

Drum Making Workshop

On Dec. 6, 2007 the Donlin Creek Mine hosted a drum making workshop for employees. The workshop began on Dec. 5, when the presenters – White Eagle and Tymoreye' – were introduced to the employees and shown around the camp. They also started soaking the hides in preparation for making the drums.

The next day, participants gathered in the dining hall to share their expectations and goals for the workshop. Drum making is a very personal part of the Region's heritage, and the group spent time learning the meanings of the four directions, singing and preparing themselves to create a drum that was filled with personal meaning and significance. Later that day, the elk hide and hoop materials were distributed and blessed with sage and eagle feathers.

The class then learned to make drums by creating their own. The hoops were prepared, the hides were punched and stretched, and drums were laced together in a special way. The group then cured the drums overnight by drying them in a warm place.

The next morning the drum makers picked out willow sticks for the drum beater and were finally able to try out the instruments. Singing and dancing took place for the rest of the afternoon, and several gifts were given to thank those that made the workshop possible as well as to those who taught it.

Everyone who took part left with two things: a meaningful traditional drum created with their own hands and the memory of the sharing that took place during the workshop.