



# SAIK'UZ FIRST NATION

2022-23 Annual General Assembly

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# A M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H I E F



Thank you for your interest in our Annual General Assembly. I hope you had a great summer and are now refreshed for the approaching year.

The Ministry of Forest continues to provide us with weekly updates on the wildfire situation. While the Tatuk fire is still blazing and has expanded to over 19,000 hectares, the Greer Creek fire has stopped spreading and has been removed from the list of wildfires in the vicinity. Currently, there is no danger to our community.

Unfortunately, because of the wildfire season that British Columbia faced this year, we could not hold this year's Culture Camp out at Tatuk Lake as planned. It is disheartening, but these fire conditions have become the new normal. Nevertheless, I would like to express my gratitude to Deanna Patrick, Rachel Thomas, and their team for hosting the camp within the community, despite the heavy smoke that engulfed most of the days.

On behalf of Chief and Council, I extend my gratitude to our General Manager, Cora McIntosh, and all the managers and staff for their valuable contributions to our nation. The dedication and commitment they give to this organization is crucial to ensuring our success. I acknowledge and appreciate their efforts.

I would additionally like to express my gratitude to the Council for their diligent efforts and commitment to our nation. Your support means more to me than you know, and I am thankful for your exceptional dedication. I receive strength from you, and I want you to know how much I appreciate you. Mussi cho!

Ongoing Projects

## Artemis (Blackwater Mine)

Artemis Gold Inc. is currently in talks with Nadleh Whut'en, Saik'uz First Nation, and Stelat'en First Nation to discuss accommodative measures and benefits. However, the three nations have not yet reached a consensus on the specifics of the benefit sharing formula. Saik'uz has sent three letters to the other two nations, requesting the involvement of a mediator or the presentation of a plan on how to proceed. Additionally, Saik'uz is consulting with its legal counsel for guidance, but it is not actively involved in this capacity with the two other nations at present.

## BC Hydro

BC Hydro is expanding their 500-kilovolt transmission line between Prince George and Terrace and will engage in consultations with the affected nations. Saik'uz is in the early stages of engagement with BC Hydro and has already met with them twice to discuss the accommodations and compensation we seek from the project.

## Bednesti Log building

The Bednesti log building will be moved by the fall of 2023.

## Boards & Committees

I hold positions on the boards of Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC), First Nation Major Projects Coalition (FNMPC), and am a member, along with four other chiefs, on the Jurisdiction for Children and Families committee.

## Clan House

We successfully secured funding for a clan house within our community. Special thanks to Sandra Isaac from CSFS for assisting us with the application. We are currently in the early planning stages of how we will use the house. Our focus is on our children in care and displaced youth and how our community can provide them necessary support.

## Treatment center at Tachick Lake

On June 12th, we held a breaking ground ceremony for the new treatment centre at Tachick Lake. If you want to see the centre's design, you can do so at the Band Office. The CSFS board and chiefs are still fundraising for the centre.

## District of Vanderhoof

The Chief and Council of Saik'uz continue to hold quarterly meetings with the mayor and council of the District of Vanderhoof, where ongoing discussions take place regarding matters that impact both communities. Our collaborative efforts aim to enhance the safety of Saik'uz members living in and visiting Vanderhoof. Notably, the Saik'uz flag is now prominently displayed outside the Vanderhoof District Office and the SD91 School Board building.

### Forestry

Saik'uz is in dialogue with the province and licensees about forestry activities in its unceded territories.

## Healing Fires

The Sacred Fire Arbour in Saik'uz has been completed and will be available to the public after its opening ceremony on Saturday, September 16th, at 12:00 pm (noon). We constructed the Sacred Fire Arbour as a venue for community gatherings and will serve as the location for healing fires in the future.

We continue to take part in the healing fires that occur in Prince George, providing us with an opportunity to connect with unhoused members of our community living in the city.

## Lhai Ventures

Lhai Ventures is a partnership between Saik'uz, Lheidli, Nadleh, and Stellat'en. The purpose of this partnership was to collaborate on procurement opportunities related to the Coastal GasLink project. As the project is now completed in our area and Lhai Ventures has achieved its objectives, we have withdrawn our membership from the partnership.

## Lheidli Tenneh/Nazko First Nation

On May 11th, our elders gathered with the elders from Lheidli and Nazko. The gathering's purpose was to provide an opportunity for our elders to visit and enjoy the day together. We will continue to engage in dialogue with the two nations as we share common interests and have overlapping issues that need to be addressed.

### Nechako Lumber/Sinclar Group

Several of our members are losing their jobs as Nechako Lumber (owned by the Sinclar Group) downsizes to one shift. We have been communicating with Sinclar, but we are uncertain why their board and shareholders decided to reduce shifts. This downsizing is not beneficial for our community or the surrounding communities.

## New Daycare

Daycare staff successfully applied for funding to construct a new daycare. I would like to thank our Daycare Manager, Miranda Adams, for her hard work in the application process. In the fall, we will host community engagement sessions to discuss the proposed site and design of the new daycare.

## New Health Centre

The construction of the new Health Centre has been postponed because of the discovery of artifacts on the intended site. These artifacts required careful handling by archaeologists and, as a result, the project is approximately two months behind schedule.

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## Opioid Crisis

Some of our members, both on- and off-reserve, continue to struggle with drug and alcohol addiction. Committed individuals in our community are being supported by organizations to help others overcome their addictions. I want to honour the individuals who have recovered from addiction or sought treatment. It takes a lot of courage and determination, and I want to lift you up and encourage you to keep up the good work.

## Pathways Forward Agreement 2.0

The Carrier Sekani First Nations (CSFN), of which Saik'uz First Nation is a member, continues to negotiate with the province to renew Pathways 2.0. We are looking at a 3-to-5-year renewal term, and presently have a bridging agreement in place as we work toward an official agreement by December 31st, 2023.

## Rio Tinto Alcan

We sent members down to the Rio Tinto Alcan appeal in June of this year to observe the proceedings. However, it will be at least six months before we learn the decision of the appeal. On the second day of the AGA, September 15th, our legal council will provide an update and respond to questions you may have.



## **COUNCILOR**

### **RODNEY TEED**

Thank you for allowing me to present to you today. I value your trust in me to serve as your councillor.

Over the past year, our community has faced several difficulties. My colleagues and I have put a lot of effort into navigating the changing realities of life, cost of living, and other challenges while maintaining the health of our community. We have been working to stay on course and complete projects that were put on hold because of COVID-19.

These projects include:

- a community park
- an expansion of Joseph Street
- a new daycare
- a new firehall
- a new health centre

What I would like to emphasize in my report is the importance of our culture. It has been a vital part of our history and existence and needs to be a vital part of our future. Our healing and success as a nation lies in embracing our culture and using it as a foundation to navigate our future governance with chief, council, and clan leaders making decisions together.

We are experiencing change like never before. Positive developments are being seen at all political levels as Indigenous nations take back control and use knowledge of their traditional governance systems to make decisions about the land and for their people. The situation for First Nations people in British Columbia, Canada, and even the world has shifted because of recent court rulings. Saik'uz First Nation's historic Pathways Agreement has provided us with the means to bring about significant change in our community.

Our elders taught us that living a happy, meaningful life begins with being honest, hardworking, and caring of others. We, as a people, need to accept responsibility for ourselves and behave in a way that honours our ancestors. I have worked hard as a councillor to be a good role model and to lead in a good way. With thanks and acknowledgement to our Creator, we set a good intention, so I have made it a priority to attend events to give these thanks and acknowledgements. I have attended meetings both inside and outside of our territory, as well as taken part in cultural events, addictions treatment support, youth events, and routine council business this year. In all the work I do, I am always guided by my cultural teachings and the examples left to me by our elders.

### Biography

Rodney Teed is an elected councillor for Saik'uz First Nation. He is a member of the Grouse Clan and has lived in Saik'uz for all but seven years of his life. With Amber Teed, his wife of over 30 years, he has two daughters and four grandchildren.

After completing his high school education, Rodney worked as a pipe layer in the infrastructure sector in Vancouver before moving on to the oil and gas sector in Alberta, where he assisted companies in restoring areas affected by industry to as close to their natural state as possible. He continued to work in this capacity for both mining and forestry, and now uses this knowledge and his expertise to defend and promote the responsible use of Saik'uz natural resources.

Rodney enjoys spending his free time outside and taking part in traditional activities, such as trapping, fishing, hunting, and weaving birch bark baskets. He enjoys sewing, as it brings back memories of his family, which he uses to guide his decision making.





## **COUNCILOR**

### **JASMINE THOMAS**

I would like to extend my gratitude to former councillor Jackie Thomas for her years of leadership in our community, which has resulted in much of the growth and progress we experience today. I welcome our newest councillor, Jason Alexis, who held key staff positions within our organization prior to his election. I look forward to serving our community once again with Councillors Rodney Teed and Alison Johnny and our tireless Chief Priscilla Mueller. I have great appreciation for all our staff and technicians who keep our organization and community moving forward as we continue to grow.

Under the Strategic Framework—that council adopted in 2017 after engaging with staff and membership—my Governance Goal has primarily been around ‘Environmental Stewardship’. It has focused me on issues related to Land & Resources as well as associated with economic development and employment opportunities for our members. I continue to support our council in other general governance areas (e.g., health, child welfare, housing and infrastructure, rights-title and interests) in addition to various committees, as the board alternate to Chief Mueller at the Carrier Sekani Family Services, and other business and economic development opportunities.

Many of our current negotiations with BC occur collectively with other Carrier Sekani First Nations (CSFN). There is currently a bridging agreement in place between the Province of British Columbia and the CSFNs since the expiry of our Pathways Forward 2.0 Agreement in March 2023. A renewal of this agreement and an 'Agreement in Principle' (AIP) that focuses on core elements of a 'Comprehensive Reconciliation Agreement' (title by agreement outside of the existing BC Treaty Process) will prioritize forestry and stewardship as a starting place. Canada will need to be engaged as negotiations advance.

CSFN territories are facing serious issues:

- Declining timber supply due to over-harvesting, the mountain pine beetle infestation, and increased forest fires. The uplift in the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) between 2002 and 2016 to salvage mountain pine beetle wood, combined with devastation from forest fires, has significantly constrained timber supplies in this region and throughout British Columbia.
- Some of the largest mills in the world were built to process the massive increase in harvesting during the pine beetle salvage. With a reduced supply, these mills will need to curtail their capacity, and some may close. This will lead to a notable job loss in the region.
- Declining animal populations, including moose, caribou, and furbearers like marten and fisher. Joint CSFN-BC reports indicate up to a 75% reduction in moose population in some CSFN territories.
- In addition, salmon returns have been in sharp decline, with many other fish experiencing lower populations as well.
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The Pathway Forward 2.0 Agreement includes collaborative decision-making between CSFNs and BC to address some of these issues. However, it has taken a long time to get movement in some of this work.

The CSFNs have also made some significant advancements in areas of forestry and stewardship:

- Largest land deferral in the history of BC through implementing 'Immediate Measures' (IM): CSFN collective efforts to preserve the last remaining biodiversity areas in the territory by halting harvesting activities that do not have consent.
  - This led to the short-term 'Spatial Harvest Planning' process where major licensees were/are to engage with our community to attain consent for logging that may occur in IM areas (ongoing).
  - The spatial harvest planning exercise is meant to preserve a 'land-base' to support a longer-term 'Resource Management Planning' process that is being pursued.

- Technical work conducted by our Land & Resources department has been instrumental in this process—not only for Saik’uz, but for the other CSFNs.
- Largest transfer of forest tenure allocated to First Nations in the history of BC.
- Key element of the Pathways Forward Agreement with BC references our collective goal for CSFNs to attain 50% of all volume attributable to CSFN territories.

• While supporting forestry and stewardship at the various leadership and technical tables, I also support other collective negotiating tables for Saik’uz and the CSFNs (Senior Official, Pathways Renewal & Implementation, Communications, Economic Development, etc.). There are many opportunities and challenges for our community to consider in terms of diversifying our regional economy, our relationship with various levels of governments, and our own internal decision-making processes (e.g., elected and traditional governance).

I have also supported the development of a full-length feature documentary film with Stelat’en, currently titled ‘Nechako’, that will highlight our ongoing legal battle with Rio Tinto Alcan and some of the work that is ongoing in our communities to save our river. While the film is still in production, we await the pending decision from the BC Court of Appeal.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve our members and to be part of an administration that navigates through many of the challenges and successes our community experiences as we continue to grow.

Snachailya,  
Jasmine Thomas

## **GENERAL MANAGER**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the AGA 2022-23. I’m hoping everyone had a chance to enjoy the warm weather, the summertime excitement, and had a chance to get out on the land and harvest.



The Fire season has gotten in the way of many fun activities throughout the summer months. For most of the season the PG fire centre and VanJam (Vanderhoof/FSJ) centre has been inundated with 20+ continuously this fire season. Not only are we feeling the pressure in community, there are many members off reserve also facing the same challenges, if not worse.

This year has also seen one of the worst Opioid crises loses to date. The province of BC declared a state of emergency, although this declaration was made, we did not see much change in services brought into community. The supports offered here in community, the healing fire coordinator, the NNADAP worker and the healing fires have provided some support, but we require more. It has been continuous struggle to help our people through those trying times, and often is not met with the resources needed. We are doing our best to get those that need help, as much resources as available. It is a continuous focus for the Nation, and we are continuously trying to find the best use and process for ensuring there is access.

While the Fall months are upon us, we have many activities coming in the near future. Including the T&R day, Health and Prevention Fair, Tri-community Halloween Dance, Community Christmas, off-reserve Christmas, Kids in Care Christmas, Christmas Hampers, and many other event and activities for the Fall/winter months.

Please keep in mind our Nation is operating at a reduced capacity. We would appreciate some patience and support while we navigate the delivery of programs and events while being understaffed. I hope today it will give you some insight into the many things our Nation is working on. I am very happy with what we have been able to accomplish to date.

### Projects

There are many projects the Nation oversees, some of which will be reported from managers. There are some initiatives and projects that don't fall under some managers and some that fall within my management. Although I do not have full involvement in all the project and programs, I do try to ensure I have some oversight and knowledge of the progress in each.

Multiplex  
Road extension  
Fire Hall

### Special projects

- Gates
- Car Removal
- Health Station Archeology Work
- Wood Program
- Elders
- Prevention
- Single mothers
- PWD
- Members
- A/C install/removal



The wood program was previously operating with support from the logging industry, with the fire season and the changes in the Forestry structure in BC we have not been able to rely on a supply of logs. I do acknowledge that the last logging truck load did have a lot of green wood, this load was a donation to the community, we have since opted to bring wood out of the bush and fill orders in this fashion. This will require more time and attention made to each load delivered, which means it will take longer to fill orders. The administration of this program has changed, as the prevention department is now contributing to the wood program and the reporting and documentation processes have changed.

As you may have noticed there are big piles of dirt along the fence of the cemetery. During the planning for the Health Station, we identified that there are no on-reserve protocols for Archeology work. We felt like the Health Station site was going to be a significant location for archeology finds. In the beginning we did not anticipate the amount of information we would gain. But through out the project Archer CRM Ltd. has tested approximately 150 sites with about 70% of the tests coming back positive with a variety of artifacts.

There are approximately large 12 projects (Daycare, Health Station, Multiplex, Bednesti building, Special projects, Arbour, Greenhouse L & S, Clan House, Firehall, Road Extension, Housing, Park) and 6 major (RTA, CIRNAC, Artemis, BC Hydro, PFA Ec. Dev., CGL) projects happening under the Nation right now. All under various departments.

## Staff

Over the year we have experienced an influx of growth from our ISC, Health, Prevention, and Administration programming. As you will hear we have many employees, with room to grow adding another 16 vacant positions. We are no exception to what is happening throughout BC, the demand for workers is a battle we are all facing.

Demand for our managers has increased exponentially following the implementation of the Reconciliation engagement from the Provincial and Federal Governments, Municipalities, and Industry. UNDRIP has changed the landscape of collaboration, engagement, and consultation. The methods used to approach Indigenous communities has changed and this means the Nation and our members now have a voice at the tables where it did not exist before. Which means we need to operate with a deep and knowledgeable understanding of the “Western” government processes, as well as a deep and knowledgeable understanding of our culture, traditions, and practices. This means planning and engagement from all perspectives needs to be included. Which brings to light the concept of Two-eyed seeing:

*“Two-Eyed Seeing adamantly, respectfully, and passionately asks that we bring together our different ways of knowing to motivate people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to use all our understandings so we can leave the world a better place and not compromise the opportunities for our youth (in the sense of Seven Generations) through our own inactions.”*

Following this concept, we are working on ways to incorporate Indigeneity into all aspects of operations for the Nation, where it does not currently exist. Not only does this apply to our internal structures but teaching government and industry what it means to be Saik’uz Whut’enne is equally important.

There has been strategic planning happening with staff, Lisa Krebs BPI has been working very closely with our Nation to effectively facilitate growth. At first, we approached the administration growth as a whole, we soon found that every department and manager are at different levels of engagement and require more one on one planning for the departments, this means it will require additional time to engage with all the Managers. We are hoping to have a presentation to community to give provide additional information.

Policy and Procedures within the office will be changing over time, as we gain a better understanding of how we can incorporate indigeneity to our administration processes we will be making those changes as needed throughout the organization structures.

#### Next Steps

- Implementation of the Full Prevention programming, including Post Majority supports
- Finishing and finalizing the capital projects on the books.
- Strategic planning with Managers/Programs
- Community Engagement on Band initiatives/projects
- Development/Implementation of Corporate structure to facilitate Legal land use planning and Economic Development Initiatives.
- Community Comprehensive plan
- Wildfire reconstruction of Culture Camp
- Saik’uz Ballfield
- Much More....



## Questions

Saik'uz First Nation continues to have an open-door policy, unless otherwise occupied, feel free to give me a call or come see me at the office when I'm available.

We have many vacancies that we would love to fill with community members, please consider applying to our open positions or inquire about what is available. Enjoy some community photos from the summer events.

Snachalhuya

## **LANGUAGE & CULTURE**

Hadi Saik'uz whut'enne,

The Culture & Language department has made significant progress toward language revitalization in 2022-23.

### Language Technology Program

We once again had success in obtaining funding from the First Peoples Cultural Council (FPCC) Digitization Grant Initiative (\$180,000) to continue translating and transcribing audio/visual assets from Dakelh to English and from Dakelh (spoken) to Dakelh (written).

Elders Gracie John, Ruby Patrick, Johnny John, and Gregory Raphael are working as translators, with Karen Thomas transcribing Dakelh audio to Dakelh text. Our technician, Traves Theberge, oversaw repairing and digitizing files, as well as setting up audio and video recordings for translation. After Traves left the project to explore new opportunities, we enlisted Danielle Mueller to fix several of our MP3 and WAV files.





Seven large binders are full of translations and transcriptions thanks to Karen Thomas, Deborah Page, and Gina Mason. Gina works with the elders as the recorder and typist. After the elders finish translating for the day, Gina transcribes the English audio to English text, then types up and labels the audio in Audacity, our audio editing program, in both Dakelh and English.

I will remind members that analogue audio and video assets deteriorate. Please bring us any video or audio tapes with historical information or Dakelh language so that we can digitize and preserve them for future generations. We will return your tapes to you.

### FirstVoices

FirstVoices is a suite of web-based tools and services designed to support Indigenous people engaged in culture revitalization and language archiving, teaching, and learning. It is the second component of our Language Technology Project. With the materials provided by our elders, transcribers, and technicians, we continue to expand Saik'uz First Nation's FirstVoices portal. Traves' departure has slowed down our efforts, but I am still confident that we will meet our objectives by the end of the project contract in June 2023.

We have recently applied to the First Peoples' Language Technology Program and the Federal Government's "Listen, Hear Our Voices" program. This is to secure funding for the continuation of our crucial efforts in restoring and facilitating intergenerational transfer of the Dakelh language.

Visit the Saik'uz First Nation language portal on FirstVoices here: <https://www.firstvoices.com/explore/FV/Workspaces/Data/Athabasca/Dakelh/Saik'uz%20Dakelh/learn>

### Pathways to Language Vitality (Language Nest)

A language nest is a specialized preschool program designed to immerse children in their language and culture. In the language nest, no English is used. Parents and families are encouraged to learn and practice with their children. We started our language nest program at the Saik'uz Daycare in September 2019, making this the third year of the program. We are grateful for the support we have received from the First Peoples Cultural Council, as they have provided funding (\$197,103.38) for the upcoming 2022-2023 year.



Susie Antoine and elder Julie George dedicate four hours each day to teaching Dakelh to the children at the HeadStart daycare facility. Rosa McIntosh attends the language nest for a duration of two hours daily. Each uses a variety of teaching techniques, such as total physical response, syllabics, drumming, dancing, singing, and storytelling. Our elders have additionally translated several children's books into Dakelh.

The Culture & Language department is actively developing further curriculum materials for the language nest. We have produced short videos using PowerPoint and will upload this material to our YouTube channel. We have geared these videos towards children, but people of all ages can use them. You can view our first video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmHF4DGy3Yo&t=21s>.

## DAYCARE

The 2022-23 year presented many opportunities for our HeadStart and Daycare program.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of professionals who contribute to our programs. Our staff includes five full-time Early Childhood Educators, a support worker, and a manager.

In addition, we have recently welcomed a new cook and custodian to our team. We appreciate the support and involvement of our families, community members, elders, SFN (Saik'uz First Nation) departments, and funders in making our programs successful. Over the course of the year, we have had 23 children enrolled in our program. As of August 2022, four children have successfully graduated.

Our programs provide a wholistic approach to supporting the five developmental domains and the overall growth, development, and well-being of children from birth to age six. All curriculum areas and daily scheduled activities are centred around the following six components: education, health promotion, culture and language, nutrition, social support, and parent/family involvement. Our year began with the construction of a covered area on our multi-aged playground to provide shade in the summer months and shelter in the winter months. With warm, waterproof winter clothing provided by our Circle of Well-Being project, we have supported our children in feeling warm and comfortable during outdoor activities throughout our cooler seasons.

We created cultural curriculum kits for the daycare program to enhance learning opportunities in a new way, beginning with animal kits, which we plan to expand. We received some beautiful regalia created by Gladys Michelle to support our children in celebrating. The children danced and drummed at our community health fair, graduation, and Truth and Reconciliation events, which nourished the spirits of many.



We implemented a gardening curriculum beginning in May that carried on throughout the summer months. This project supported us in teaching about healthy food and beverage choices and caring for our earth and plants. This encouraged family involvement and storytelling as we worked together to grow a garden. With time and prosperity, our harvest will tie into our traditional food curriculum and food preservation lessons.

We installed two air quality sensors, one indoor and one outdoor, as part of a wildfire smoke detection project. As well, we have added air purifiers to each of the classrooms. We worked with Eagle Spirit Community Solutions Inc. to have our existing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system assessed and are looking at the possibility of upgrading our systems to improve indoor air quality.

We ensure our curriculum meets the goals and child outcomes relevant to early child development and the individual needs of each child. It is a top priority to care for children's physical, emotional and mental health, and diverse needs by applying early intervention, community supports, as well as a culture and language curriculum.

We have had Language Nest daily throughout the school year. The children are learning to speak and understand Dakelh through focused lessons during circle times, and classroom teachers continue these lessons throughout the days during ordinary moments to best extend the children's familiarity with the language and concepts. The children practice a Dakelh prayer before mealtimes, and many of the children can say and/or recognize the words for basic conversation pieces, days of the week, familiar animals, household items, table settings, weather, colours, numbers, family members, food, body parts, articles of clothing, actions, movements, and directions.

We have a few staff members who worked diligently to continue their education and received infant toddler certificates this year, which has allowed our program to open an infant toddler classroom and better meet the growing needs of the community. We have updated the parent handbook, policy, procedure, and registration package, as well as recorded audio and a video of these documents. Beginning in February, we offered monthly "Dinner and Dakelh" language lessons for families with children attending our Saik'uz HeadStart program, which continued into June 2023 before taking a break for the summer.

Each of our projects continues to be child, family, and community-focused, intending to honour the strength and resilience of the community. Our team is looking forward to the upcoming year, and we hope it brings new happiness, goals, achievements, and inspiration to all.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Economic Development has many projects and economic initiatives that require constant administration. Most of the projects are long term and require continued efforts to mature the project to its completion. Projects can take years to progress and involve many moving parts. The nation has received an unprecedented number of opportunities that leadership and staff are pursuing. I will attempt to clarify the activities of the Saik'uz Economic Development Department and answer questions that the nation's members may have.

My name is Jason Alexis. My parents are the late Dickson and Hazel Alexis, and I am a member of the Noolhk'ai Whut'en. I have been employed by the nation since May 2016. I was hired as the Education, Training, and Employment Manager, but, in 2019, I transitioned to the position of Economic Development Manager. I take great pleasure knowing my efforts assist in the advancement of the nation while mindfully protecting its cultural values.

## Networking and Skill Development

It is important that I develop and maintain a working relationship with the provincial and federal governments, industry stakeholders, economic development organizations, post-secondary institutions, and other First Nations. Fostering positive relationships allows me to attain experience and contributes to my skill development. It also allows me to receive valuable insight into opportunities that the nation may exploit. Additionally, it is also important to have a respectful relationship for the advancement of future economic development projects and to ensure that our cultural values are expressed in any potential partnerships or projects. This prevents activities that contradict the position and values of the nation.

## Internal Operations

Saik'uz First Nation has a spectrum of internal projects and programs with which the Economic Development department assists. The department must continually manage, monitor, and re-evaluate the progression of each project or initiative it is tasked with administering. Business interests of Saik'uz First Nation span a range of industries, including forestry, mining, telecommunications, utilities development, arts, recreation, and culture, as well as construction, real estate, and property management. The nation works to support, advocate for, and promote membership businesses that operate within our territory. These businesses include the sale of artisan crafts, silviculture, retail, and the service industry.

Utilizing contacts is required for the Economic Development department to advance capital and service projects. It is also required to research and report on economic development opportunities. The nation has ambitious aspirations that involve multiple property acquisitions; however, because the acquisitions are still being negotiated, I cannot elaborate on the location or status. You can contact me if you have questions or want expanded information on any of the other initiatives mentioned.

### Coastal GasLink Project

Phase 1 of the Coastal GasLink (CGL) project is nearing completion. Through Lhai Ventures—a partnership between Nadleh Whut'en and Lheidli T'enneh, Saik'uz, and Stelat'en First Nations—and the Employment Continuity Program, I'm still working to offer employment and contract opportunities. However, due to declining operations in Section 4 of the pipeline, employment is limited to environmental, security, and heavy equipment operators in areas that don't immediately pertain to Saik'uz First Nation. Plans are being made for strategies to take advantage of any potential opportunities from CGL Phase 2. I encourage all Saik'uz members to get in touch with me for details on potential career and training opportunities.

### Agreement Management

Saik'uz First Nation has many past, present, and pending agreements with companies, organizations, and the provincial and federal governments. To avoid any deviation from these agreements, it is important to know them thoroughly. Additionally, it is crucial to monitor all employment and financial obligations to ensure that the nation or individual band members can take advantage of all opportunities outlined in the agreement. We are also holding our partners accountable to hire community members as specified in each agreement. I am required to represent Saik'uz on committees where I advocate the nation's sociocultural interests. The committees monitor the progress of the agreement and revise if required. I am currently on four internal committees, and I am on five partnership committees which meet biannually, quarterly, and monthly. Saik'uz also has leasing agreements and service agreements which require to be renegotiated when the term has expired. I am currently assisting with the development of eight new agreements.

### Special Projects

There are many projects that enhance the services, infrastructure, and governance of Saik'uz First Nation. These projects can be partially or fully funded by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). Projects not funded, or only partially funded, by ISC require the financial support of the nation.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to search for grants and proposals. If successful, the project must then be managed and monitored, and, after completing the project, the team must prepare an extensive report and budget.

The nation's current special projects are Phase 2 of the FireSmart Program, Phase 2 of the Saik'uz First Nation Emergency Plan, the Saik'uz First Nation Comprehensive Community Plan, Pathways 2.0 Economic Development Plan, and the designation of IR #6 (Noonla). Additionally, I assist with several infrastructure projects as a contributor to their technical teams.

Economic development is dynamic and requires constant administration and advocacy. Saik'uz First Nation staff continue to offer outstanding service despite a deficiency in resources. I would like to acknowledge Barry Vickers for his support and technical guidance and to thank all the staff that have supported me. Lastly, I would like to thank the community for your trust and support.

Snachailya.

## **EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, & TRAINING**

Hadi from Shawnee Everett, Education Manager for Saik'uz First Nation. Mariah Douthwright, the Education Assistant, and I had a busy year in the Education, Employment, & Training department. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve the community and see all their success in the future with Education, Employment, and Training. Here are some highlights of the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year.



### Education Support

We helped families by providing financial assistance for the purchase of school supplies and supported students by covering the costs of babysitting classes, sports fees, and home economics and woodworking supplies.

#### Nechako Valley Secondary School Incentive Program

The high school incentive program aims to encourage academic achievement and regular attendance among students in grades 7 to 12. To qualify for the incentive, students must maintain a good attendance record that aligns with their schoolwork. Parents play a crucial role in this process by contacting NVSS to excuse their child's absence. This initiative not only promotes educational success but also fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability among students and their families.

## Congratulations to Graduates!

Congratulations to four high school graduates, Aniah Raphael, Shaughnessy Lazare, Sylias Alexis, and Traften Teed; to Levi Vickers for his successful completion of his Industrial Mechanist program; and to Kirsti West for graduating with her master's in psychology!

Mba hoonust'! Your hard work and dedication have paid off, and you should be proud of your accomplishments, as are we. As you embark on the next chapter of your lives, remember to continue striving for excellence and pursuing your dreams. Best of luck in all your future endeavours!

## Post-Secondary Highlights from the Post-Secondary Policy and Procedures Manual

Vision Statement: Saik'uz First Nation Post-Secondary program is designed to encourage and support band members of the Saik'uz First Nation to acquire qualifications so that they may become economically self-sufficient and realize their individual potential for contribution to Saik'uz First Nation and society at large. The program shall provide counselling and adequate financial support, as defined by the Saik'uz First Nation Post-Secondary Policy, to band members who have been accepted by an accredited post-secondary institute. It is the belief of Saik'uz First Nation that band members have the right to receive aid in pursuing post-Secondary education. However, it is also believed that for an individual to be successful in acquiring an education, individuals must take responsibility for setting and achieving their educational goals.

### 3.0 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

This section outlines the eligibility criteria for postsecondary sponsorship. Post-secondary applicants:

- I. Must be registered Saik'uz First Nation band members or band members of Saik'uz First Nation ancestry approved by Chief and Council to attend post-secondary programs.
- II. Must have met university or college entrance requirements and have been enrolled in or be accepted for enrollment in a program of studies at an accredited post-secondary institution.
- III. Must submit a fully completed 'Application Package as described in section 4.2 Post-Secondary Application Package'.
- IV. Must be in good standing with both the post-secondary institution and the Saik'uz First Nation Education Department.

## 4.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

I. Application packages must be sent to continuing and new applicants in a timely manner to ensure an adequate turn-around period to meet the deadlines set out in Section 4.1.

II. Any applications received late or incomplete will be put on a waiting list according to the date received and student eligibility per Section 5.2 (#3).

III. September enrollment receives priority funding. Approval of sponsorship for programs beginning at a time other than September will be based upon fiscal year funding availability and the placement of the applicant in terms of Section 5.1.

### 4.1 APPLICATION DEADLINES

Applications are listed in order of priority for enrollment consideration:

I. September Enrollment: Applications are due on or before June 1.

II. January Enrollment: Applications are due on or before October 30 for new applicants and by December 1st for returning students.

III. Inter-session or spring/summer semester: available for ongoing students only. Ongoing students must indicate at the start of the year if they are wanting to take intersessional studies so that the annual budget can be planned accordingly.

IV. We were able to fund twenty-four post-secondary students last fiscal year and currently have twenty students enrolled for this fall! We had one post-secondary graduate this year!

With every learning curve in life, we all come out on top during our journey, whatever it may be. All past, present, and future students, do not give up on your education journey!

### Employment & Training

We understand that finding employment can be a challenging process, which is why our Education, Employment, & Training department is here to support you every step of the way. In addition to assisting with cover letters and resumes, we offer a wide range of training programs and certifications to help you enhance your skills and increase your job prospects. Whether you're interested in gaining industry-specific knowledge or improving your overall employability, we have the resources and expertise to help you succeed. Don't hesitate to reach out to us!

## Prince George Native Education & Training Program (PGNAETA)

PGNAETA offers a wide range of employment and training opportunities for Indigenous students in the Prince George area and is a frequent supporter of the Saik'uz First Nation Education, Training, & Employment department.

Through funding and support from PGNAETA, we were able to deliver training and return-to-work support for both community members and off-reserve band members over the past fiscal year. Our training courses included:

- Traffic Control Course
- Environment Technician Certificate
- S100/S185 Suppression
- WHMIS/Transportation of Dangerous Goods
- Bear/Cougar Awareness
- H2S Alive
- Occupation First Aid Level 1 & Transportation Endorsement
- Class 7 Driver Lessons
- Healing & Grief Sessions
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Bookkeeping Certificate
- Building Inspector Level 1
- Backhoe Training
- OFA Level 1: Transportation Endorsement
- OFA Level 3
- Industrial mechanics
- Heavy-Duty Mechanics Level 1

### Proposals

- Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP)
  - o \$10,865.00. Funded two summer student positions.
- SLP (Skills Link Program)
  - o \$5,124.00. We hosted a community career fair in both November and April.
- Health and Science Related Career Promotion Program
  - o \$5,000.00. We took students from the local high school to the University of Northern British Columbia and the College of New Caledonia in Prince George, where Ivan from the local paramedic service presented a workshop on the dangers of vaping. In addition to this, Northern Health provided information on several health professions.
- Learning Academy/Tutoring
  - o \$80,990.00. From October to March, Cultural Days were held monthly and featured a variety of cultural activities.
- After-school tutoring for students in grades K-12
- Contributed to the funding of the Cultural Camp at Tatuk Lake.



The employment opportunities at Nechako Lumber have provided valuable job experience for fifteen band members. This partnership has not only contributed to the economic growth of our community but has also created a sense of pride and empowerment among our members.

## FINANCE

Greetings. My name is Crystal Franks, and I am the Finance Manager for Saik'uz First Nation. As Finance Manager, I oversee the finances of Saik'uz First Nation, report on its businesses and government-owned entities, and ensure that it is in compliance with all public sector accounting principle. Since I began working in June 2020, the Finance Department has been updating its internal controls, rules, and procedures, and redistributing tasks. By doing this, the Finance Department can better support other managers and their departments. It is a massive task and progress can feel slow, but, when I look back to where we started, I can proudly say we have made huge and beneficial changes over the last three years.



Besides the various departments and programs, Saik'uz First Nation has several companies that affect its financial reporting. Overseeing these companies is an enormous task, but each one serves a distinct purpose and falls into the overall corporate structure. Leadership is currently working with several consultants to ensure we maintain the absolute best structure from now on.

Saik'uz First Nation's government-owned businesses are:

- Tin Toh Forest Products Ltd.
- 0944099 B.C. Limited
- Tin Toh Forest Products Limited Partnership
- TAGI Resources Corporation
- TAGI Resources Limited Partnership
- TAGI Contracting Corporation
- TAGI Contracting Limited Partnership
- TAGI Forestry Corporation
- TAGI Forestry Limited Partnership
- TAGI Blackwater Services Corporation
- TAGI Blackwater Services Limited Partnership
- TAGI Tatuk Resort Corporation
- TAGI Tatuk Resort Limited Partnership
- 1404232 B.C. Limited

- Saik'uz Development Corporation
- Saik'uz Yun K'ut

Other entities include:

- SCC Contracting Ltd.
- Desti Holdings Ltd.
- L'hai Ventures General Partnership Corporation

Saik'uz First Nation also participates in a number of Partnership Agreements. There is still significant work needed to ensure that each of the listed companies is caught up with the requirements of operating a business. Saik'uz First Nation is a large organization with an astonishing number of projects currently ongoing and on the horizon. It has an incredible vision that it continues to grow and foster for the future of the nation.

One of the major annual events in the Finance Department is the financial audit. A financial audit checks that an organization's financial records are accurate. It also ensures that the audited organization has internal controls that support accurate and timely public disclosures. The audit uses the fiscal calendar, which is a twelve-month period used for financial and tax reporting purposes. It runs from April 1st to March 31st of the following year. This year's audit was performed by KPMG.

To prepare for the 2022-23 fiscal year audit, I completed in-depth reviews of every department and program run by the Saik'uz Administration. These reviews were three-way meetings between the manager for each department or program, the General Manager, and me. The managers were then tasked with completing financial budgets for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Department managers are actively using the Adagio FX program we rolled out last year, giving them instantaneous access to the financial data of their departments and programs to help with daily budgeting and operations.

Joining me in the Finance Department is Carla Tumbaga. Carla moved to Canada from the Philippines in 2011 and began her employment with Saik'uz First Nation in 2019. She is our Accounts Payable Clerk; however, she has also been doubling as our Payroll Clerk since June 2023 and is enrolled in the Bookkeeping Certificate Program through the College of New Caledonia. Despite this immense workload, she is regularly complimented by others for her flexibility, reliability, and her calm and welcoming demeanour.

We continue to work hard to ensure all the financial aspects of the Nation and its companies are where they need to be. With continued changes to internal controls, policies and procedures and redirection of duties, the Finance Department will be an integral resource to support other managers and their ability to run their departments effectively.

Crystal Frank, CPA, CA  
Finance Manager

## HOUSING & MEMBERSHIP

Hadih! My name is Lesley Raphael. I am a Saik'uz member, and I work as an Indian Registry Administrator (IRA) and Housing Manager for the Saik'uz Administration.

In my role as an IRA, I am responsible for maintaining accurate records of Saik'uz members and ensuring compliance with government regulations. As the Housing Manager, I oversee the management and maintenance of housing units within Saik'uz, working closely with residents to address their needs and concerns.



Additionally, I am a commissioner with legal authority to take affidavits and statutory declarations and administer oaths and affirmations. However, due to my status as an IRA, I have certain restrictions. I do not certify or verify documents such as contracts.

### Membership

As of December 31, 2022, the Saik'uz First Nation population was 998 members. 342 members live on-reserve, while the remaining 656 live off-reserve.

The membership program now has a certified backup IRA, Chantel Murray, to support clients, review applications, support identification documents, assist people in applying for a Secured Certificate of Indian Status card (SCIS), issue status cards (Certificate of Indian Status), and maintain the Indian Registration and Band Lists Programs on behalf of the department. Chantel also reviews reports and submits them to the regional office.

The Indian Registration System, Register Pages, blank certificates of Indian Status, and any other materials related to Indian Registration must always be kept in a locked filing cabinet and maintained in an effective and efficient filing system. Additionally, we must protect other people's privacy by limiting access to Indian registration records so that people wishing to obtain information will only be able to do so through authorized channels.

## Certificates of Indian Status Cards

Only Saik'uz members will be issued Certificates of Indian Status Cards (laminated) on the same day. Other First Nations applicants must submit their information, which Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) or their band then verifies, before setting an appointment. Saik'uz members pay \$10.00, while other First Nations pay \$20.00

## Secured Certificate of Indian Status Card

To apply for a Secured Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) Card, applicants must provide two passport photos or have their photo taken using the SCIS photo app. Since passport photos have better lighting and fewer shadows, it is advised that applicants use them whenever possible. This reduces the likelihood that they will be rejected for failing to meet the photo requirements.

SCIS cards for adults and dependent adults (16 years and older) are valid for 10 years; children (15 years and younger) are valid for 5 years. It takes up to 16 weeks to process a complete application. There is no fee.

## Birth Registration

The birth registration process requires the parent(s) to submit the original birth certificate with their name(s) listed. The application can be accessed online, and there is no fee for this service. The processing time for complete registration applications can vary from 6 months to 2 years, depending on the complexity of the file.

## Death Registration

When a member passes away, it is important to remove their name from the registry list promptly to ensure accurate records and prevent any potential misuse of the deceased's identity. It is usually the family's responsibility to notify the IRA and provide the certificate of death.

## Estates Services

Estate management services assist in handling the affairs of a minor, a dependent adult who typically resides on a reserve, or a deceased family member or friend who typically resides on a reserve. The province, territory, or country where a First Nations person lived is accountable for their estate if they were living off-reserve when they passed away.

## Housing

Members of the Housing Committee play a crucial role in overseeing the Housing Department and addressing issues that may arise. They work together to ensure that residents receive the necessary support and assistance they need. Additionally, the committee meets to discuss and make decisions regarding the program's policies and procedures. The Housing Committee members are: Jason Alexis, Celena Case, Chantel Murray, Keisha Thomas, Gary Joseph, and Alison Johnny.

The Housing Department collects rent from band members living in mortgage-financed homes and band-owned apartments (including the triplex and ten-plex buildings). The Housing Department primarily focuses on providing assistance (such as minor repairs or appliance replacement) to band members living in mortgage-financed homes and band-owned apartments. However, in cases where elders and community members who own their homes face health and safety issues, they can file a request for support with the Housing Department. This ensures that essential aid is provided to those in need while maintaining the program's primary objective of supporting rent-paying residents.

## Renovations

Last fiscal year (2021–22), the Housing Department applied for funds for renovations. Our renovation team is still working on the 26 units that received approval. The Housing Department has also been gradually eliminating abandoned homes and broken-down cars. This effort aims to improve the overall appearance and safety of the community.

## Phase 5 Mortgages

Saik'uz has 20 units in Phase 5 of mortgage repayment. The monthly payment on these units is \$4,358.12, with the final payment on April 1, 2023. Additionally, the three units that were constructed on Mary John Street in 2017 have a monthly mortgage of \$2,200.00, with the final payment on August 18, 2045.

## New Construction

The Housing Department has completed the construction of two duplex buildings, two four-plex buildings, and five three-bedroom houses. The development of these residences was made possible by funding through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative Round 2 and from Saik'uz First Nation.

Additionally, the Housing Department has successfully applied for funding through the ISC Housing Support Program for Governance and Capacity. We will be working with the Community Power Company to develop a multi-year housing upgrade plan (40 houses), which will provide a clear path forward to improve the on-reserve housing conditions, reduce energy costs, and make homes more healthy, safe, and comfortable. We will be identifying, prioritizing, and implementing housing renovations and energy improvements within the community housing stock, identifying sources and applying to BC Hydro and other programs for housing renovations and energy upgrades, and strategically planning renovation and upgrade work in a way to empower our nation by building capacity, creating economic development opportunities, and supporting members in pursuing meaningful careers.

The Housing Department is collaborating with a company called Paradigm Building Solutions Ltd. to apply to the CMHC Rapid Housing Initiative Round 3. Paradigm was chosen because it can meet our requirements for accessibility, design, and fabrication in an economical and limited timeframe. The application requires an estimate of the cost of construction, community contribution, and design and extra-point documents. The application deadline is March 15th, 2023. By July 1st, 2023, we will know if our application was successful. Since ISC does not offer funding for the design phase of construction, the Housing Department has additionally applied for funding of this project through the Saik'uz Pathways Forward Agreement.

## LAND & RESOURCES

Hadi Saik'uz Whut'enne!

My name is Kasandra Johnny-Turbide. I am a member of the Noolhk'ai Whut'en (Frog Clan) and have been the Land & Resources Manager since August 2018. Before joining the department, I obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). My job mainly consists of overseeing the department staff, projects, and initiatives, administrative duties, and attending various meetings regarding industrial and stewardship projects in Saik'uz Keyoh (Territory).



As always, there is a lot that has happened in our department over the last year! We have been focusing on Traditional Governance work to help shape our future processes in how we will make decisions over Saik'uz keyoh. We have had many clan meetings with Tachek and Noolhk'ai Whut'en, as well as a few keyoh meetings, to get feedback from the membership on how to move forward with this important governance work.

We have heard the about importance of genealogy and keyoh maps in moving forward with the development of these processes and are still planning to host our clan meetings and all clan meeting over the coming months to further these discussions. Our clan meetings have been focused on balhats protocol and conduct, which will help inform teaching tools for our current and future generations so that there are consistent and recognized standards and protocols within the community. Kelsey Antoine (Tachek Whut'en) and Nadia Nowak have been hired to help organize and create tools to help move this work forward.

We have two projects as part of our Governance work: the Ecosystem Restoration Plan (ERP) and the Noolhk'ai-Tachek Pilot Project. Both will take place in the coming year and are targeted at stewardship and restoration of the area and sub-watershed surrounding our main community. The purpose of the governance work is to establish a core group of family representatives who can meet on a regular basis to help guide territory decision-making on initiatives such as the ERP and the Noolhk'ai-Tachek Pilot Project.

In June 2022, the province supported the implementation of our Immediate Measures to protect our Biodiversity Management Areas. This has brought us into a consent-based decision-making process around forestry. We have been working with our partners at Nechako Lumber on forestry blocks for Tin Toh to harvest over the past year, which has been the main forestry activity within the keyoh. We are currently working on technical tools to help us make informed decisions about forestry in the future. This includes a model that will look at different harvesting rates over the next 5 years (as a start) and what that looks like when we preserve areas and include protection of different values like moose, fisher/marten, grizzly habitats, fisheries-sensitive watersheds, and our biodiversity areas. This will be the basis for Resource Management Planning (RMP) with the other Carrier Sekani First Nations and the province that will set the rate of harvest that we will allow in the keyoh. RMP is a fundamental shift in how forestry decisions are made within the keyohs of the Prince George Timber Supply Area—which is part of the reasons our governance work is so important! This is a step towards shared jurisdiction with the province and we need the appropriate community decision-making structures to move forward with the best interests of our future generations in mind.

There are two major projects in Saik'uz Keyoh: The Coastal GasLink (CGL) Pipeline and the Transmission Line for the Blackwater Mine. For Coastal GasLink, I am engaged in the "Liaison Committee" where we meet bi-annually with TC Energy to discuss our project agreement as well as any other issues that may come up. Sections 4 and 5 of the projects are within Saik'uz Keyoh—Section 4 has been completed with some continued monitoring, and the Vanderhoof Lodge Camp Facilities have been deconstructed.

Harold Alexis is the Saik'uz Community Construction Monitoring Liaison—in this role, he monitors construction activity on the pipeline and provides daily reports to our department. Harold has done a great job flagging any environmental issues for the department to follow up with the company, which has resulted in more monitoring and awareness around sediment and erosion issues on fish habitat.

Artemis Gold received their permits for construction of the Blackwater Gold Mine earlier this year and have started construction at the mine site. A forest fire went through the area of the mine this summer, but they were able to protect their main assets. Although the mine site itself is not within Saik'uz keyoh, the transmission line for the project is within the collective territories of Saik'uz-Nadleh Whut'en-Stellat'en. We have been heavily engaged in the project development with a focus on the potential effects of the activities from the mine site to our receiving waters. Many protections have been put in place from the technical work our consultants at Sources Environmental have helped us advocate for, and the mine is required to abide by the Yinka Dene Water Law through both the Environmental Assessment Conditions and the Project Agreement. We completed the negotiations for the Project Agreement this year; however, the benefits sharing between Nadleh-Stellat'en-Saik'uz is yet to be reconciled amongst the communities. Construction on the Transmission Line is scheduled to start sometime this fall and we will be posting for an Environmental Monitor in the coming weeks. I am also involved in the Life of Mine Committee for the project which provides monthly updates on mine construction, operations, and updates of management plans.

The Saik'uz Environmental Monitoring crew consists of James Thomas and Erik Johnny-Martin. The crew works on pre- and post-harvest forestry monitoring with our partners at Nechako Lumber, as well as other licensees operating in Saik'uz territory. Our goal is to engage with licensees before any planning is solidified so that further protection can be applied to protect riparian, wildlife, and cultural heritage resources. The past three winters, the crew was busy working on a collaborative research project looking at Fisher presence and habitat with the use of wildlife cameras and baiting. They are also involved in Water Quality testing for Carrier Sekani First Nations. The crew has also been working on collaborative Nechako River projects with Nadleh and Stellat'en which include operating a SONAR to monitor the salmon populations that are migrating through Vanderhoof and Nadleh. Other projects include looking at water quality, varying flow levels and the effects on fish habitat, and effects from cattle and agriculture on the river. The monitors have also been involved within the wildfire response in the territory this summer—looking at the fire guards, helicopter flights, and providing recommendations when given the opportunity to work with BC Wildfire Service.



Ashley Raphael is Saik'uz and Nadleh's Aboriginal Natural Resource Liaison since 2018—her position is funded through the Oil and Gas Commission's Aboriginal Liaison Program. The goal of her program is to assist community members in voicing their concerns around resource development, safety, and environmental and emergency management. She is continuously learning about various government agencies, regulations, and different natural resource development processes. Through her program, she can attend various inspections with the local Natural Resource Officers and is integral to the Carrier Sekani First Nation Water Quality Monitoring Program through the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance. She has continued to strengthen her knowledge and skills within the Water Quality program and is a real leader with data collection, data management, and training others! She is also a valuable member of our Environmental Monitoring team and helps with forestry monitoring, fish and wildlife studies, and drone data collection.

If Saik'uz members have any concerns over activities they witness within our territory please contact Ashley. She can document your concern, research the legislation related to the issue, and help file a complaint with a Natural Resource Officer if necessary. This can all be done confidentially if requested. She can be reached in the office or through email at [ashley.raaphael@saikuz.com](mailto:ashley.raaphael@saikuz.com). We are proud that Ashley has developed a moose protocol which aligns Conservation Officers with community members to help salvage moose that have faced mortality through traffic incidents—if you would like to be a part of this list, please contact Ashley.

## **OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE**

The Operations & Maintenance Department is responsible for the roads, sewer, water, garbage, and maintenance of main buildings. We ensure that these essential services are running smoothly and efficiently and conduct regular inspections and repairs as needed. Additionally, Operations & Maintenance also oversees the landscaping and groundskeeping of public areas to maintain a clean and aesthetically pleasing environment for residents and visitors.



This year, it came to our attention that certain sewer electric boxes had experienced operational failures and had become obsolete. Consequently, we have initiated the process of re-designing the lift station to address this issue. The roof at the Mary John lift station has also been renovated. This improvement was required to guard against potential leaks and equipment damage at the station. Additionally, we are regularly inspecting and maintaining all other lift stations to find any potential concerns and fix them before they worsen. With these actions, the community will have a consistent and stable water supply.

We have begun replacing the roof of the old shop by the cemetery. The shop has to be renovated to ensure its structural soundness and to guard against any water damage. Additionally, we are putting in place a maintenance program to routinely check for problems and take care of them to preserve the longevity of the shop's roof and stop any further leaks or deterioration.

Over the summer, we have been cutting grass for elders and around fire hydrants, lagoons, well houses, and ditches. We had the privilege of hiring three summer students this season: Ethan Harper, Preston Case, and Julien Hixon. Albert Raphael has been working with the backhoe to clean up throughout the reserve, assist with the new sheds, and sweep the roads of sand and debris.

The Operations & Maintenance Department has also assisted with two other community projects: the community garden and the Sacred Fire Arbour. Additionally, we have assisted the Housing & Membership Department by performing minor maintenance on band-owned houses.

This month, we will start pumping out septic tanks at some of the older houses that have them. In the next two weeks, we will be repairing and cleaning the fire hydrants throughout the reserve.

Thank you,  
Mickey Phillips, Operations & Maintenance Manager  
Harvey Raphael, Operations and Maintenance Assistant  
Joseph Barfoot, Maintenance Labourer

## PATHWAYS

Prepared by Amber Teed Pathways Coordinator

The year has been one of extreme challenges. Working in the COVID-19 era has driven up costs for everything. But, on a happy note, we were once again able to be together and enjoy public events. Through direction given by Chief and Council, Saik'uz departments apply for Pathways monies which are then leveraged through other funding sources to ensure that we maximize the funds we are allotted. Following these policy and procedures, projects have been approved and are now ongoing. The Pathways Coordinator works with the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) as well as other First Nations and government representatives to ensure the agreement is implemented properly and accounts for the goals and objectives defined within it.



## Pathways Projects Currently Underway

### Traditional Governance Oversight Committee

Saik'uz First Nation has been working on the program infrastructure used to form a Traditional Governance Oversight Committee (TGOC), bringing traditional governance into practice in a way that supports the elected government and the Land & Resources Department. Saik'uz has implanted the TGOC in an exercise to align traditional governance with a technical exercise in developing an Ecosystem Restoration Plan (ERP). This governance work, combined with a technical restoration planning exercise, will position Saik'uz to be ready for environmental restoration implementation, as well as other LEGAL land use planning and implementation programs. The TGOC met four times throughout the fiscal year and continue to learn and share traditional knowledge as it related to the traditional territory.

The TGOC is committed to supporting Saik'uz First Nation by providing knowledge and expertise based on the traditional governance system. The group is made up of Saik'uz Family Representatives in good standing and who have knowledge of the traditional territory of the Saik'uz people and their practices. The purpose of the TGOC is to bring traditional governance into practice and work with the elected government and Land & Resources Department to support, offer guidance, and provide traditional and contemporary knowledge in matters relating to the territory of Saik'uz First Nation.

The TGOC brought on master's degree graduate Nadia Nowak to lead the team. Together, the group is conducting interviews to get a better sense of the level of traditional knowledge among the community and to determine what the cultural interests are. This information will guide the work we do going forward with self governance. We also were very lucky to be able to draw on the experience and vast knowledge of Dr. Joanne Fiske, now retired, who worked for many years with our elders who have all now passed. Joanne has graciously allowed up to digitize her large number of files from her many years of research to store in our archives. In addition, we have brought George Labrash and Terry Hooper to contribute with their vast knowledge of the region.

There are three areas of focus for the Traditional Governance Oversight Committee within the scope of work:

- 1) Knowledge Building
- 2) Prioritization of Land values for the SFN Ecosystem Restoration Plan and
- 3) Communications and information sharing for traditional governance and community members.

## Sacred Fire

It has long been a traditional practice to gather as a community, clan, and people around a fire. With the large number of losses that our community has suffered in recent years, it was suggested that we investigate traditional healing practices to help the community. The healing fire events that have occurred throughout the year have been very well attended, and it demonstrated the need for a permanent structure where this healing could occur on an ongoing basis. This sacred fire structure is located at the heart of the community. The sacred fire project has been built close to the creek where the dance hall was once located. The idea behind this structure is to call upon the four directions and the four elements of mother earth, calling in all our ancestors for wisdom and strength. The all-natural structure is constructed of fir logs and stone with an open air 40-foot gazebo and a fire pit built of stone in the earth. The circle around the fire is meant to be filled with salmon the vital source of food for our people and represents the circle of life. We encouraged all members to add their salmon print. This will allow for the strength of the wind, water, earth, and fire to support our healing. Four of the posts were carved by our community carvers Reece, Caden, and Glen and they included many community members to help. It is our hope that we will be able to host many healing events at this site inviting all nations to participate. Construction is now completed, and our opening ceremony is during this AGA event. I want to remind our community this is a sacred site. It is meant to bring people together for positive love, light, and healing. Drinking and using substances in this space will not be tolerated and violators will be dealt with within our clans.

## Cultural Center

The Economic Development Department has been working closely with Pathways to bring the log building currently located at Bednesti back to the village. The site chosen for the new Cultural Centre will be at the Potlatch Park site. The team has been working to secure funding for this project and is currently working with Collier as its project manager to bring this project to completion. We are very excited to have a building that will serve the needs of the community to practice the culture and showcase our people to the public. We are working with Four Rivers Gallery to bring home our artifacts that are currently housed in other museums. We will be installing specialized cases to hold these artifacts. The construction is scheduled to be completed by the end of October 2023.

## Language Digitization Project

The Culture & Language Department has been building a FirstVoices archive, as well as digitizing the Saik'uz First Nation archive.

## Database 4Nations and TLC

Pathways has invested in a membership all inclusive database system to oversee all the community information security and storage. This system will be online so all members will have access regardless of where they live. The program includes systems for education, health, asset management, employment, and membership communications. In addition, we have secured a contract with TLC to overhaul our information systems within the band office and the community. TLC provides the technical support for the Band office to ensure that the staff have all they need to fulfill their duties. A decision was recently made to add an additional tool for the community to help gain access to all the information and programs going on in the community. We recently acquired the services of an app developer, and they are busy working on our very own app. This app will be able to send push notifications to let you know what is happening in all areas of band business. It is hoped that we will no longer use Facebook as a means of communication. Look forward to the launch soon!!

## Greenhouses and Community Garden

The pathways program has been involved in a project to construct two dome greenhouses. One is a 60-foot dome greenhouse that can operate all year round. It is our hope that we can utilize the community members to grow food and bedding plants for the entire community at a much-reduced cost! The 20-foot dome greenhouse is to build the food security needs of the community. We have planted a wide variety of fruits and vegetables as we test the equipment. Fern Prince and JR Teed constructed 30 raised bed boxes for us to provide the community members (Elders) so that they can grow some food at their own home. Next year we hope to continue to provide gardening opportunities to all community members that wish to plant a garden in their personal spaces. We also intend to have some additional classes in food preservation this fall, including canning, freezing and drying products to last throughout the year.

We are very excited to have three graduates of the Tea Creek Farm. Andrea Patrick, Samson Raphael and Samantha David all completed a five-week training program on farming. We can't wait to put their newfound skills to work!! With the help of the Economic Development Department and the Community Garden committee the construction of these buildings will provide an opportunity for community members to grow vegetables and medicines all year round. In addition to food, we will also be looking at growing traditional plants needed to restore our traditional territory. This is a huge economic opportunity for community members, and we encourage any members that have an interest in horticulture and a possible career in gardening and/or greenhouse management.

We have recently brought on consultant Silverberry Consulting to aid us in the development of our forestry strategy and in this includes seed collection and planting. It is our wish to collect and grow seed to the point where they can then be placed back out on to our territory to thrive as nature intended them to. If this work is something you would be interested in, please reach out to Shawnee to explore training in this field! Construction of the community garden and the small dome is now complete. Design issues have tampered our construction schedule for the large dome, but we are working hard to secure a new supplier soon.

### Capacity Building

This section of the pathway's agreement is meant for us to build the skills of our community members. We have utilized this funding to support further education for staff members as well as community. Cassandra has been completing a program through the Vancouver Island University on traditional land stewardship. The skills she gains will assist her in her position to build stronger policies and programs in our Land & Resources Department.

Community Healing Project is a new program in conjunction with Education, Social Development Pathways and Economic Development to support our community members that are struggling with life and addiction. This program is meant to utilize our culture to help support a change in lifestyle for those that want to enter back into the workforce, be more active in cultural practices and learn new life skills. The program is meant to be a long-term support system and includes trainers that will discuss things like detox, rehab, family violence solutions, resume writing, workplace entry, personal development, cultural practices including trapping, hunting, fishing, medicine making, crafts and food preservation. The start date for this project is May 2023. We welcomed Justin Young a well-known facilitator and he did days for adults as well as youth and ended with a family dance. He is slated to return for adult sessions in October so watch for announcement.

In addition, we have supported the youth summer employment program to provide valuable skills to our students and expose them to the many opportunities available to them. We supported the beautification crew to clean up the community to make it look better and reduce the grass around the community creating a safer fire space.

The staff has been participating in workshops to build their management skills and give them more support in their roles at the band office. The Pathways program has been utilizing the professional development skills of Lisa Krebs to do this work with great success.

## Economic Benefits

The Pathways Agreement has a section called Economic Benefits. This fund is gained from the benefits the province has had while utilizing our territory. This fund provides the band with funds to do large projects in the community that we currently have no other source of funding to do. Some of these projects include housing inspections for future renovations, emergency roof repairs to 21 homes, travel for Elders to the Kamloops Pow Wow and the National Elders conference in Edmonton. This fund also provided Ball Equipment for the Girls team as well as funds to support the JR Tigers team as they travel and enter tournaments.

This funding has been vital in supporting the growth and development in our community by providing the supporting funds for successful grants in community garden, the greenhouses and the equipment need to grow food, the Sacred Fire and the Cultural center and museum. This fund also provided the vital work need to complete the archeological study at the new health center construction site when artifacts were found when they broke ground. Supporting efforts of the land and resources department as they pursue reclamation goals and building the community to be a good environment for members to thrive.

## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

To our clients, I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding when I first took over the Social Development Manager position halfway through the fiscal year. Getting to know the program has been a challenge, but meeting each of you has been a rewarding experience for me. I hope we can continue to build relationships with all our clients.

Our door is always open—I hope you will feel free to come say hi and let us know if there is anything we can do.

The Social Development Department program provides Income Assistance to all individuals that qualify for the service. The services include Basic Needs, Shelter Allowances, Special needs, and Adult In-Home Care.

**Basic Needs:** This is the regular monthly income assistance payment. We ask all our clients to submit a stub every month by the 20th to avoid late payments. All our employable clients are required to fill out a work search form monthly, which includes three places that the client has applied for a job at or two places you have applied at, and an appointment with education where there is an effort to further your education or update a resume. Cheques will be held until a valid work search has been completed.



Shelter Allowances: Shelter rates are dependent on your family size; with the shelter allowance, we pay BC Hydro bills first, and then rent or wood costs if there is a remainder of the allowance.

Special Needs: This funding has previously been used for security deposits (housing or BC Hydro), help with food and furniture replacement for Social Assistance clients who are starting new in their own place for the first time, or if there has been a need for new furniture replacement (i.e., bedbug infestation). As this funding is very small each year, we must decide on eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

Adult In-Home Care: This program is for our elders, people on disability, or someone who has had recent surgery and needs the extra support. To be eligible for this program, you need to be assessed by a nurse at the time of application and every 6 months thereafter.

I would like to speak a bit about Hardship Assistance, as there have been many questions about it. Hardship Assistance is a last resort and would be accompanied by a repayment agreement. Only under certain circumstances is hardship not repayable:

- Persons awaiting verification of a sponsorship, or breakdown of a sponsorship.
- Persons awaiting identification documents.
- Applicants awaiting SIN.
- 

Hardship Assistance is a distinct category of social assistance with its own eligibility criteria. Assessment for Hardship Assistance is undertaken only after an eligibility test for basic social assistance benefits has been applied and the applicant has been determined to be ineligible for income or disability assistance.

Hardship Assistance is provided for one month at a time, and eligibility must be re-established each month.

Applicants for Hardship Assistance must demonstrate that all alternatives to meeting basic needs have been exhausted. To be considered for Hardship Assistance, adult members of the family unit must show that they have:

- Applied for and accepted any other available income or assets, including loans and credit, final pay cheques, holiday pay, etc., and used them to meet support and shelter needs (if such monies were used for other purposes than meeting these basic needs, the applicant is not eligible for Hardship Assistance).
- Sought help from other organizations, family, and friends.
- Exhausted all available income and assets.



Please remember that Indigenous Service Canada (ISC) is funding our program, so we are bound by their policy; therefore, we try our best to help each client individually in any way that we can without causing hardship.

I would like to thank all our clients once again for their patience while we find our feet in our new roles. Mussi Cho.

## About us

Hello, my name is Chantel Murray. I am the daughter of the late Brent Raphael and Irene Howse. I've spent the majority of my life in Saik'uz. I studied basic bookkeeping in college, and, in the fall of 2022, I began as the Social Development Manager. My education has aided me in this position. I intend to help us get the best out of our department by listening to our clients and thoroughly understanding the many challenges our community has encountered in recent years. When I'm not working, I like to spend time with my family, go fishing, quadding, riding my motorcycle, or reading.

Hadi! My name is Keisha Thomas. I am a member of the Grouse Clan and am the proud mother of one daughter. I studied at post-secondary school to be a Medical Office/Administrative Assistant. Currently, I am the Social Development Assistant at the Saik'uz Band Office. My duties include assisting the Social Development Manager/providing support to Saik'uz members in need of social assistance/assisting members in navigating government systems like EI, conducting work searches/etc. I enjoy spending time with my daughter and going on road trips in my spare time.

## KPMG FINANCIAL DATA

### Financial Assets - March 31, 2023

#### Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

	2023	2022
Cash	\$ 24,235,486	\$ 16,740,917
Accounts receivable	\$ 2,413,727	\$ 2,219,068
Guaranteed investment certificate	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,844,787
Four Rivers Co-operative equity	\$ 84,091	\$ 83,146
Investments in government business entities	\$ 6,920,668	\$ 4,976,486
Ottawa Trust Fund	\$ 975,711	\$ 978,756
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>\$ 35,629,683</b>	<b>\$ 26,843,160</b>

### Non-Financial Assets - March 31, 2023

#### Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

	2023	2022
Tangible capital assets	\$ 26,505,732	\$ 21,028,328
Prepaid expenses	\$ 279,124	\$ 12,646
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>	<b>\$ 26,784,856</b>	<b>\$ 21,040,974</b>

### Financial Liabilities - March 31, 2023

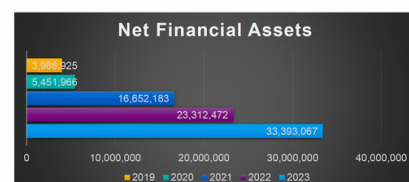
#### Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

	2023	2022
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,055,940	\$ 1,239,686
Deferred revenue	\$ 813,030	\$ 1,862,976
Long-term debt	\$ 367,646	\$ 428,026
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 2,236,616</b>	<b>\$ 3,530,688</b>

### Net Financial Assets - March 31, 2023

#### Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Financial assets	\$ 35,629,683	\$ 26,843,160	\$ 18,102,751	\$ 7,130,618	\$ 7,130,618
Financial liabilities	\$ (2,236,616)	\$ (3,530,688)	\$ (1,450,568)	\$ (1,678,652)	\$ (3,257,490)
<b>Net financial assets</b>	<b>\$ 33,393,067</b>	<b>\$ 23,312,472</b>	<b>\$ 16,652,183</b>	<b>\$ 5,451,966</b>	<b>\$ 3,966,925</b>



# Results for the 2023 Fiscal Year

## Consolidated Statement of Operations

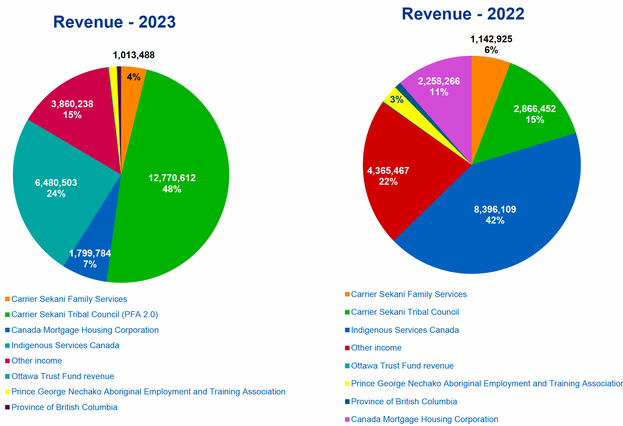
	Actual 2023	Actual 2022
Revenues	\$ 26,427,388	\$ 19,775,427
Expenses	\$ (11,529,532)	\$ (11,811,892)
Annual surplus before the undernoted	\$ 14,897,856	\$ 7,963,535
Equity from investment in government business entities	\$ 926,621	\$ 1,087,878
<b>Annual surplus</b>	<b>\$ 15,824,477</b>	<b>\$ 9,051,413</b>

# Accumulated surplus - 2023 Fiscal Year

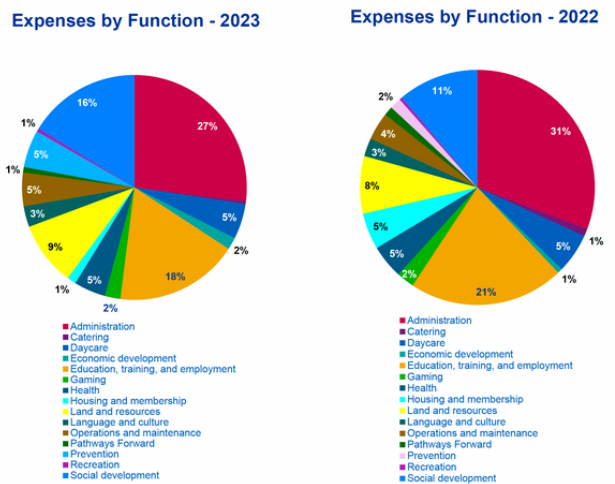
## Accumulated surplus

	2023	2022
Annual surplus	\$ 15,824,477	\$ 9,051,413
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	\$ 44,353,446	\$ 35,302,033
<b>Accumulated surplus, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 60,177,923</b>	<b>\$ 44,353,446</b>

## Revenue - 2023 vs. 2022



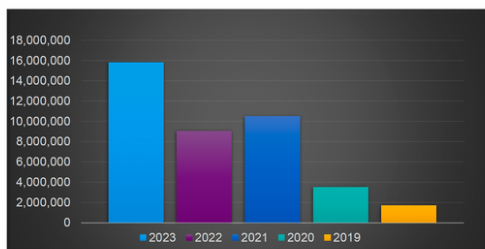
## Expenses by Function - 2023 vs. 2022



## Annual Surplus - March 31, 2023

### Consolidated Statement of Operations

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Annual surplus</b>	<b>\$ 15,824,477</b>	<b>\$ 9,051,413</b>	<b>\$ 10,512,307</b>	<b>\$ 3,519,253</b>	<b>\$ 1,708,699</b>



## Accumulated surplus - 2023 Fiscal Year

### Surplus Breakdown

	2023	2022
Operating fund	\$ 32,887,459	\$ 22,597,721
Invested in tangible capital assets	\$ 26,138,086	\$ 20,600,302
Ottawa Trust funds	\$ 975,711	\$ 978,756
Treaty	\$ 176,667	\$ 176,667
<b>Accumulated surplus</b>	<b>\$ 60,177,923</b>	<b>\$ 44,353,446</b>

### Accumulated Surplus - 2023

