



In the Yukon, Julien can put his skills to good use year-round. He has found a paradise in his host country.

Courtesy photo

Julien Rouget, a Man of the North

Originally from Brittany, Julien Rouget is at heart a man of the North. It is not surprising that he has become a permanent resident of Canada and settled in the Yukon for four years now.

His first contact with the North occurred across the Atlantic. After completing a degree in ecotourism, he obtained employment contracts in Northern Europe, Finland and Norway. "I was sledding in winter and canoeing in summer. I went to Mongolia for six months to serve as a guide... I had a work permit but it was temporary," Julien explained.

First experience in Canada

Julien first set foot in Canada ten years ago. On a Working Holiday visa, he spent a year as a sled dog kennel groomer with musher Marcelle Fressineau in Quebec. At that time, the Alayuk Adventures musher offered dogsledding tours in Quebec's Mauricie region.

"I'd worked for Marcelle and Gilles when they were in Quebec. I had heard so much about the Yukon and it seemed so much like what I was looking for that when they moved here, I came to visit them," said Julien Rouget. That was six years ago.

Choosing to immigrate

When Julien Rouget began to think about immigrating, his first choice was the Yukon. Having settled there with Alayuk Adventures, Marcelle Fressineau and Gilles Proteau took Julien on as a guide for a year and a half. He was able to work in Canada thanks to a Young Professionals visa.

Determined to obtain permanent residency, Julien was looking for someone who would hire him under the Nominee Program. Marcelle Fressineau introduced him to Carson, owner of

the Inn on the Lake at Marsh Lake, who agreed to sponsor him. "I did some guiding, maintenance work and a bit of everything," said Julien.

For Julien, obtaining his residence card didn't take too long; just one year after sending in his application. "That's not too bad. But the longest, is finding a company willing to trust you," he added.

The Yukon

What drew Julien Rouget to the Yukon was primarily the great outdoors, nature and the quality of life found here, not to mention the work! "For me, here, the big difference from where I worked before, is that I wasn't a permanent resident of the country then. I was seasonal," he explained. "Whereas here, I live in Whitehorse, I have a normal life; I can work as a guide all year round and have my own home. The

city is not too big but it offers all the services, everything you need. A few minutes out of the city and you are in nature. It's paradise."

"Immigration is one heck of a challenge"

The state of mind of applicants for residency often swings from hope to despondency. Julien Rouget tells us of his experience: "It takes a lot of perseverance. You go through various stages and there are times when you want to give up. It's demoralizing, for sure. But at the same time, the more the process moves forward, the less you can back out."

Then there are rumours and the experiences of others. Some got their card in six months, others in two years. Anxiety mounts. The costs of taking the permanent residency route are also to be considered. Julien had to go to Vancouver twice; once to have his passport extended and a second time to take an English test and pay his examinations for his medical record. Julien estimates that, all in all, his application cost him roughly \$3,000.

Since he officially became a permanent resident, Julien finds everything clearly easier. He can now plan ahead. After four years in the Yukon, he realizes that he has put down roots in this land. And since he met his Canadian girlfriend, he cannot imagine leaving here.

"Whenever I leave the territory, I realize that I'm happy here. I like going to France, but after a month, I want to come home."

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