

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'Safe on The Land': Hotii ts'eeda and FOXY promote on-the-land social distancing

Yellowknife, March 24, 2020 - As part of its social distancing campaign called *Our Home is Our Camp* (#homeiscamp), Hotii ts'eeda and FOXY (Fostering Open eXpression among Youth) are continuing to promote social distancing that is both *culturally relevant* and *safe* in response to the COVID-19 coronavirus.

"Going out on the land is a good way to practice social distancing if you can," said Hotii ts'eeda Chairperson John B. Zoe. *"We want to remind everyone of what our Elders and Knowledge Holders have always taught us: plan well, stay safe and ask for guidance if you need it."*

"Everyone needs to practice social distancing right now. It is the most important thing we can all do to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect our families and communities," said Executive Director Candice Lys. *"We care about each other's safety and we want everyone who goes out on the land to do it safely."*

The two organizations are expanding their campaign in coordination with Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Health and Social Services. They are releasing a new poster by Dene artist Melaw Nakehk'o of Yellowknife, that provides reminders about how to be 'Safe On The Land'. These include:

- Continue social distancing. This means 'Stay at camp' and 'No visiting.
- Talk with Knowledge Holders about your plans.
- Bring enough supplies and medications and know how to get more when needed.
- Check weather forecasts.
- Tell family where you are going and for how long.
- Have a way back.
- Have a way to stay connected and in touch.
- Keep busy. Everyone has a role and things to do (e.g. sewing, crafts, games, puzzles).
- Only go as far, or as long as you feel comfortable (camp does not need to be far away).

Please note, going out on the land is for social distancing *only*. It is not a way to self-isolate. Anyone required to self-isolate must do this at home. Also, it is recommended that anyone feeling sick should stay at home. Continue to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 while on the land and consider heading back to town if someone develops symptoms.

Because not everyone can or should go out on the land at this time, Hotii ts'eeda and FOXY note that it is important to make sure there is a plan and support for those who stay behind.

The two organizations also recommend that everyone stay informed on the latest COVID-19 information and recommendations by checking: hss.gov.nt.ca or canada.ca/coronavirus.

You can follow the *Our Home is Our Camp* campaign on the Hotiì ts'eeda Facebook page or following the hashtag #homeiscamp. Resources are being developed in all NWT official languages and can be accessed via www.nwtspor.ca and through social media.

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BACKGROUND

Hotiì ts'eeda's mandate includes ensuring relevant health and research information reaches the general public. Hotiì ts'eeda is hosted by the Tłı̨chǫ Government. It is a SPOR (Strategy for Patient Oriented Research) Support Unit funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and supported by a partnership of NWT governments and organizations.

FOXY is a thriving made-in-the-NWT program that uses Indigenous ways of knowing and arts-based methods to bring sexual and mental health awareness to Northern and Indigenous youth. Since 2012, FOXY and its parallel program SMASH (Strength, Masculinities, and Sexual Health) have reached more 6000 youth across the three territories with their trauma-informed, strengths-based health promotion programming.