtual)

Moderator: Sam Alexander

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12:30-1:30pm

**Lunch (provided)**

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1:30-2:15pm

**Presentation**

**Energy Security: The Potential of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) in the Yukon**

- *The urgency of meeting Yukon's growing energy demands and ensuring long-term energy security*
- *The promise of SMRs as a rapid-deployment, scalable power source, and where we are on the path to deployment*
- *How SMRs could integrate into a diversified energy mix alongside renewables and existing infrastructure*

Presentation by: Senator Pat Duncan and Elliot Berg (virtual)

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2:15-2:30pm

**Transition to Workshops**

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**Workshops**

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2:30-4:30pm

**Workshop 1: Energy Infrastructure**

*Hosted by Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation*

*Attendance is limited to representatives from Yukon First Nations, Transboundary First Nation Governments and Development Corporations.*

**Workshop 2: Introduction to Yukon First Nations History, Culture and Collaboration**

*Presentations by Samantha Dawson (ChangeMakers) and Ltaguháa Sean McDougall (Director of Heritage, Language and Culture at Carcross/Tagish First Nation)*

*Attendance is open to any interested participant.*

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**- Day 1 concludes -**

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6:30pm-  
9:00pm

**Networking Event and Reception, hosted by Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce (MacBride Museum)**

**Day 2**

**Time**

**Agenda Item**

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8:00-9:00am

**Light breakfast (provided)**

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**Supporting Industries and Infrastructure**

*Objective: To consider the interconnection between Arctic security and defence and other key industries that Yukon First Nations are considering making investments in.*

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9:00-9:10am	<b>Day 2 Welcome</b> AFN Yukon
9:10-9:30am	<b><i>In Conversation</i></b> <b>Yukon Government Perspectives on Arctic Security and Defence</b> The Honourable Ranj Pillai, Premier of the Yukon Moderated by: Regional Chief Kluane Adamek, AFN Yukon
9:30-10:15am	<b>Keynote</b>  <b>Creating Strategic Value and Shared Prosperity: Building a Collaborative Defence Economy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The mechanics of creating shared value between community, industry, and government</i></li> <li>• <i>Strategic value of the Yukon and First Nations in defence</i></li> <li>• <i>Thinking outside the bureaucratic box: re-establishing First Nation economies and trade relationships</i></li> </ul> <p>Keynote by: David Carrière-Acco, President and CEO, Acosys Consulting</p>
<b><i>Understanding the Defence Industry</i></b>	
<i>Objective: To raise awareness about what the “defence industry” means in terms of the Yukon, the Arctic, and Canada, and highlight opportunities geared towards First Nation procurement.</i>	
10:15-11:45am	<b>Panel</b> <b>Facilitating First Nation and Industry Collaboration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Challenges to and opportunities for enabling First Nation and defence industry collaboration.</i></li> <li>• <i>First Nation-Industry success stories</i></li> <li>• <i>What is needed to attract and initiate defence and security-related projects in the Yukon?</i></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Philip Ducharme, Vice President of Entrepreneurship &amp; Procurement, Canadian Council for Indigenous Business</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Cmdre Jason Armstrong, Naval Force Development, Royal Canadian Navy</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Aiden Kindopp, Research Coordinator, Cando</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Antoine am Rhyn, Regional Service Line Leader - Contract Services, Defence Construction Canada</i></li> </ul> <p>Moderated by: David Carrière-Acco, President and CEO, Acosys Consulting</p>
11:45am-1:00pm	<b>Lunch (provided)</b>

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1:00-2:00pm

**Panel**

**Emergency Management and Security**

- ❖ *Josie Pickard, Occupational Health and Safety Officer, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government*
- ❖ *Nick Mauro, Chief Operating Officer, Yukon First Nations Wildfire*
- ❖ *Shane Skarnulis, Yukon EMO*
- ❖ *Major Dan Gillis, Joint Task Force North*

Moderated by: Sam Alexander

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2:00-2:15pm

**Closing Prayer**

Elder Chuck Hume, AFN Yukon Knowledge Keeper

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2:15-2:30pm

**Transition to Workshops**

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**Workshops**

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2:30-5:30pm

**Workshop 1: Getting Started in Defence Procurement - A Primer for Yukon First Nation Development Corporations**

*Attendance is limited to representatives from Yukon First Nation Development Corporations or businesses.*

**Workshop 2: Learning from the Land - Canadian Rangers Demonstrations & Walking Tour by Amber Berard-Althouse**

*Attendance is open to all participants. [RSVP](#) is required for the Walking Tour. Please be prepared with appropriate clothing to be outdoors.*

**Workshop 3: Solidifying Yukon First Nations Leadership in Defence - Priorities and Next Steps**

*Attendance is limited to leaders and representatives from Yukon First Nation governments and organizations.*

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**- Day 2 concludes -**

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