

Annual General Assembly Report

2023 - 2024



SAIK'UZ
FIRST
NATION





Hadih Welcome

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Message from Chief



Welcome to the Annual General Assembly report for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Time seems to have flown by, and it feels like just yesterday we were here, reporting to the community. Last year was challenging due to the fires in our area, forcing us to hold our assembly in the midst of smoke and heat. Let's hope this year will be better.

This is the time when we report to our members, updating you on what we have worked on over the past year and informing you about ongoing projects, engagements with other Nations, corporate entities, and the provincial government.

Despite the challenges, there have been successes in the past year that our community, as well as surrounding communities, should be proud of.

Here are a few highlights:

RTA Appeals Decision

The Supreme Court of BC upheld the ruling in our court case against Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA). However, it did not hold RTA accountable for the damage done to the Nechako. Our Nations decided to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, which is our last opportunity to challenge the ruling and bring this matter to court.

The Supreme Court made two key findings:

- 1 The Plaintiffs (us) have an Aboriginal right, as claimed, to fish for food, social, and ceremonial purposes in the Nechako Watershed; and
- 2 As an obligation related to the honour of the Crown, both the provincial and federal governments are required to protect that Aboriginal right.

Federal Loan Guarantee

For ten years, I have been part of a group of several Canadian Chiefs engaging with the federal government to consider loan guarantees for First Nations across Canada, who are impacted by major projects in their respective territories.

In April, the federal government announced \$5 billion in loan guarantee programs for Indigenous communities. This means equity and ownership in projects can now become a reality for Nations across Canada.



Quebec Court of Appeal Regarding Bill C-92

Appealing Bill C-92 would have negatively impacted the ability of First Nations to reassume jurisdiction of Child & Family Services and have Canada recognize our right to self-govern, as the courts in Quebec did not want to acknowledge Indigenous laws when it came to our families and children. Saik'uz and Stellat'en, along with Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), were interveners in the case, and the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the constitutionality of Bill C-92.

Saik'uz Fire Department

Our Saik'uz Fire Department firefighters won first place at the Provincial Firefighters Competition for the fifth year in a row. They will be heading to the national competition in Vancouver in the fall. Congratulations to all who competed, and thank you for your dedication to our community!

Cultural Awareness Video

We have now completed the Saik'uz Cultural Awareness Video, a project that has been in development for over two years. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this project and Pop Media for producing the final product. The purpose of this video is to share with external businesses and companies we are working with or partnering with, such as the RCMP, an understanding of who we are.

Update on Projects

Coastal GasLink (CGL)

Phase 1 of the project is complete, with Phase 2 set to begin. Saik'uz, along with 11 other Nations, is exploring the possibility of purchasing equity in the project. The First Nations Major Projects Coalition (FNMPC) is providing us with technical and advisory services.

Artemis Project

The Artemis project is in the full construction stage and is 73% complete as of March 2024. Saik'uz, Nadleh, and Stellat'en Nations engaged in mediation and now have a shared understanding of how the significance of impacts is viewed. We agreed to develop a protocol that outlines how the Nations will share benefits from all projects in our territories.

BC Hydro

Saik'uz, along with Nadleh, Stellat'en, and Lheidli Nations, is engaged in intensive discussions with the Province and BC Hydro. Our technicians are exploring different models for sharing equity benefits and developing formulas for sharing Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) benefits. More work is needed before a recommendation can be made for the IBA level formula, as each community has unique needs. FNMPC is supporting these technical discussions, along with our legal counsel, Scott Smith.

Lhai Ventures

Saik'uz, Nadleh, Stellat'en, and Lheidli Nations continue to work together in partnership, exploring opportunities beyond the CGL project and partnerships with industry. For example, the BC Hydro line project is one area of focus.

Innergex Wind Farm Project

Community engagement is ongoing regarding the Innergex Wind Farm Project. No decision has been made at this time.



Business of the Year

Saik'uz was recognized as the successful candidate for the local Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year award. This recognition acknowledges not only our business ventures but also the projects within our community.

In-Community Projects

New Health Centre

Construction has begun on the new Health Centre. The expected completion date is 2025.

Antoine Street Road Extension

The road extension project for Antoine Street will commence in June 2024.

New Fire Hall

The project to construct a new Fire Hall is set to begin in August 2024. We are considering a modular building, as it will be more cost-effective compared to a traditional wood-constructed building.

Greenhouse

Our Economic Development Manager, Vincent Wickham, will provide an update on the Greenhouse project.

Cultural Centre

The log building from Bednesti has been dismantled and required some repairs. Once repairs are complete, the Cultural Centre will be moved to a location near the current potlatch house. The estimated completion date is fall 2024.

Clan House

The feasibility study for the Clan House will be completed by the end of August, followed by the design phase, which will be completed by October.

We held highly successful community engagement sessions regarding the design of the building.

Government-to-Government Engagement

Pathways 2.0

The Carrier Sekani First Nations (CSFN) leadership has been negotiating an extension of the Pathways agreement (Pathways 2.0), which expired in March 2023. We are currently a few weeks away from determining if the agreement will be renewed for another five years. Pathways 1.0 significantly benefited our community over the last five years, and CSFN continues to lead the way in First Nations forestry in BC.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

The MOU we signed with the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) has expired, and we will be renewing it in August, adding the District of Vanderhoof and Cheslatta Carrier Nation as parties. The parties share a mutual interest in implementing a new flow regime and developing a collaborative approach to stewarding the Nechako and its affected tributaries. We aim to restore the health of the river.

We are also considering signing MOUs with Yellowhead Road & Bridge (YRB), the Trappers Association, the Cattlemen's Association, and RDBN. We believe that by engaging with these organizations, we can support the work we are doing. It is essential that we have a say in what happens on our lands.

Governance

Acknowledgement of Governance Team

I want to acknowledge the work Kelsey Antoine, Amber Teed, Kasandra Johnny-Turbide, and Nadia Nowak are doing on governance. It has been encouraging to see members attending meetings and movie nights.

Election Code Amendments

We have begun community engagement to review proposed amendments to the Election Code, which was adopted in 2017. We hope to implement any changes by December 2024.

Policy for Chief & Council

We are developing a policy for Chief & Council, which will clearly define roles and responsibilities, as well as the mandate for Chief & Council, to ensure we do the best work for the Nation.

Monthly Community Updates

Our council and staff have scheduled monthly community updates to maintain transparency and accountability to our membership. Please be patient as we work on scheduling. Currently, the updates are scheduled for the second Thursday of every month.



Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the Saik'uz Men's Group. It is wonderful to see you working on so many projects in the community, volunteering, and positively impacting the lives of all our men.

I would also like to thank our General Manager, Cora McIntosh, and all our staff for their hard work and dedication over the past year in keeping our organization running smoothly. There are always ups and downs, but we all work towards making our community healthy and productive.

Thank you to the council for your tireless efforts and the hours you dedicate to supporting me in my role, as well as striving to be the best leaders possible. You each bring unique and beautiful gifts to our table, making everything better. I appreciate you all so very much!

Finally, thank you to the membership for the opportunity to serve you in the work that we do. We appreciate your patience and kindness as we continue our work together.

Councillor Report

from Jasmine Thomas



I would like to extend my gratitude to the Saik'uz membership for allowing me the honour to have served our community since 2017. It has truly been a privilege to watch the growth and resilience of our Nation alongside our council and staff. I look forward to watching our members continue to reclaim the spaces that we have been historically shut out of and restore the places that have sustained us for generations. I will continue to support our membership in various roles that our community may require to help advance and protect our collective rights, title and interests.

Under the Strategic Framework—that council adopted in 2017 after engaging with staff and membership—my Governance Goal has primarily been around 'Environmental Stewardship'. I have been focused on issues related to Lands and Resources as well as associated economic development and employment opportunities. I continue to support our council in other general governance areas that impact all Saik'uz members (e.g., health, child welfare, housing and infrastructure, rights-title and interests) in addition to other various committees and boards internally and externally.

Many of our current negotiations with British Columbia occur collectively with six other Carrier Sekani First Nations (CSFNs): Nadleh Whut'en, Stellat'en, Ts'il Kaz Koh (aka Burns Lake Band), Nak'azdli, Tl'azt'en, and Takla. As of August 2024, there is currently no agreement in place between BC and the CSFNs since the expiry

of the Pathways Forward 2.0 Agreement in March 2023. A renewal of this agreement is being sought before the provincial elections occur in the fall, in addition to seeking mandates on 'Resource Management Planning' 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) that has prioritized forestry and stewardship chapters as part of a step-wise approach towards achieving reconciliation in those areas. Canada will be engaged as negotiations advance, and historical redress and compensation will continue to be elevated within multiple negotiation spaces in relation to many of the opportunities that we are currently engaged on. There are growing pains associated with many of these processes, but we have achieved many unprecedented milestones as a collective.

Carrier Sekani First Nations (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 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 and drive the need to diversify the regional economy.

Declining animal populations, including moose and furbearers like marten and fisher. Joint CSFN-BC reports indicate up to a 75-90% reduction in moose population in some CSFN territories and indicate only 10% of old growth/high biodiversity areas remain in Saik'uz territory to sustain all those dependent on forest health (wildlife, members, etc.)

In addition, salmon returns have been in sharp decline, with many other species experiencing lower populations as well.



While there are challenges, there are also significant advancements that have been made in areas of forestry and stewardship that have been unprecedented to date

The Pathways Forward 2.0 Agreement includes collaborative decision-making between CSFNs and BC to start addressing some of the issues highlighted above.

However, it has been a long journey to get movement on some of this work. While there are challenges, there are also significant advancements that have been made in areas of forestry and stewardship that have been unprecedented to date:

Largest land deferral in the history of BC through the implementation of 'Immediate Measures' (IMs): CSFN collective efforts to preserve the last remaining biodiversity areas in the territory by halting forestry harvesting activities that are not consented to.

- 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 (on-going)
- 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 Lands & Resources Department has been instrumental in this process—not only for Saik'uz but for the other CSFNs as well

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., relationship between elected and traditional governance systems, Business Accountability Framework that aligns business with stewardship and cultural values and principles, etc.). I also encourage our members to engage in processes that will support the amendment our current custom election code and discussions regarding the role, structure and compensation of elected Chief and Councillors.

I have also supported the development of a full-length feature documentary film with

the National Film Board of Canada that will highlight our legal battle against Rio Tinto Alcan and some of the work that is ongoing in our communities to save our river alongside Stellat'en who stood with us on our legal journey (community screenings TBC for winter 2025). Since our BC Court of Appeal decision was received in winter 2024, we have since applied for leave to the Supreme Court of Canada and are awaiting their decision as to whether they will hear our case on the basis that Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA) should be held liable and ordered to release more sustainable water levels into the Nechako River that is only operating around 30% of its natural flow. Currently, Rio Tinto operates under the authorizations received from BC and Canada. We don't anticipate either of the Crowns (BC or Canada) to act expeditiously to amend the existing flow regime that RTA is comfortable with (and that BC Hydro profits from). Negotiations with RTA are still underway in light of litigation.

There are many significant projects that will require community engagement

(off/on-reserve) to discuss how each project may impact Saik'uz member rights and interests (either positively or negatively): Artemis transmission line to power the Blackwater mine; solar and wind energy opportunities; BC Hydro's transmission line expansion project (we have aligned with our neighbours Lheidli, Nadleh, and Stellat'en as 'Phase 1' communities); land and other business acquisition opportunities; infrastructure projects and initiatives on the Nechako River that may help restore sustainable water levels for threatened fisheries; relationships with BC, Canada, and other First Nations (i.e., Nazko), etc.

These are just some of the many issues and opportunities that I hope to explore deeper within my upcoming two-years of study with Simon Fraser University in their Indigenous Business Leadership Executive Masters of Business Administration program. I am excited to refine the skills I have attained so far and continue to build upon and reflect on my three terms of leadership experience during this next part of my journey.

I have appreciated the opportunity to serve our members and to be part of an administration that has navigated through many challenges and successes as a community while growing exponentially simultaneously. We have so many things to consider during this critical period of growth: self-determination and decision-making, energy sovereignty, food security, cultural revitalization, ecosystem restoration activities, future leadership and capacity building, and much more. We are a powerful people living in exciting times and I will always love and advocate for our members in whatever capacity that I can. I am proud to be from Saik'uz and honour all those before me who have created foundations that I also hope to leave for future leaders.

T'eke nawhudusni,
Jasmine Thomas

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We have so many things to consider during this critical period of growth

General Manager Report from Cora McIntosh



This past year my worldview of Saik'uz First Nation has changed. We have collectively grown a whole lot, in the face of the pandemic, the opioid crisis, the rising costs of living, and the ever-changing landscape of climate change.

My report this year will highlight the "important moments" of this year and how they relate to administrative changes, these important moments define my dedication to this nation. Important moments shape the path we choose to take, in my opinion, it is not the funding we receive, the court cases we pursue, or the number of meetings that we attend that determines "important moments". To me it is the relationships we maintain, together. Recognizing that amongst change and growth we can still be Dakelh and continue to love and cherish one another at the end of the day. So, my report timeline reflects these important moments.

Following the family day events of 2023, we were informed Jay Raphael could not be found. A new fiscal year was starting, and all staff, leadership and community could do was wonder and search. Searches were conducted in Saik'uz, Vanderhoof, and Prince George, despite many efforts, we are still searching for Jay.

Fire season was well underway coming into the spring months, the nation monitored, responded to and communicated the many notices and alerts for the Greer Creek and Tatuk Lake fires brought. That fire season lasted longer than any other fire season in history, we were on active fire watch from April to October 2023. Not only had our Nation never experienced an evacuation before, but we were also faced with a very scary requirement to shelter

in place, should we face a fire. Thankfully we made it through the season without having to activate our evacuation plan. This experience did identify the need for more engagement, planning and preparation for evacuations. This resulted in updating our current plan, this required us to do door to door sit downs with members to understand the needs we have to consider, we now have a fairly comprehensive survey that we will continue to use for year to come.

Throughout the late spring, summer and into fall we faced so much loss and heart ache, in many different forms, on and off reserve. We responded to and addressed as many requests for support as humanly possible as there were many crises occurring at the same time and in many different locations.

Following the active Fire season, we faced another tragic loss in community, it shook our office to the core. The loss of Greg Rapheal Jr. brought us to our knees. This loss has forever changed the organization. This single moment showed us all that our staff and their families are all so very important. How can we pour with an empty cup? In the following months, we worked hard on identifying the supports and needs of staff. They are the hands and hearts that make this office run. If we do not take the time and attention for their wellbeing, how are we to expect them to provide those same opportunities to community. Continued support and guidance in hard times is so imperative.

Fall of 2023, we faced another missing person. Chelsey's beautiful face took all our attention. We spent weeks searching in many communities, unfortunately for family and friends we laid her soul to rest. By that time emergency planning for missing members had come to the top of our list. Not only do we need to be prepared, but the relationships in that process need to be maintained. As a result of the searches for Chelsey we are now going to conduct an in-person training opportunity. We are looking to train community members to search as well as do a mock run through of activating and emergency plan. We are building stronger relationships with the Search and Rescue team and the RCMP. It was very apparent that these processes need to be Saik'uz guided.

Many of the events this past year has influenced where we need to add more resources. Much of the other activities in the beginning of this year has been to help organize (FMB certification, MNP 10-year fiscal plan, BAF, Staff/Managers Meetings...) the multitudes of opportunities that are coming to the nation in the next 10 years.

These identified activities and resources have been sought to help with the increase in workloads and workflow of staff, management and leadership.

As a result, the demand to hire more staff has increased. The positions with the nation require a broad demand of academic requirements. We are making our best effort to provide as many opportunities as possible with the nation, with as little barriers as possible. Of course, it is a difficult undertaking, and we are working to fulfill those to the best of our ability.

Despite the many challenging times in community, the nation still managed to maintain the projects and scopes of work we committed to. Including but not limited to:

- **15 departments**
- **60+ staff**
- **4 Major project engagements**
- **15+ Medium project engagements**
- **Countless community initiatives**
- **Community Meetings, Industry engagements, Traditional Governance work, Surveys, Hampers, Pet care, etc.**

The activities that were delivered to the community were beyond our expectations given the extreme amounts of grief and loss that was faced by us all.

There are many initiatives we are working on throughout the year at any given time. If you would like additional information or further details on specific topics, please contact myself at the band office.

Thank you for your continued support and kindness, I look forward to what our future holds.

Snachalhuya

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Culture & Language

Hadih Saik'uz Whut'enne,

We have continued our Dakelh Language Revitalization work, which is of critical importance as our Dakelh language is endangered, and we have fewer speakers left who can work on transcribing and translating our ancestors' words.

FIND THE TEAM'S BIOS STARTING ON PAGE 38



Language Technology Program

We were successful once again in securing funding from the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) Digitization Grant Initiative (\$180,000). Additionally, we secured funds from the federal program "Listen, Hear Our Voices", which provided us with \$73,751.25 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year and \$24,583.00 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The project involves restoring archival audio tapes held in our archive, as well as audio and video tapes that were donated to the project. Elders Julie George, Gracie John, Ruby Patrick, Irene John, and Johnny John have been working as translators, while Karen Thomas has been transcribing Dakelh audio into Dakelh text. Deborah Page is responsible for digitizing and restoring the audio and video tapes and preparing them for translation. In addition to the audio-visual assets that were digitized and repaired in-house, we sent 35 audio and video tapes to VIVO Media Arts in Vancouver for digitization.

It is important to note that audio or video stored on old media has a limited shelf life before quality is lost, and eventually, the tape becomes impossible to digitize. If you have audio or video of our Elders or other important cultural or historical data, please bring it in, and we will digitize it for you.

FirstVoices

FirstVoices is the second component of our Language Technology Program. Unfortunately, we have faced challenges in retaining our FirstVoices managers. Our original manager, Traves Theberge, left in September 2023. We hired his replacement, Nathan Thomas, in May 2023, who left in October 2023. As a result, we have not filled this position, and the program has fallen behind the submitted work plan.

We are currently working on a sound booth in the Elders' work area, "The Shed", which is being soundproofed and having lighting installed. Once complete, we will record the language material we have prepared, illustrate it, and upload it to FirstVoices.

You can explore our work on FirstVoices at the following link:

firstvoices.com/saikuz-dakelh





Pathways to Language Vitality (Language Nest)

A language nest is a preschool program where children are immersed in their language and culture with no English used. In language nests, young children are surrounded by their language, and caregivers are encouraged to participate.

This program began in September 2019. We have completed our third year of the language nest at the Saik'uz Daycare with the help of funding from the First Peoples' Cultural Council. The children receive three hours a day of total immersion in our Dakelh language. We use various delivery methods, including total physical response (TPR), syllabics, drumming, dancing, singing, and storytelling. Additionally, Susie Antoine, Julie George, and Rosa McIntosh spend three hours a day teaching Dakelh to the children at the Head Start (daycare) program.

Storytelling in our language is also a significant activity within the language nest. Our Elders have translated several children's books into Dakelh.

What's to Come

The future of our projects is currently on hold. We have been granted extensions to continue spending the funds we have left in the Language Technology Program and the Pathways to Language Revitalization. However, there has been a significant decrease in recent language funding from the federal government.

All funding committed by the federal government for Indigenous languages is distributed across Canada among First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Funding will be allocated based on a new formula currently under development by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). This formula will likely not be finalized until after the AFN meets for their Annual General Assembly (AGA) in July 2024.

Given this situation, we will not know if we will be funded, or at what level, until at least September 2024.



Daycare

The 2023–2024 fiscal year brought many opportunities for our Head Start and Daycare program. We currently have five full-time Early Childhood Educators who facilitate the programs with the support of families, community members, Elders, Saik'uz First Nation departments, and the First Nations Health Authority.

Our programs provide a holistic approach to supporting the physical, developmental, emotional, social, cultural, and spiritual well-being of children from birth to age six. Throughout the year, we have had 18 children enrolled.

All curriculum areas and daily scheduled activities are centred around the following six components: Education, Health Promotion, Culture & Language, Nutrition, Social Support, and Parent/Family Involvement.

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Cultural Integration

Throughout the year, we have encouraged staff and children to bring the outdoors in and take the indoors outside to foster a connection with cultural events and activities. This has included simple activities like going for walks around the playground and identifying birds or animals in the Carrier language.

The cultural aspect of our program significantly supports the health and overall well-being of both children and staff. Our cultural curriculum has been greatly enhanced by the Language Nest program, where we are visited daily by a culture/language teacher and Elders. Teachers and children learn new words daily, continually expanding their cultural vocabulary. The children are learning to speak and understand Dakelh through focused lessons during circle times, and these lessons are reinforced throughout the day to build familiarity with the language and concepts. The children practice a Dakelh prayer before mealtimes, and many children can say or recognize words for basic conversation, 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 enjoy a lot of singing and drumming, and we have both child and adult-sized drums at the centre to encourage active participation.



Healthy Living & Environmental Stewardship

We hope that our projects will support teaching about healthy food and beverage choices, as well as caring for the earth and plants. This may encourage family involvement and storytelling as we work together to grow a garden. It may also help foster empathy with nature and serve to share healthy, home-grown choices with children, families, and community members. With time and prosperity, our harvest can tie in with our traditional food curriculum and ongoing food preservation lessons.

We received a grant for Earth Day, which included additions to our program to teach families how to preserve food for a longer period of time, such as dehydrators, canners, and cooking classes.

Emotional Well-being & Mental Health

In our programs, we prioritize the emotional well-being and mental health of children, as well as their diverse needs, by implementing an early intervention curriculum, along with cultural and language curricula that support children in a holistic manner.

Literacy & Learning Resources

We received a grant for more books, which everyone was excited to read, learn from, and explore. These new books have been a valuable addition to our learning resources.

Community Art and Training

We are proud to display artwork from local community artists in the centre.

Our staff continue to participate in training opportunities that are relevant to the needs of the children in our daycare and community. This helps to develop and expand the skill set and knowledge of our teachers, strengthening our team of educators for years to come.



New Furniture & Renovations

We received a grant for new furniture for the infant and toddler area, which has arrived, and we are thrilled with how it looks. The children also seem to like the new look, as it fosters greater independence.

We are patiently waiting for the snow to clear so that renovations can begin on our kitchen, front walkway, and the roof of the playground on the three-to-five side.

Staff Qualifications

We have several staff members who have earned their full Early Childhood Education (ECE) diploma, which includes certification in early childhood education, as well as infant and toddler care, and special needs.

Each of our projects continues to be child, family, and community-focused, with the intent to honour the strength and resilience of our community.



New Daycare Grant

We are excited to announce that we have been approved for a grant for a new daycare. We are currently awaiting additional information to proceed to the next step.



Economic Development

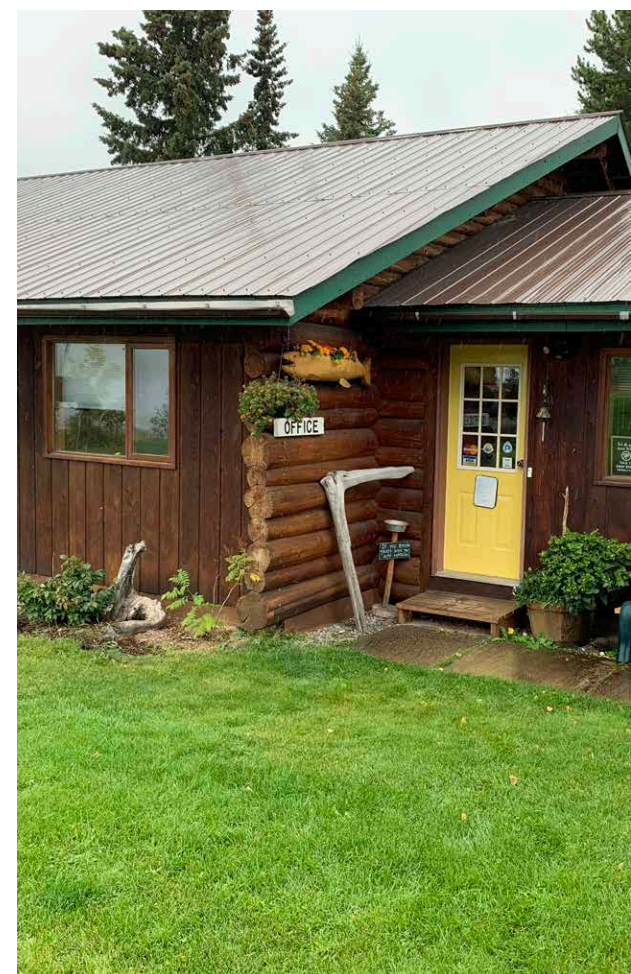
The Economic Development Department would like to extend its gratitude to the outgoing Economic Development Manager, Jason Alexis, for his instrumental role in launching and growing the department. Jason Alexis was appointed as the Economic Development Officer when the department was first established, and he successfully nurtured both the department and his own professional development until his election as Councillor. In May 2023, Jason Alexis took leave from his role as Economic Development Manager to assume his new responsibilities as Councillor.

Congratulations to Councillor Jason Alexis, and thank you for all your hard work.

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The Economic Development Department also wishes to thank the Council members, staff, community members, and consultants who have championed the department's work during the vacancy of key positions. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of many individuals, the continued growth, sophistication, and Indigenization of Saik'uz's economy has progressed despite challenges related to capacity and prioritization.

As the new Economic Development Manager, I am fortunate to inherit this broad portfolio of work. I look forward to collaborating with the distinguished network of passionate and professional individuals who have supported and continue to support Saik'uz First Nation's Economic Development.



Through the efforts of Councillor Jason Alexis before his election, and the efforts of the de facto Economic Development team during his absence, the Nation was able to advance many initiatives and projects within the Economic Development portfolio:

Rehabilitation and Relocation of the Saik'uz Cultural Centre:

Successfully moved the Cultural Centre from the Bednesti Resort back to the Saik'uz community.

Development of an Emergency Support Services Program:

Included Emergency Operation Centre training, Search and Rescue training, and Evacuation Plan exercises.

Installation of Food Security Infrastructure:

Improved access to healthy food options and created healing and therapeutic spaces for appreciating nature.

Evaluation of Fire Hall Options:

Secured funding to enhance the community's resilience to climate disasters.

Finalized Design and Tender Preparation for Joseph Street Extension:

Advanced the project to the tendering stage.

Revival of Discussions on Community Improvements:

Addressed improvements for the Playground, Ball Park, Potlatch House and Campground, and Multiplex.

The Nation is exploring various collaborations and partnerships with businesses, industries, agencies, and governments.

For direct interests, the Nation has explored opportunities with entities like Surerus Murphy and Meraki Resources for joint ventures and service agreements. In our broader collaborations, the Nation seeks to secure capacity funding, as it has with BC Hydro and Innergex, to enable appropriate engagement with opportunities before making decisions.

To guide the Nation and provide information on best practices, we turn to organizations like the First Nations Major Projects Coalition, the Clean Energy and Major Projects Office, and the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council for advice on options that align with our community-first approach. Additionally, the Nation has established Government-to-Government relationships with the Province of BC, Indigenous Services Canada, and many First Nations in the region to navigate complex issues and intersectional projects that cross jurisdictions.

Thanks to these networks and the team's efforts, the Nation managed to secure an additional \$48,000 for an Elders' trip and land designation activities, beyond our standard Indigenous Services Canada funding. The Nation also began planning for capacity funding, equity purchases, and revenue sharing, which will introduce new opportunities and resources for the Nation to leverage, with larger volumes of resources becoming available.

Despite the challenges of being understaffed and under capacity, the team was still able to continue with the above projects and find ways to support the Nation in its economic pursuits. With the Economic Development Manager position now filled, there is new capacity to participate in engagements, collaborate with departments, and advocate for Indigenous values. To best incorporate the unique and progressive values of the Saik'uz community, the department is leveraging relationships and information-sharing with other departments to break down siloed knowledge and incorporate Indigenized approaches to economic development.

This has included advocating for National Indigenous Peoples' Day as a holiday for industry employers, requesting that supported interviews be available for members seeking employment, asking that industry marketing departments commission community artists for promotional items, and incorporating the Saik'uz dialect of Dakelh into project and program titles where possible.

To better meet the needs of the community, the Economic Development Department will continue to prioritize community interests and uphold land stewardship values over business needs. The department aims to launch new programs to support entrepreneurs and creators and help connect them with industry proponents who are passionate about supporting Indigenous Peoples. The department also hopes to fill its vacant positions and continue investigating economic opportunities in the renewable energy sector and other sectors that reduce environmental impacts on our territory.

To accomplish this, the Economic Development Department expects its annual budget to expand, leveraging new revenues to explore opportunities that will accelerate Saik'uz's economic growth in responsible and sustainable ways. The department's greatest expenses are in capital development and property acquisitions, as the Nation develops new community infrastructure and reacquires interests in land on our territory.

Although the department saw reduced salary expenses without any staff, consulting and professional fees were

heavily inflated to compensate for this capacity gap. Fortunately, this capacity was well-leveraged, as these professionals worked to develop new agreements and frameworks that will offer the Nation financial and administrative support over the next year. They have also secured the Nation's interests in projects by ensuring their continuity. With many opportunities being considered, and with their long-term payouts, the Economic Development Department continues to seek additional revenues and opportunities that can be leveraged to support community initiatives, programs, and projects.

About Vincent Wickham

My name is Vincent Wickham, and I am honoured to introduce myself as your newly appointed Economic Development Manager. I was born and raised in Prince George, and although my journey has taken me through various paths, I always seem to return to where my roots run deepest.

I pursued my education at the University of Northern British Columbia where I completed co-op jobs with BC Public Services and studied towards my International Business Degree. When I graduated during the pandemic, I entered an internship through Northern Development with the District of Vanderhoof, where I served as a liaison to Saik'uz First Nation and coordinated Community to Community Forums and other joint initiatives. After a brief stint with the City of Prince George, I transitioned to Saik'uz First Nation in December 2023.

In my free time, I enjoy running outdoors, hiking up mountains, and swimming in lakes and rivers. When outdoor conditions aren't ideal, I like to play video games and

work on business development for my own adventure and production company. I also keep busy in the kitchen and enjoy cooking and learning new recipes.

Although I am not Indigenous myself, I have family members that are, and it is my love for them and my sympathy for their values that inspire me to do this work. It can be difficult to navigate imposter syndrome, allyship, and appropriation in this space, but my intent is to be transparent in what I do and work towards opening doors and creating spaces for Indigenous Peoples to thrive. Although there are many scenarios where it would be inappropriate for me to lead the cause, I can work hard to clear the path and support Indigenous Voices in rising up without barriers and with protected energy.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to perform this work for you and to be part of establishing progressive standards of economic reconciliation. I promise to uphold the values of the community, to protect the energy of the population, and to always be thinking of the generations ahead of us.



Education & Training

Education Support

We provided support to families with school supplies and assisted students with extracurricular activities, including sports, babysitting courses, home-alone courses, dance classes, and CanSkate.

The criteria for students in grades 7 to 12 to receive the high school incentive is as follows: "The student's schoolwork must match their attendance!" Parents are required to contact Nechako Valley Secondary School to excuse their child if they are absent.

FIND THE TEAM'S BIOS STARTING ON PAGE 38

Post-Secondary Education

Highlights from the Post-Secondary Policy and Procedures Manual

1.1 Vision Statement:

The Saik'uz First Nation Post-Secondary program is designed to encourage and support band members of the Saik'uz First Nation in acquiring 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 institution. Saik'uz First Nation believes that band members have the right to receive aid in pursuing post-secondary education. However, it is also believed that individuals must take responsibility for setting and achieving their educational goals to be successful.

3.0 Eligibility Requirements:

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

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



We had four high school graduates in Vanderhoof:

Nevaeh Johnny-Thomas

Madison Parker

Austin William

Serenity David

Congratulations to all of you! We are so proud of your success!

4.0 Application Process:

- Application packages must be sent to continuing and new applicants in a timely manner to ensure an adequate turnaround period to meet deadlines set out in section 4.1.
- Any applications received late or incomplete will be placed on a waiting list according to the date received and student eligibility per section 5.2 (#3).
- September enrolment 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 enrolment consideration:
- September Enrolment: Applications are due on or before June 1.
- January Enrolment: Applications are due on or before October 31 for new applicants and by December 1st for returning students.
- Inter-session or Spring/Summer semester: Available for ongoing students only. Ongoing students must indicate at the start of the year if they intend to take intersession studies so that the annual budget can be planned accordingly.

Employment & Training

Targeted Wage Subsidy:

We covered wages for the Wood Project for two months.

Pre-employment Support Program Guidelines:

- The client must be an IA recipient.
- The client must provide a letter of employment and other supporting documentation on a case-by-case basis.
- The client must be employed for a full three months during the Pre-employment Support.

We supported clients in:

- Healing & Grief Sessions
- Informed Trauma and Care
- Beautification Project
- Remedial Drivers Program



With every learning curve in life, we all come out on top during our journey, whatever it may be.

To all past, present, and future students: Do not give up on your education journey!



Prince George Native Education & Training Program (PGNAETA):

Over the past year, we assisted community members and off-reserve band members with training and return-to-work support. We also provided help with resumes and cover letters.

Here's a list of training courses we supported:

- Backhoe Training
- Bear/Cougar Awareness
- Bladerunners Program with Kopar – A Construction Training Program for Youth
- Bookkeeping Certificate
- Class 7 Drivers Lessons
- Computer Training – Word/Excel/PowerPoint
- Early Childhood Educator (first year)
- Environmental Technician Certificate
- H&S Awareness
- Heavy Duty Mechanic (first year)
- Management Skills
- Occupational First Aid Level 1 & Transportation Endorsement
- Remedial Drivers Program
- S100/S185 Suppression
- Welding Apprentice (first year)
- WHMIS/Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG)

Proposals

SWEP (Summer Work Experience Program)

\$11,910.00 funded for two summer students

SLP (Skills Link Program)

\$53,668.00 funded for two positions: O&M Assistant and Events Coordinator

Impact on Student Learning

\$103,567.00 funded for Cultural Days throughout the year and tutoring on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We also held a Literacy Camp in the summer and contributed to the Cultural Camp.

Parenting Group

\$6,250.00 allocated for creating a group for parents in the community. If anyone is interested, please come and see me.

Capacity Development

\$24,029.00 allocated for professional development, reviewing and updating the education policy and procedures manual, and Local Education Agreement (LEA) renewal.

Nechako Lumber

Currently, we have nine band members employed with Nechako Lumber. The sawmill is currently operating on a four-day work week.

We funded 25 post-secondary students, five of whom were part-time. We also had two post-secondary graduates this year! Congratulations to:

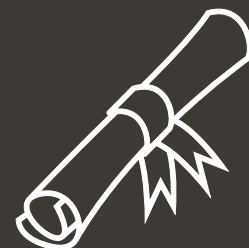
Derek Williams – Associate of Arts Degree in Psychology

Trisha Johnny – Criminology Degree

Gladys Lawrence – Accounting Bookkeeping

Esmae Rothfus – Indigenous Community Support Worker Certificate

Morgan Tinsley – Bachelor of Fine Arts (BA) in English





Health

The Saik'uz Health Centre has been incredibly busy over the past year. Although I have only been working at the Health Centre since the end of April 2024, I have witnessed the Centre's remarkable recovery after a fire last winter.

We have seen an increase in both staff numbers and the frequency of programs. It is a great pleasure and honour to serve the community through the Health Centre, and I am incredibly grateful to the community members and staff who have welcomed me.

Much of my day-to-day work involves supporting staff in their programming, organizing services offered at the Health Centre by Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), and meeting with clients one-on-one to develop healthcare plans that meet individual needs. My favourite part of this work is connecting with community members while delivering services and supporting health at a community level.

The Health Centre also hosts two CSFS mental health clinicians and a physical therapist on most days of the week.

Additionally, dental and optometry clinics are being hosted with the goal of having these service providers visit the Saik'uz Health Centre more frequently. Health Centre staff work closely with FNHA and CSFS staff to organize service provisions for clients, including access to other healthcare providers and communicable disease initiatives to ensure the safety and well-being of community members. The Health Centre has also been working to support the Pet Committee, which recently hosted a spay and neuter clinic for pets.



Krista John supports Elders in attending their doctor appointments, Elder luncheons, and annual trips, and is increasing her service delivery to the Elders with the support of Lindsay Antoine, the Community Health Representative. Lindsay Antoine also supports the Health Centre Driver, Shane Patrick, and organizes patient travel for clients to attend their medical appointments. Additionally, Lindsay supports Elders and their health needs, including providing both Elders and community members with medical equipment and home supports that meet their medical needs. Lydia Poole and Josiah support Narcotics Anonymous programming on their own time, while providing excellent care to community members struggling with addictions during their work hours. Josiah and Lydia offer counselling and one-on-one appointments in the community to help members walk the road to recovery.

I want to extend a huge thank you to all the staff at the Health Centre for their amazing dedication, care, and compassion. Each day we learn, improve, and care for people on a deeper level, and this would not be possible without such an incredible team.

Sincerely,
Jordan Cranmer
Assistant Health Manager

[FIND JORDAN'S BIO ON PAGE 43](#)

Health Programs

Health and wellness programming is a significant aspect of the work being done at the Health Centre, and it is always expanding and adapting based on feedback from community members.

In recent months, the Saik'uz Health Centre has hosted:

- Healing Fires on Monday nights
- Bingo on Monday nights
- Game Night and Talking Circle on Wednesday nights
- Celebrate Recovery on Thursday nights
- Women's Group on Friday nights

At the Health Centre, we have been supporting a wide range of programs, including:

- Foot care clinics every six weeks
- Bathing and hygiene care
- Provision of Care Aides and Homemakers
- Delivery of medical equipment
- Organizing patient travel to appointments and prescription deliveries
- Supporting clients in attending detox and treatment for addictions
- Delivering primary care through doctors in the clinic at least two days a week and a registered nurse four days a week



Human Resources

My name is Marie Boivin and as the Human Resources Manager, I am responsible for a variety of duties and responsibilities, including:

- Assisting with disciplinary actions, employee evaluations, and recruiting, interviewing, and hiring staff
- Creating and editing job descriptions, policies, and procedures
- Maintaining confidentiality, disability files, and employee files
- Preparing mandatory annual reports for Violence and Harassment in the workplace, under Federal Jurisdiction
- Researching training and development opportunities for staff
- Serving as a link between the organization and all its employees, as well as between employees and benefit providers such as Sun Life and the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB)
- Tracking employee absences (sick leave, vacation, AWOL, training, etc.)



Policies and Procedures

- Addressing any questions from staff regarding policies, procedures, and the benefit plan, ensuring they are correctly followed
- Receiving and considering suggestions on additions or deletions to current policies

Employees

Currently open positions:

- Admin Assistant – *Maintenance*
- Community Health Representative (CHR) – *Part-time*
- Early Childhood Educator
- Economic Development Assistant
- Grant Writer – *Part-time*
- Housing Assistant
- Housing Manager (*term position*)
- NNADAP Worker

Thank you for your continued support as we work to ensure the smooth operation of our Human Resources department and the overall well-being of our employees.

Sincerely,
Marie Boivin
Human Resources Manager

New Hires

Claudia Johnny-Martin
 Event Coordinator

Courtney Woodland
 Payroll Clerk

Erik Johnny-Martin
 Fire Chief

Jennifer David
 Social Development Assistant
(term position)

Jordan Cranmer
 Assistant Health Manager
(term position)

Kathy Antoine
 File Clerk (*temporary*)

Miranda Louie
 Prevention Manager

Traften Teed
 Maintenance Manager Helper

Ursula Ho-Lem
 Band Designate Representative

Vincent Wickham
 Economic Development Manager

Vivian Hoffe
 Patient Travel / Reception

8 Summer Students

76 Employees in Total

Including full-time, part-time, new hires & casual

18 New Hires
Including part-time & casual



Operations & Maintenance

The Operations & Maintenance Department is responsible for the upkeep and management of roads, sewer, water systems, garbage services, and maintenance of the main buildings within the community.

Team Members

Mickey Phillips
Operations & Maintenance Manager

Joel Cromarty
Maintenance Manager Assistant

Joseph Barfoot
Maintenance Labourer

Traften Teed
Maintenance Labourer

FIND THE TEAM'S BIOS STARTING ON PAGE 38

Key Activities and Achievements

Upgraded and successfully maintained sewer electric boxes.

Provided grass cutting services for Elders, as well as around fire hydrants, lagoons, well houses, and ditches.

Collaborated with Albert Raphael, using the backhoe, to clean up various areas throughout the reserve, assist with new shed installations, and sweep roads of sand and debris.

Supported other community projects, including the garden, healing gazebo, and housing program by performing minor maintenance tasks.

Engaged summer students—Ethan Harper, Preston Case, and Julien Hixon—in maintenance activities.

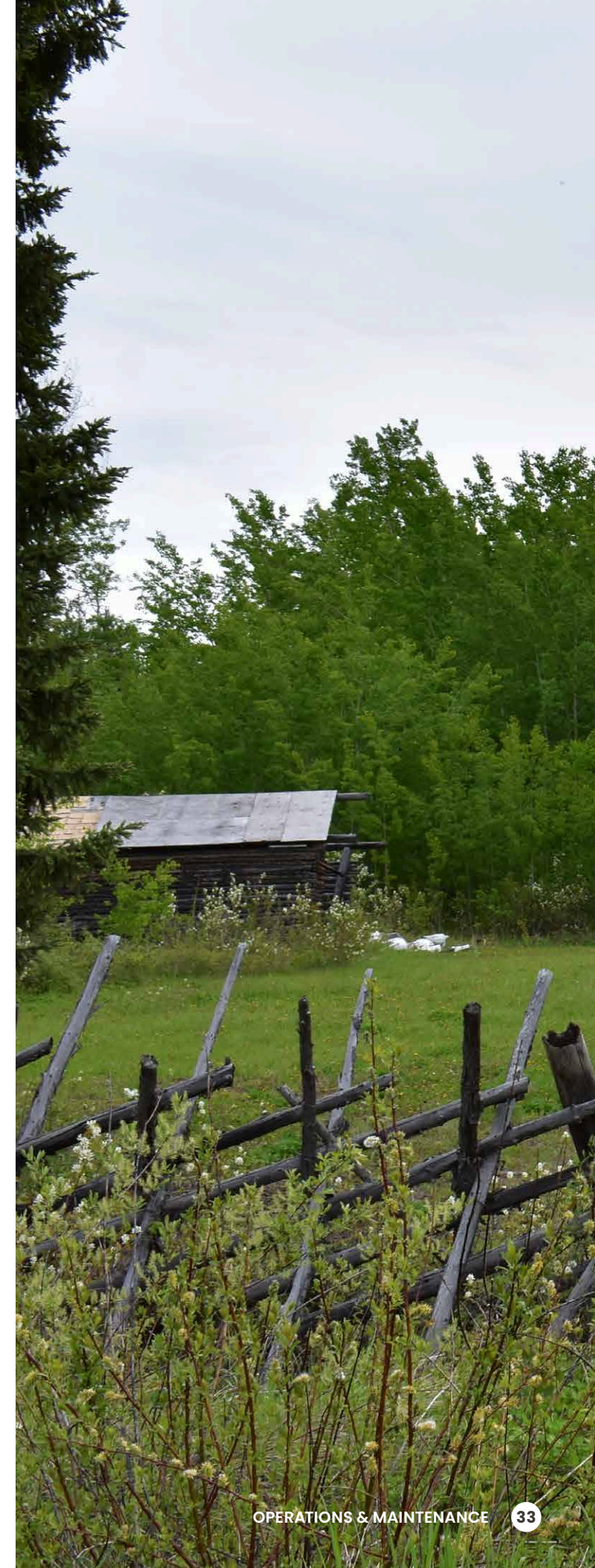
Maintained the lift station and well houses, including the installation of new well pipes and booster pumps.

Installed a new roof on the old shop near the graveyard.

Pumped out all septic tanks across the reserve.

Repaired and cleaned fire hydrants throughout the reserve in the fall.

Thank you for your continued support.





Prevention

Hadih!

I'm Miranda Louie, Prevention Manager and Interim Health Director. I began working for Saik'uz First Nation in January 2024. Since then, I've taken on various responsibilities, focusing on building a strong team within the Health and Prevention departments to offer services and support to Saik'uz members. With the dedicated support of the Saik'uz staff, we have diligently onboarded 10 new staff members since January. While we are still a work in progress, I am pleased to report that we are almost fully staffed. Please keep an eye on the website, as we plan to continue expanding our team based on the Nation's needs.

FIND MIRANDA'S BIO ON PAGE 46

Building Relationships

As part of my role as a manager, I have focused on strengthening relationships between Saik'uz First Nation and the companies that provide health and prevention services to our community. These partners include:

- Carrier Sekani Family Services
- First Nations Health Authority
- Ministry of Children and Families
- Northern Health Authority
- RCMP

Community Events Supported by Prevention

This year, the Prevention team has supported the following community events:

- 2 Cougars Hockey Games
- Cultural activities (ribbon skirt making, clan vests)
- Ember of Hope
- Family Week in February
- John-Cho Cup
- Movie Nights
- Prince George Fair in May
- Quesnel Pow Wow
- Rodeo in Vanderhoof
- Terrace Youth Conference
- Transformation

Individual Client Support

Part of my role involves supporting clients on a one-on-one basis and working closely with the Child Wellness Committee to ensure that Saik'uz families receive the best care possible.

Mussi!

Prevention Team Welcomes

Ashley Antoine
Youth Support Worker
(welcomed back in March)

Deanna Patrick
Youth Support Worker

Leila Weibe
Band Designate

Ursula Holem
Band Designate

Health Team Welcomes

Cathy
Filing Clerk

Jordan Cranmer
Assistant Health Manager

Josiah Rambally
Wellness Worker

Kerri Palmer
Filing Clerk (after fire support)

Lindsey Antoine
Community Health Representative

Vivian Thomas
Reception/Patient Travel Clerk



Social Development

Hello, my name is Keisha, and I am currently taking over the Social Development Manager role while Chantel is on maternity leave. I want to thank our clients for their patience as Jennifer and I train in our new roles. We hope to continue building positive relationships with you all—our door is always open.

Mussi cho!

FIND KEISHA'S BIO ON PAGE 44

What is Social Development?

I often get asked, "What is social development?" Let me break it down for you and explain the different programs we offer.

Income Assistance

We provide income assistance to all individuals who qualify for the service. This includes support for basic needs, shelter allowance, special needs, and adult in-home care.

Client Responsibilities

For our employable clients, monthly work searches are mandatory and must be completed regularly. Please note that March is the renewal period for the new fiscal year.

Funding and Policy

Please remember that our program is funded by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), so we are bound by their policies. We do our best to help each client individually in any way we can without causing hardship.

Community Projects

We are involved in many projects that benefit the community, such as:

- Back-to-school supplies
- Child nutrition packages
- Christmas hampers
- Spring break activities
- Winter boots and jackets for children

We collaborate with various companies and departments to provide the best services to our social assistance (SA) clients. Currently, we are working with the Education Department on job assessments and labour market opportunities for our clients.



Please remember that we have a community pantry available to anyone in need.



Staff Biographies



Alison Johnny

Alison Johnny is a dedicated **Councillor** for Saik'uz First Nation and an active local businessperson. Since beginning her term in March 2021, she has been a strong advocate for her community, focusing on economic development and the well-being of Saik'uz members.



Amber Teed

Amber Teed is the **Pathways Forward Coordinator**, with a career spanning 27 years in Aboriginal Relations. She has pioneered numerous First Nations programs at various institutions, such as the Justice Institute of BC, Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association, and New Gold, Inc. Amber holds a B.A. in Geography, focusing on Aboriginal Resource Management, and has an undefended M.A. thesis in First Nations Studies.

Amber is a proud Frog Clan member, celebrating almost forty years of marriage to Rodney Teed. She enjoys engaging in Carrier Sekani culture with her children, Cody and Kayla, and cherishing moments with her three grandsons, Donovan, Damian, and Lazare.



Andrea Herrera

Andrea Herrera is the **Executive Assistant** to Chief & Council and Administration Manager at Saik'uz First Nation, having completed her first year with the team in 2021. Her background in Event Management and diverse experience in government, education, and hospitality have honed her skills in problem-solving and public engagement.

Born in Ecuador, Andrea has called Canada home since she was five. She loves exploring British Columbia's landscapes with her fur-baby, Autumn. Andrea values the opportunity to connect with community members and contribute to the leadership's efforts.



April Antoine

April Antoine, a proud member of the Grouse Clan, has been serving Saik'uz First Nation as an **administrative assistant** for over four years. Her responsibilities include public assistance, managing calls, supporting all departments, and overseeing store operations. April also ensures that all supplies, from janitorial items to personal protective equipment, are well-stocked.

When not at work, April cherishes time with her family and enjoys outdoor activities, embracing the natural beauty of her surroundings.



Ashley Antoine

Ashley Antoine, daughter of Vera Antoine, is a Saik'uz and Tachek Whut'en member and mother of three: Kalen, Maryanna, and Liam. After living in various places, Ashley returned home four years ago and now works as a **Youth Support Worker**. With a background in welding and experience in the Education Department, she brings a hands-on approach to her work with Saik'uz youth.

Ashley is passionate about cultural activities and building strong bonds with the youth. She is dedicated to focusing resources on children in care and strengthening relations with those living out of community.



Caleb Nome

Hadih! Caleb Nome is a member of the **firewood team** and is committed to serving the Saik'uz community, focusing on the well-being and safety of its members. He is responsible for providing essential firewood and actively participates in the fire guard project, enhancing safety in the area. Caleb is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the community's resilience.



Carla Tumbaga

Carla Tumbaga has been the **Accounts Payable Clerk** for Saik'uz First Nation since August 2019, where she manages invoices and cheque requisitions for both Saik'uz First Nation and Tin Toh Forest Products Ltd. Originally from the Philippines, Carla moved to Canada in 2011 and has since embraced her new home, gaining permanent residency and citizenship. She is currently completing her Bookkeeping Certificate at the College of New Caledonia, balancing work and studies. *(continued on next page)*

CARLA TUMBAGA CONT'D

Carla is grateful for the support she's received from the Saik'uz community, which she deeply values for its commitment to protecting culture and traditions for future generations.



Claudia Johnny-Martin

Claudia Johnny-Martin, originally from Fort St. James, now serves as the **Events Coordinator** for Saik'uz First Nation, a role she took on in early 2024. Claudia is married to Erik Johnny-Martin, and together they raise their three children in Saik'uz territory. Her passion for community engagement and her dedication to her role have made her an asset to the team.



Cora McIntosh

Hadih,

For those of you who do not know my name is Cora McIntosh, I am the **General Manager** for Saik'uz First Nation. This executive position with the nation began January 2022. I have grown tremendously in the last few years, much of that growth is in thanks to my community.

In 2017, at the end of my term in leadership, I decided that I could not continue working in the same capacity, I knew the only way to get what I needed was to go back to school. In September of the same year, I attended UNBC for the first time since I was a teenager in 2002, 15 years. It was an extremely difficult journey as a full-time mom, attending school in pg. In 2021, after my father's devastating passing, I knew I needed a change, and I could only do that by finishing what I started. December 2021, I finished my last class in the Bachelor of Planning Program.

January 2022 I was approached to be the interim General Manager. In June of that same year, I was offered the chance to come on full time.

I am beyond grateful for this opportunity, as it has always been a dream of mine to work for and with my community. Heck that was the whole reason why I went back to school.

I am a proud Noolh'kai Whut'enne mother of 4, I am so very honoured to work for our Nation.



Courtney Woodland

Courtney Woodland is a proud member of the Kaska Nation and the Wolf Clan, hailing from Lower Post in northern BC/Yukon. She joined the Saik'uz First Nation finance team in November and handles **payroll, bank reconciliation, and other finance duties**. Courtney holds a diploma in Oil and Gas Office Administration from Grande Prairie PolyTech and has furthered her studies at UNBC. A mother of two, she enjoys traditional arts like beadwork and caribou hair tufting, and embraces the outdoors through harvesting, fishing, and hunting with her family. Courtney feels honoured to work within the Saik'uz community and is eager to build connections with its members.



Crystal Franks

Crystal Franks joined Saik'uz First Nation in June 2020 as the **Finance Manager**, overseeing the financial operations of the Nation and its growing number of government-owned entities. Crystal collaborates closely with department managers, providing them with tools like Adagio Fx for efficient budgeting and reporting. She is instrumental in coordinating financial audits and maintaining the strategic vision for Saik'uz's corporate structure. Crystal leads a dedicated team, including Carla Tumbaga and Courtney Woodland, and is committed to enhancing the financial management of the Nation. Outside of work, Crystal appreciates the community's supportive environment and is passionate about contributing to its success.



Deborah Page

Deborah Page, granddaughter of Veronica George and Duncan George, has dedicated herself to cultural preservation as the **Culture & Language Manager**. Over the past seven years, Deborah has focused on revitalizing the endangered Dakelh language, securing \$1.8 million in funding for language programs.

Her deep respect for elders fuels her commitment to preserving cultural heritage. Deborah acknowledges her hardworking team and remains steadfast in her mission despite recent provincial government funding challenges.



Deanna Patrick

Hadih, Saik'uz! Deanna Patrick, daughter of Andrea Patrick and the late Gordon John, is a new **Youth Support Worker** at Saik'uz First Nation. As a Frog Clan member and mother of three beautiful daughters, Deanna is thrilled to return to her community and work with the youth. Her previous experience with youth in Vanderhoof and surrounding areas has prepared her for this role. Deanna is excited to implement culturally-based activities and build strong relationships with the children in care and the community.



Erik Johnny-Martin

Erik Johnny-Martin has been a **Wildlife Monitor** for the Land & Resources department since 2019. He is responsible for maintaining equipment, data logging, and engaging the community in cultural activities like medicinal plant gathering and meat harvesting. Erik has also served as the Deputy Fire Chief and, in early 2024, took over as Fire Chief from Gilbert Vickers, Sr. His deep connection to the land and commitment to community safety make him a vital member of Saik'uz First Nation.



James Thomas

James Thomas supervises the **Land & Resources Wildlife Monitor** crew at Saik'uz First Nation. His team works on various projects, including investigating pre- and post-harvest cut blocks, water quality testing, and conducting wildlife studies. James is passionate about supporting the community through traditional activities such as hunting and trapping, and he takes pride in preserving Saik'uz territory.



Jasmine Thomas

Jasmine Thomas is a Dene woman and proud Frog Clan member who lives in Saik'uz. She has been actively involved in research projects and educational initiatives that explore the relationship between the environment, health, and community well-being. As an advocate for environmental, climate, and social justice, Jasmine applies her experience to her current role as an elected **Councillor** for Saik'uz. Jasmine's commitment to youth and community engagement continues to inspire those around her, as she works to create a better future for all.



Jason Alexis

Jason Alexis, a member of Noolhk'ai Whut'en, is the son of Dickson and Hazel Alexis. Raised by his grandmother, Marie Alexis, Jason was deeply influenced by his cultural upbringing. After pursuing education and while raising his daughter, Chaylean Alexis, Jason returned to Saik'uz and served as the Economic Development Manager before being elected as a **Councillor** in 2023.

Now, Jason focuses on promoting economic development and is passionate about ensuring that the future of Saik'uz is prosperous and culturally rich.



Jennifer David

Jennifer David is a **Social Development Assistant** at Saik'uz First Nation. A proud mother and independent woman, Jennifer has dedicated her time to supporting her community. As she completes her Grade 12 education and furthers her knowledge in her department, Jennifer is committed to serving Saik'uz with integrity.

She takes pride in her daughter's achievements and enjoys being busy in her role, helping to improve the lives of those around her.



Jerry George

Jerry George is a proud member of Saik'uz First Nation, where he works with the **Firewood team** to serve the community. His dedication to his role and the well-being of Saik'uz members is evident in his work. Jerry is deeply thankful for the opportunity to give back to his people.



Jordan Cranmer

Jordan Cranmer serves as the **Assistant Health Manager** at the Saik'uz Health Centre, where she supports daily operations and works closely with health centre staff to create a safe and healing environment for clients. Jordan's background in Community, Population, and Environmental Health informs her approach to land-based programs that connect environmental and personal well-being.

Outside of work, Jordan enjoys kayaking, spending time with family, and riding her horse. She is dedicated to developing her leadership skills and contributing to positive health outcomes for Saik'uz.



Josiah

Josiah is an **Addictions Counsellor** at Saik'uz First Nation, specializing in 'Relapse and Recovery.' With over 20 years of personal recovery experience, Josiah brings a unique perspective to his work, focusing on the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. Qualified "by pain and certified by sorry", he aims to help others to get out of what they are into—helping them with their hope-filled, autonomous goals.

Josiah has been recognized for his work with inmates and in Indigenous treatment centres across Alberta and BC. When not at work, he enjoys playing soccer, working on orphanage and widows projects overseas, and providing firewood to those in need.



Kasandra Johnny-Turbide

Hadih, Saik'uz Whut'enne! Kasandra Johnny-Turbide, a Frog Clan (Noolhk'ai Whut'en) member, has been the **Land & Resources Manager** since August 2018. With a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from UNBC, Kasandra oversees department staff, projects, and initiatives, ensuring that Saik'uz territory is responsibly managed and protected. She remains dedicated to representing Saik'uz in industrial and stewardship projects.



Keisha Thomas

Keisha Thomas, daughter of Vivian and Corey Hoffe, is committed to supporting Saik'uz First Nation in her role as the **interim Social Development Manager**. With training as a Medical Office Assistant and further studies in Indigenous Service Canada's social programs, Keisha is dedicated to assisting community members in navigating income assistance and addressing the challenges facing the Nation.



Krista John

Krista John has been the **Elders Coordinator** for the Health Department for the past five years. A devoted supporter of Saik'uz Elders, Krista assists with daily tasks such as grocery shopping, attending appointments, and arranging medication pickups. She deeply values the wisdom and teachings of the Elders and is grateful for the opportunity to work alongside them.



Lesley Raphael

Lesley Raphael is a proud member of Saik'uz First Nation, where she serves as the **Housing Manager** and **Indian Registry Administrator** (IRA). Married to Gregory Raphael, Lesley has dedicated much of her life to the community, ensuring that housing policies are up to date and assisting members with their status cards and registry needs. She remains committed to improving housing conditions and supporting Saik'uz members.



Lydia Poole

Lydia Poole serves as a **National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program** (NNADAP) worker for Saik'uz First Nation, a role she began in January 2023 during a time of profound personal loss. The passing of her daughter, Abeni Forsythe, due to overdose has deeply impacted Lydia, fueling her commitment to healing and supporting her community. She holds a Certificate in Trauma-Informed Training, a Chemical Addictions Certificate, and a Diploma in Social Work. Lydia is actively involved in facilitating healing fires, game nights, and recovery circles, and is dedicated to helping individuals access detox services and residential treatment programs. Guided by her mentor, elder Marlene Quaw, Lydia remains committed to uplifting Saik'uz members and is working towards completing her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work.



Lynda Derryman

Lynda Derryman, a seated Frog Clan member from Stelat'en First Nation, has been a valued member of the Saik'uz **Daycare staff** since August 2008. With over two decades of experience in Early Childhood Education, Lynda holds a Diploma in Child Studies and is passionate about continuing her education. Outside of work, she enjoys outdoor activities such as fishing, hiking, and gardening. Lynda cherishes the opportunity to work with children and looks forward to many more years at the Saik'uz Daycare.



Mickey Phillips

Hadi! Mickey Phillips is married to Peggy Phillips and sits with the Grouse Clan. Having served as the **Operations & Maintenance Manager** at Saik’uz First Nation since 1998, he brings over 25 years of experience to the role. Mickey’s duties include water testing, grounds management, and infrastructure maintenance. He is dedicated to ensuring that Saik’uz’s public spaces and well-maintained and safe for all community members.



Rodney Teed

Hadih! Rodney Teed is an elected **councillor** for Saik’uz First Nation and a member of the Grouse Clan. Rodney has lived in Saik’uz for all but seven years of his life, during which he worked in Vancouver and Alberta. With his wife of almost forty years, Amber Teed, Rodney has two daughters and four grandchildren. Rodney’s extensive experience in the infrastructure, oil, gas, mining, and forestry industries informs his approach to natural resource management in Saik’uz. He enjoys spending his free time outdoors, engaging in traditional activities such as trapping, fishing, hunting, and birch bark basket making.



Miranda Louie

Miranda Louie is the **Prevention Manager** at Saik’uz First Nation, where she works closely with partners like CSFS and MCFD to support children and families. A Frog Clan member and part of the Balhats system since childhood, Miranda integrates Dakelh culture into her work, believing that cultural practices are vital for long-term family strength.

Miranda’s dedication to the health and well-being of Indigenous families began at a young age. She has worked alongside leaders like Phil Lane Jr. and Dave Pranteau, whose work focused on understanding the intergenerational impacts of Residential Schools. Committed to the future of Saik’uz, she aims to ensure that cultural foundations remain central to all community programs.

Outside of work, Miranda finds joy in her family’s smokehouse in Nadleh, where she engages in fishing and hunting. She also enjoys singing karaoke and snowmobiling in the mountains, embracing the healing power of the land.



Sasha Striegler Iannone

Sasha Striegler Iannone grew up in Vanderhoof and studied at Vancouver Island University, where she completed a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing. After returning to Vanderhoof in 2016, Sasha became the **Communications Officer** at the Saik’uz Band Office in June 2019. She feels privileged to work for Saik’uz First Nation and deeply values the opportunity to connect with the culture and people. In her spare time, Sasha enjoys writing, composing music, hanging out with her partner and two cats, and embracing all things nerdy.



Shawnee Everett

Shawnee Everett is a member of the Tahltan Nation and has been part of the Saik’uz community since moving to Vanderhoof in 1995. Currently, Shawnee serves as the **Education Manager** for Saik’uz First Nation, where she applies her extensive experience to support and enhance educational opportunities for the community. She is deeply committed to the success and well-being of Saik’uz members and is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Nation’s growth.



Priscilla Mueller

Priscilla Mueller is the elected **Chief** of Saik’uz First Nation and a member of the Grouse Clan. She is married to Reg Mueller and has three children and two grandchildren. Chief Mueller enjoys cooking, walking, and spending time with her family, but, most of all, loves sitting in on Balhats, serving and learning from elders and others. She encourages members to “be brave, be strong, be kind!”



Tristan Sangwais

Tristan Sangwais (Sang-ways) is the **Media Technician** at Saik’uz First Nation, supporting event booking and audio/video setup. He developed his skills as a youth leader at Living Hope Church in Edmonton and remains passionate about music and IT. Tristan enjoys building and troubleshooting computers, a hobby he shares with his son, Nathaniel. In his free time, Tristan can be found watching movies and TV shows with his family—Cassandra and Nathaniel Thomas—gaming, or dabbling in music production.



Ursula Ho Lem

Ursula Ho Lem, a member of Nadleh Whut'en First Nation and the Frog Clan, joined Saik'uz First Nation as the **Band Designate Representative** in March 2024. With over 20 years of experience in social work, Ursula has built strong relationships with local communities, providing support to children and families. She is passionate about helping others and is proud to serve the Saik'uz community, where she has many "cuzzin's".



Vera Antoine

Vera Rose Antoine is a dedicated member of Saik'uz First Nation, where she has served as a **custodian** at the Daycare, Health Centre, and Band Office for the past decade. As a single mother of three daughters and grandmother of six, Vera takes great pride in her family. She also has experience as a homemaker, providing care to Elders in the community. Vera cherishes the opportunity to contribute to the well-being of Saik'uz First Nation.



Vivian Hoffe

Vivian Hoffe is the Receptionist at the Saik'uz **Health Centre**, where she supports the healthcare team by managing calls, greeting visitors, and coordinating medical appointments. Vivian is committed to maintaining patient confidentiality and providing exceptional service to the community. She is looking forward to expanding her role to include patient travel arrangements once the required equipment is available.



Will McIntosh

Will McIntosh has been the **Firewood Manager** at the Saik'uz Band Office for over a year, working diligently to ensure the safety and well-being of the community. Will's team has successfully completed key training programs and has made significant progress in strengthening fire safety measures, particularly through the fire guard project. Will is dedicated to continuing this important work and is grateful for the opportunity to serve Saik'uz.

2021 – 2022 AGA MINUTES Chief & Council

Wednesday, August 10, 2022
9:45AM

Saik'uz Administrative Office

NOTE TAKER

Andrea Herrera

ATTENDEES

Council

Councillor Jasmine Thomas
Councillor Alison Johnny
Councillor Jackie Thomas
Councillor Rodney Teed
Chief Priscilla Mueller

Staff

General Manager – Cora McIntosh
Executive Assistant – Andrea Herrera
Finance Manager – Crystal Franks
Human Resources Manager – Marie Boivin
Economic Development Manager – Jason Alexis

GUEST SPEAKER

David Luggi, Rosa McIntosh, Micaela Roque, Lisa Krebs, Barry Vickers, Mayor Thiessen, Claudette Gouger, Brody Garbitt and Aimee Thompson

OPENING PRAYER

Dennis Thomas

Agenda

MOTION 01: Mr Stephen Thomas moves to accept the agenda. Ms Tracy John Seconds with omissions. **Motion carried.**

Minutes

MOTION 02: Adoption the minutes of Sunday, November 21, 2021, at 9:00 AM. Community in Consensus. **Motion carried.**

Chief & Council Updates:

Chief Priscilla Mueller

- In November 2021, the meeting was held virtually due to delays from late audits and an increase in COVID-19 cases in the community.
- There have been staff changes this year. Cora McIntosh was initially appointed as the Interim General Manager and quickly became the permanent GM. Regina Thomas has stepped down as Health Manager, with Vanessa Vandelaar stepping in as the Interim Health Manager.
- We are making progress on housing development with 17 additional units, including single, double, and family housing. Special thanks to our Housing Manager, Lesley Raphael.
- The Fire Hall project had to be revised due to inflation. We have gone back to negotiations with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to discuss alternatives to ensure the new Fire Hall meets our needs.

Achievements:

- Saik'uz Fire Fighters — We won first place at the annual Victoria competition and will be competing in Saskatchewan in September.
- The design for the new Health Centre is moving forward, with funding secured. We are preparing to send it out for tender and will announce the construction schedule once a contractor is selected

Leadership and Governance:

- At the Chiefs' table, we reviewed the position of Tribal Chief. Given the more prominent role of the Chiefs at the table, the decision was made to discontinue the Tribal Chief position.
- We are also reviewing our approach

to communicating with government officials and higher-level representatives.

Pathways 1 & 2:

- We launched a new entity, separate from CTSC, in response to the disengagement by Nadkazli and Glasden. This entity will manage the pathways funding and is now operational. CSFNs primarily oversee the pathways funding. Councillor Jasmine Thomas will provide further updates on the forestry portion and our negotiations.
- We continue to meet quarterly with MCFD and CSFS. Earlier this year, Mabel Louie joined us to manage prevention funding. With her help, we assembled a team and hired two new roles: Shelby Hatley (Band Designate) and Ashley Antoine (Youth Support Worker).
- We plan to renovate our multiplex to make it more inclusive for events and to better engage with families and youth.

Ongoing Efforts:

- The MCFD committee has made significant progress in preventing our youth from being taken off-site.
- Recognition goes to Councillor Johnny for her dedication and tireless advocacy for our families and her representation with government officials, often working outside of regular business hours.

Community and Facility Updates:

- The Tachick Resort was purchased by CSFS, and this center will provide crucial support for our members. We are still advocating for funding, including the potential for a detox center at the site.
- The Bednesti Log Building will be relocated back to Saik'uz to our Potlach House to serve as an inclusive community space for all members.

- The Fishing Derby was a great success this year, and we are considering long-term plans for gradual upgrades.
- The Tatuk Plan is in negotiations, and we are developing a business plan with the goal of establishing a Culture Camp and eventually adding this to our reserve.

Collaboration with Other Organizations:

- We continue to hold quarterly meetings with the Council and the District of Vanderhoof ("DoV"). We raised our flag during Indigenous Days, and plans are underway to move it to a permanent structure in town.
- We are addressing local issues such as the housing shortage and the lack of transportation for students and employees, including discussions about a bus shuttle.
- We are holding cooperative meetings with Board members to address racism and stigma, emphasizing the need for our input in these matters.

Corrections and Rehabilitation:

- We are in discussions with the Prince George's Office of Corrections to conduct visits and offer land-based healing programs for those in custody, with involvement from Elders, who will receive honorariums for their participation.

Ongoing Negotiations:

- Negotiations are ongoing regarding the percentage share with CGL and other pipeline discussions.

Staff Acknowledgement:

- A heartfelt thank you to all our staff who continue to work hard, especially with COVID-19 still present in our communities. Our staff is doing their best to make decisions that prioritize the well-being of our members.

Gratitude:

- Thank you to our members for your trust and support. We are committed to always advocating for your interests. When we come together for events, we can truly see the love and unity in our community.
- I also want to thank our council members for their extra work, countless hours, and support for me as your leader.

QUESTION 1 | Stephen Thomas

"Inquiries about why there had been no consultation, regarding Mina Holmes and investigation conducted on CSTC"

Response from Chief Mueller:

Mina Holmes was the last Tribal Chief and was on leave for nearly a year due to an internal investigation regarding conduct. An independent contractor, Deloitte, conducted the investigation. When the position came up for reappointment, an amendment was passed during the AGA in June 2021. We will provide more information on this matter, clarifying that it wasn't an issue against the Tribal Chief but rather an external review.

Councillor Jackie Thomas

RTA Negotiations:

- We need to gain control over the river and continue negotiations with Canada. We are prepared to address this issue by conducting exploratory assessments. Out of 220 bands, only two Nations—Stellat'en and Saik'uz—are negotiating for rights and title.
- We seek governance authority and a seat at the table, as well as jurisdiction over the spring "flushing flow" to regulate fish volumes, such as kokanee.

- We are in discussions with the District of Vanderhoof (DoV) to ensure flood reports are presented.
- We have discussed establishing an adaptive management process and have a draft monitoring framework in place.
- An appeal has been filed, and we are determining if other Nations are interested in joining on our terms.

DFO Salmon Hatchery:

- A proposed location near Cheslatta Falls is under consideration.

NeToo and Kenney Dam Infrastructure Projects:

- These projects aim to prevent the flooding of Cheslatta graves and manage river flows.
- The river has caused decades of damage, and Saik'uz wants to collaborate with our neighbouring Nations who are also affected.

Board Appointments:

- Reappointment to PAGNATTA, with a focus on securing more funds for training during the 3-year term. This includes travel to Ottawa and other locations for advocacy.

2023 By-Elections:

- I will not be running again due to health concerns.

QUESTION 2 | Dennis Thomas

"Inquiries regarding the Residential schools, the damages to our reserve, will we get compensated for this decimation. 1952 when the dam was built, I want for our future generations."

Response/ Discussions:

Negotiation Stance:

While this is part of the funding, I have not mentioned it in detail because the offer we received felt like a slap in the face. I refuse to settle for less.

We seek a healthy water system and the return of our fish populations. This is our priority, and a legacy fund and additional funding are secondary to what we are asking for.

Our negotiation team is fully committed and actively working on this.

Comments by Reginald Mueller:

I want to express my deep appreciation to Jackie Thomas for all her hard work and dedication. Her opinions and experience are highly valued. Many people do not understand how much she has fought for our community.

Comments by Maureen Thomas:

The river is ours—it is our territory. In 1952, a flood devastated both Stoney Creek and Vanderhoof. We were told it would only be a few years before things would return to normal, but instead, they used this opportunity to take the river away from us, believing we had no rights.

We need to reclaim ownership of "Noonla" (St. Joseph), where our community once dried salmon and gathered together. It has been far too long since we have been able to fish here and carry out our traditional activities.

Door Prizes

Councillor Rodney Teed

- My cultural background and traditional activities are what I bring forth, and provide support to our fellow councillors.
- When we are in conversation with industry and government, we focus on these cultural things to educate and advocate for this.
These is the traditions that we pass on to our youth
- Coop Board Meetings, I have attended a couple and it was eye-opening for them, they didn't have much understanding.
- Robert Gagnon Office of Probations, and working on having steps to ensure they can move forward with support and get out of the system.
- We need to work with Industry and Government.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Marlene Quaw

I would like to thank the Chief and Council for their hard work and the results they are achieving. It is important for us to understand what is happening at the government level and to educate government officials. As a former council member, I appreciate the efforts of our current Chief and Council members. They should be consulting with us more frequently, and I commend Councillor Jackie Thomas for her work.

The initiatives with MCFD and the programs being developed are proving to be impactful. We see our councillors actively working in the field on our behalf—God bless you all. We need to unite across Canada, stand up for our rights, and demand better for our children, especially in the face of past harms.

I apologize for missing the last Chief and Council meeting, as I attended a Potlatch with our youth. The COVID-19 pandemic has kept many of us away.

QUESTION 3 | Decker Todd

"As a foster care survivor, I want to address the issue of drug distribution and its impact on our youth. Our children look up to these individuals, and we need to take action to remove these influences. I suggest setting up checkpoints to keep unwanted elements out and consider implementing tolls as an additional source of revenue. --- You do a lot for the children on the reserve, but what about the kids in town? Are there plans to make programs and support available for them as well?"

Response from Councillor Rodney:

That's a fair point. We do have some Potlatch plans for the future, which could provide opportunities. I recommend sitting down with the youth to hear their needs and ideas. We can also coordinate with Carrier Sekani to set something up.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Rosa McIntosh

I have a couple of requests, including a report, and I would like to extend my gratitude to the council for their efforts in working on solutions and helping others understand who we are. It's also important for us to work internally to define this for ourselves. I hope to remain positive and ask for more community engagement. Thank you for all your work with the industry and your commitment to our people.

Comments by Councillor Rodney Teed:

I want to remind everyone that when you are on the land, we encourage you to

document and share your experiences, especially when participating in cultural activities and harvesting.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Decker Todd

We don't have representation for Father's Day, and use of the Multiplex to community children and members. We don't have activities for young adults and older, there are restraints for those who don't have any transportation.

Councillor Alison Johnny

- Thank you to everyone present today. I also want to express my gratitude to my fellow councillors for your ongoing efforts in fighting with industry. Rodney, you are our backbone, supporting all of us, and I am constantly learning from you.
- When I joined the council, my focus was on supporting children in care. I understand their struggles from my own experiences. These children, removed from their homes, are the ones suffering and being uprooted from their lifestyles.
- When I first returned to the community, I felt ashamed because I had been raised away from our culture. Josephine Johnny, who raised me, will be greatly missed.
- I attend court and assist with safety plans. I've learned to speak up and be assertive from people like Marilyn Vickers and Marlene Quaw. I sit on boards and fight for the changes we want to see and to take control of our future.
- I contribute to the Housing Committee by providing recommendations periodically. Last year, I had COVID, which was a struggle for my mental health and left me feeling isolated.

- I have questioned the purpose of life and have considered quitting multiple times due to these struggles.
- Four years ago, I started my home-based business, which has allowed me to connect with community members who share their struggles and concerns with me.
- I am working on securing loans to move forward and access the necessary funds.
- We need to come together and rebuild our sense of community.
- I ran for council to help the people, not to advance any political platform.
- I am also a Sixties Scoop survivor and a residential school survivor. They hurt us, removed us, and tried to break us, but we are still here, and we will rise again.
- On September 30, 2022, we will have a bus shuttle available for an event at Lejac. Please sign up at the band office if you wish to attend.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Decker Todd

Thank you to Alison Johnny for your work. When I returned my mother and I didn't get support. The band office took the house away and there should have been someone here to support.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Rosa McIntosh

A letter should be sent to the community regarding non-band members who wish to speak with the council about matters affecting those living on the reserve.

External Events:

- Recommendation to have Krista John or Celena Case support off-reserve events.

QUESTION 4 | Geraldine Johnny

"Regarding the welfare committee, who are its members, and should we consider involving more men? What aftercare programs are available for the children, and how do we introduce these? I know Rosa and Rodney are involved, but I don't see parents participating."

Response from Councillor Alison Johnny:

We initially had six members on the committee, but this has changed, and the male representative did not stay. We do have community members who are steadfast in their commitment—Darlene Barfoot, for example, was a strong and incredible grandparent fighting for our youth. Currently, we have one child being raised within our traditional framework.

Comments by Decker Todd:

I agree with Alison's words. When I was taken away, I felt resentful and betrayed by our leaders and our community. I still carry these feelings because I felt like I had no one to fight for me. However, I am now two years sober and moving forward.

Response from Councillor Alison:

I understand your feelings, Decker. The leadership and community are here to fight alongside you. We have had some Elders Marilyn Vickers and Marlene Quaw who have been strong advocates and supporters in these efforts.

Councillor Jasmine Thomas:

Acknowledgements

- I would like to thank the Chief and Council for their dedication and the scope of their work in supporting one another and our community.
- I also want to express my gratitude to the staff for their efforts on the ground. Their work keeps the leadership informed and enables us to advocate and provide support effectively.
- Special thanks to the members of the oversight committee who are working towards transitioning to a hereditary governance system and moving away from the colonial-imposed system of Chief and Council.

Committee Involvement:

- I am part of the Joint Management Committee with Nechako Lumber, established in 2019 under a 10-year agreement. This committee oversees the implementation of the agreement and focuses on environmental stewardship.
- I serve on the Board of Directors of the First Nations Technology Council (FNTC), working to ensure connectivity, manage our systems, and develop our own programming.

Economic Development Component:

- We are also focusing on economic development initiatives that align with our community's goals.

Lantern Films Advisory Committee:

- In Fall 2022, I joined the advisory committee for Lantern Films in collaboration with Stellat'en.

MEMBER COMMENTS

It is essential to involve the entire community in all decision-making processes. Currently, there is a lack of engagement, which is why we don't see more community members participating.

Response from Councillor Thomas: thank you great suggestion.

Comments by Mr Stephen Thomas: You aren't trying to save the world, it is the piece of the puzzle you are holding in your hands, and this is the shortcoming of council.

QUESTION 5

Concerns were raised about farmers contributing to existing problems, along with other issues. There were also questions about accessing funds from Pathways 2.0 to support entrepreneurial ventures.

Response from Councillor Jasmine: Some of these concerns will be addressed in upcoming project updates and other reports.

Response from David Luggi: Some of the comments and findings from biologists and scientists are part of a pilot project currently underway. We need to base our actions on facts and expert opinions.

Comments from Decker Todd: We have Lands and Resources (L&R) staff who are capable of doing this work, and there have been discussions about documenting these issues. You've been working on this for two years—where is the documentation?

Door Prizes

Lunch

Prayer led by elder Dennis Thomas

Finance Manager

Crystal Frank

Overview:

- Focus on supporting kids attending daycare and Headstart programs.
- With 18+ years of designation experience, I aim to enhance policies and procedures and elevate them to the required standards.
- Gained experience from the private sector and then transitioned to the forestry sector.
- Worked with various executives and offices.

Accomplishments:

- Aligned headers for accounts receivable and payable.
- Implemented Adagio FX for improved department management and better access to budgets.
- Established backup and scanning protocols to create additional transparency.
- Implemented electronic funds transfer (EFT).
- Ensured timely processing of receipts and invoices.

Upcoming Focus:

- Restructuring the chart of accounts.
- Implementing a budget aligned with our Strategic Planning sessions.
- Conducting training and seminars to stay current with protocols.

Team Updates:

- **Carla Tumbaga:** Handles accounts payable for Saik'uz and related entities, including tasks like cheque requests and Post-Secondary Living allowances.
- **Janine Payne:** Onboarded in 2021 with 44 years of bookkeeping experience. She is responsible for payroll and assists with multiple projects.

KPMG Update:

Micaela Roque:

- Audit Partner with KPMG, working with Saik'uz for the past three years; independent from the Nation.
- Provides an unbiased opinion on the management of funds.
- Audits the expenses, numbers, and amounts in financial statements.
- A clean audit opinion will be available once officially confirmed and posted.

Statement of Financial Position:

- Includes an overview of liabilities not paid as of March 2022.
 - **Deferred Revenue:** Funds received but not yet spent, e.g., housing builds.
 - **Long-Term Debt:** Overview provided.
- **Net Financial Assets:** Assets minus liabilities overview ensures sufficient funds for continued operations.
 - Graph shows growth since 2018 to date.
- **Non-Financial Assets:** Includes non-cash assets and amortization of initial purchases, e.g., buildings.
- **Consolidated Statement of Operations for Fiscal Year:**
 - Includes snapshots (Slides 1 and 2) of expenses and operations.

Annual Surplus:

- Provides a snapshot of both past and present.
- Clarifies that the surplus does not represent cash but funds already invested.

Councillor Comments:

Councillor Jackie Thomas:

- Expressed satisfaction with seeing that the Education budget is higher than that of the Social Assistance Department.

Councillor Jasmine Thomas:

- Appreciated the visuals and information on growth over the past five years, highlighting the value and work done by the council and staff. Last year, we were not dependent on ISC funds to operate, and we will continue to grow.

Election Code

Lisa Krebs

Overview:

- Presentation on the proposed amendments to the current 2017 Election Code.

Changing Sources of Wealth:

- The Nation's wealth and its sources are evolving, moving away from dependency on ISC funds to operate.

Strategic Council Leadership:

- While the sources of income are changing, the council's strategic approach to navigating these changes remains steady. I firmly believe that Saik'uz is a leader in this area, demonstrating forward-thinking and progressive strategies.

Overview of the Band Council System:

- Acknowledgment of the impact of the Indian Act, emphasizing the need to prepare for discussions around this topic.

History of the Band Council System – Indian Act:

- Snapshot of the presentation.
- Key sections of note highlighted.

Fiduciary Responsibilities:

- Snapshots provided.

Expanding the Role of Council:

- Slideshow snapshots detailing legislative updates and the strategic expansion of council responsibilities.

Exploring the Changing Role of Council:

- Future strategic plans emphasize building a framework to navigate this evolving landscape. The goal is to ensure that legislative and fiduciary responsibilities are well-integrated into processes, policies, and the Election Code.
- Investing in management training is essential to enhance capacity and develop a strong management team capable of achieving these goals.
- Identifying the path forward involves defining what it means to operate as an Indigenous governance office and how the community, Elders, and traditional systems are incorporated into this structure.

QUESTION 6 | Stephen Thomas

“The challenges we face stem from not being able to stop certain actions at the government level.”

Response from Chief Mueller:

We will be hosting a secondary meeting to discuss the Election Code in more detail. The days of First Nations not having a seat at the table are over.

Jackie Thomas has gone above and beyond in her role, not only attending Chief and Council (C&C) meetings but also participating in industry discussions, external engagements, and the ongoing RTA fight over the past 10 years.

Discussion on Capacity Gaps:

We need to address the gaps in capacity. Our council members are frequently seen on various boards, and this role is no longer a part-time commitment. It is essential for our members to stay informed. While we aim for transparency, we started late today because there was not enough member representation in the audience.

Councillor Teed’s Perspective:

There have been significant changes in how we operate compared to the past. Our Elders have often emphasized the importance of working for what we need; the era of handouts is ending. We are working toward self-governance.

Door Prizes

General Manage Update

Cora McIntosh

Fire Hall & Road Extension

Housing Project and additional applications

Renovations of Band Office Gym

Events & more

- Our staff has a tremendous amount of work, and they are working diligently behind the scenes. I am grateful for the team we currently have.
- It is crucial for the growth of our Nation to indigenize our organization and implement the strategies developed in our strategic sessions.
- Ms Lisa Krebs provided an update based on high-level strategic planning from leadership. For future planning, we are considering how to engage with our members who live off-reserve and how to roll out these plans effectively. We want to ensure that the funds we have are being managed properly and are effectively utilized.
- **The Ecosystem Plan** and the **TGOC Committee** are critical for our organization and its growth. We need to ensure that Saik’uz’s voice is heard and that we move beyond the current barriers. For more information on this topic, please contact Lisa Krebs, Land & Resources Manager or General Manager.
- **Fisheries Update:** There is a lack of concern about the sustainability of sockeye, which is unsustainable for our community. We are working with other Nations to address these issues. Our inability to access the water is posing problems for future generations, and we need to find a way forward.

QUESTION 7 | Maureen Thomas

“What actions have been taken regarding the Big Bar rock slide that is preventing fish from moving downstream? I have provided suggestions, and our people know how to handle this issue, but they are not being listened to. We faced a similar situation with the beetle devastation, and our concerns were ignored, leading to it spreading across BC.”

Response from Cora McIntosh:

They have conducted some removal of the obstructions, but they have not been able to fully clear them. Additionally, they have removed some of the measures they implemented last year.

QUESTION 8

“There have been reports of parasites and worms found in the fish in Nulki Lake. Is this a natural occurrence, especially with the increased use of pesticides and other chemicals?”

Response from David Luggi:

The water temperature is a significant factor, as salmon cannot survive in warmer waters. Previously, monitoring and tallying of fish numbers were conducted, but there were no proper instruments available to provide accurate counts, they have removed some of the measures they implemented last year.

Human Resources

Marie Boivin

- The HR Manager, who started in June 2022, will be taking on responsibilities previously managed by other staff members to help distribute the workload more effectively.

- Key areas of focus include developing and implementing HR policies, overseeing the hiring process, and managing conflicts and incidents within the organization.

Economic Development

Jason Alexis

- In the past year I have been working with CGL for the project (section 4 and 5)
- MacroNadleh employment and training opportunities.

QUESTION 9 | Melanie Labatch

“When will information be available regarding the \$10 million in Pathways funding? Additionally, what is the status of the L&M agreement? Are we operating at full capacity? If not, how can we create a more stable workforce?”

Response from Jason Alexis:

We have just received confirmation of the funds, and we are still in the early stages of determining how these funds can be accessed and how we will provide opportunities for our members.

Response from Councillor Jasmine Thomas:

We have presented some information, and we are finally at a stage where we can review the funds and determine how they can be used for both personal and community-based economic development.

Regarding the L&M agreement, we have been reviewing it in multiple areas and closely monitoring its implementation. However, we have faced challenges in retaining employees. Currently, we have 19 out of 25 positions filled. While we have opportunities available, we cannot force members to seek employment. The council is working to address some of these gaps, such as improving transportation.

QUESTION 10 | Geraldine Johnny

“What types of work are available for the Coastal GasLink project? Are the funds from the Pathways initiative intended for businesses on the reserve?”

Response from Jason Alexis:

We are working with relevant organizations to provide the necessary training for members to fill roles with industry partners.

We hope to establish a committee to oversee the distribution of these funds. Accessing the funds will require a business plan, and I am collaborating with other organizations to develop a plan that is tailored specifically to Saik’uz.

QUESTION 11 | Geraldine Johnny

“When will information be available regarding the \$10 million in Pathways funding? Additionally, what is the status of the L&M agreement? Are we operating at full capacity? If not, how can we create a more stable workforce?”

Response from Jason Alexis:

We have just received confirmation of the funds, and we are still in the early stages of determining how these funds can be accessed and how we will provide opportunities for our members.

Response from Councillor Jasmine Thomas:

We have presented some information, and we are finally at a stage where we can review the funds and determine how they can be used for both personal and community-based economic development.

Regarding the L&M agreement, we have been reviewing it in multiple areas and closely monitoring its implementation. However, we have faced challenges in retaining employees. Currently, we have

19 out of 25 positions filled. While we have opportunities available, we cannot force members to seek employment. The council is working to address some of these gaps, such as improving transportation.

Comments by member Reginald Mueller:

We discussed the importance of establishing a board of directors with a strong background in business. This board would help ensure that proper steps and business plans are in place to achieve success.

Pathways Coordinator

Cora McIntosh on behalf of Amber Teed

Industry updates

- Ms Teed holds a Master’s degree with an undisputed thesis. For more details, please refer to the report posted in the AGA booklet.

Provided Funding:

- Support for family events.
- TLC connectivity improvements and a Starlynx system overhaul.

QUESTION 11 | Melanie Labatch

“What is the current status of the graveyard map that was created in the past to mark the graves?”

Response from Cora McIntosh:

We started work on this project before COVID, and we will be reopening it soon. Once the project is underway, we plan to conduct both online and door-to-door recognition efforts.

Industry Updates

Barry Vickers

Forest Strategy:

- Involved in the development of a Forest Strategy to address concerns related to over-harvesting. A presentation on this topic was provided by Mr. Vickers.

Upcoming Projects and Purchases:

- Tatuk is identified as a prime location for addition to the reserve.

QUESTION 12 | Maureen Thomas

“Can we go solar?”

Response from Barry Vickers:

Yes, there are minimal diesel requirements, and the system does have solar integration.

Question:

Would the Tatuk lake be for Saik’uz members only?

Response from Barry Vickers:

Yes, essentially, if the government closes access on the opposite side, this would give us sole access to this part of the river.

Question from Deborah Page:

I have concerns about the location being used by the community. We had a Keyoh—how did we end up without access?

Response from Barry Vickers:

I don’t have extensive knowledge of the historical background, but if we cut off access, it would strengthen our position on rights and title, which could then support applying for an addition to the reserve.

Comment from Councillor Jasmine Thomas:

We are in the process of engaging with the province and working towards a reconciliation agreement with the Federal Government of Canada.

Coastal Gas Link

- Overall it has been very successful, and address that Saik'uz may have an opportunity to engage and purchase equity in the pipeline. The capital costs have risen by 40% to now currently accessed to 11 billion, for a potential of 10% of the pipeline from 11 different nations.

QUESTION 13 | Stephen Thomas

"I am seeking clarification. Some of the earlier engagements showed a 50% stake, but it seems there has been a drop, and there is no continuity with this deal. I have attended the meetings you hosted, and it appears the terms have changed."

Response from Barry Vickers:

I have been involved since the beginning, and it was never a 50% stake.

Clarification from Councillor Jackie Thomas:

What Stephen is referring to is the initial expectation of a 60% stake in the pipeline. However, due to challenges in bringing all the Nations together, the amount has changed. The current percentage is based on ongoing conversations and negotiations.

QUESTION 14 | Maureen Thomas

Inquires about where in our territory is this compressor occurring, this area is part of my families (my dad's) keyoh and that is trapping and hunting territory. Everyone hunting on our territory needs our permission.

Response from Barry Vickers:

Dog Creek Northern BC

MEMBER COMMENTS | Melanie Labatch

I have suggested before, and I want a commitment that the territory map and Keyoh boundaries are posted so that projects can be mapped accurately. I want to address the areas of old growth and immediate measures needed in those areas. Regarding logging and forestry, I believe it has been mismanaged, and that raw products should not be leaving the territory without adding value. We need strong advocacy on this.

Regarding Tatuk, I suggest a transition period of 5 years to maximize its potential, especially since it offers some options for individuals with disabilities and has market potential. All members should be aware of the Keyoh and specific territorial areas.

While we need to generate revenue, I do not believe it is wise to make decisions that could be detrimental to our land and resources. These decisions should not be purely based on monetary gain. It is crucial to have accessible information and clear presentations

Mayor Thiessen

- Thank you for inviting me to your community, council meetings, and regional meetings. The relationship we have with Saik'uz is important, and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak here today.
- As the Mayor of Vanderhoof, I want to address the past and the embarrassment caused by the treatment of veterans returning home.
- Our relationship is an ongoing process. We have made efforts to include Saik'uz in our community, such as incorporating Saik'uz in our signage.

- This year, we raised a flagpole that will become a permanent addition to the district offices.
- The Bulkley-Nechako Regional District is hiring a liaison to further strengthen communication and collaboration.
- I appreciate the leadership's efforts to address community gaps, such as the bus shuttle service.
- Regarding the Tachick Lake project, we have been involved from both the Regional District and the District of Vanderhoof (DoV) perspectives.
- We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako concerning the watershed, and we are working towards signing another MOU.
- My wife has been warmly welcomed at community events, where she has received thank-you gifts and hospitality.
- I was elected Chief 14 years ago, and I want to express my gratitude to Jackie Thomas, Stanley Thomas, and Priscilla Mueller for the relationship-building that has taken place over the years.
- Councillor Jackie Thomas, extends gratitude to thank Mayor Gerry Thiessen for handling hardships with his constituents and acknowledge the friendship that has been built. His assistance has helped make our lives easier.
- Chief Priscilla Mueller, reiterates our appreciation for your support. Mayor Thiessen has engaged with our members and loggers and has been an advocate for addressing racism. We hope that the new mayor shares a similar vision and will continue this work. Next week, we have a meeting with the Minister to address the shortages.

- Comment from David Luggi, I see you as a champion for reconciliation.

Land & Resources

Kassandra Turbide

QUESTION 15 | Krista John

Who do we speak to about the moose populations and efforts to protect them?

Response from Kassandra Turbide:

We continuously advocate for this issue.

QUESTION 16 | Melanie Labatch

Can we move forward by providing updates and sharing the results of current studies? Also, can you speak on the availability of a large Keyoh map?

Response from Kassandra Turbide:

We previously had a Keyoh map, but it has been misplaced. Currently, the TGOC is working to remap these areas. Our monitoring results have been strategically placed in specific areas, but we are uncertain about the current numbers, including grizzly bear coverage.

Question for Barry Vickers:

Could you provide an update on the ESI (Environmental Stewardship Initiative) and Immediate Measures and the areas of protection? This is a significant accomplishment as it gives us the ability to protect these areas and reduce harvesting.

Artemis Gold

Claudette Gouger

- Thank you to having me here today and being able to work on the traditional territory.
- Highlevel update on this, or direct them to our office or through the Saik'uz Land & Resources Department.

QUESTION 17 | Melanie Labatch

Regarding the area of the transmission, I would like to see a graphic representation; it's easier to understand in a simplified format. Also, regarding job opportunities, are you providing training to address skill gaps for contractors on-site? Since this is a multi-year project, do you have plans to create opportunities?

Response from Claudette Gouger:

I can confirm that the transmission location is over the Joseph Family Trapline.

We are currently in the process of developing a training strategy and working with other Nations to address specific needs. However, we cannot provide further details until this agreement is finalized. Our approach is twofold, focusing on both immediate and long-term strategies.

Coastal Gaslink

Brody Garbitt

- Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to speak on, and updating the community on the project.

QUESTION 18 | Stephen Thomas

What happens when this project is completed? Will there be future employment opportunities for those who wish to continue working?

Response by Brody Garbitt:

Each work package has different prime contractors and is associated with different unions. Workers who are laid off are shortlisted and referred for offers to work on new sections of the project. However, this may require relocation and working outside of their current community.

QUESTION 19 | Lester John

Does GCL have an agreement with Saik'uz?

Response from David Luggi:

Yes, we have had an agreement with Saik'uz since 2017.

Follow-up Question:

I wasn't rehired after working on the pipeline. What should I do?

Recommendation follow-up action to Lester John:

Please submit your concern to Jason Alexis, who will be able to assist you with this matter.

QUESTION 20 | Maureen Thomas

What happens to the workers when they are sent off-site and beyond?

Response by Brody Garbitt:

We are not able to provide specific details as we do not oversee the hiring process. The prime contractors handle the recruitment and management of these positions.

QUESTION 21 | Geraldine Johnny

You mentioned receiving 73 resumes and hiring 11 individuals. Are there any positions available beyond labour roles? Additionally, do you have any Indigenous office staff?

Response by Brody Garbitt:

There needs to be a balance between office jobs and on-the-land roles. Currently, the majority of available positions are in field-based roles.

QUESTION 22 | Deborah Page

What is the total number of employees hired in sections 4-5?

Response:

As of December 2021, approximately 4,923 employees were hired, including seasonal positions. We can provide more detailed information to Jason Alexis.

Aimee Thompson, Education & Training Advisor

- I work with all Indigenous Nations, and I want to acknowledge Jason Alexis and the Education Department for their assistance in filling positions and providing training.

Education Opportunities:

- Our education initiatives have three levels:

1. Education Legacy:

This includes bursaries and scholarships supported by TC Energy and New Relationship Trust. We are currently reviewing this agreement.

2. Training to Employment:

We collaborate with PGNAETA to support training initiatives and cost-sharing agreements, regardless of which organization members choose

to work with. My focus is on increasing training opportunities for members so they can understand what the work entails and decide if they want to pursue it further.

3. Reclamation Work:

We have upcoming reclamation projects that will offer opportunities for members to participate.

Community Involvement:

- Your community has a construction monitor who collaborates with inspectors on various projects, and we have contributed to training for this role.

Entrepreneur Training:

- Upcoming entrepreneurial training sessions are available for those interested in professional development. Details are posted on the Education and Training page.

QUESTION 23 | Maureen Thomas

What age levels are eligible for the bursaries?

Response by Aimee Thompson:

The bursaries require applicants to have either a diploma or a degree. I have additional information available about our scholarship requirements, eligible job titles, and operational roles at the back.

QUESTION 24 | Lester John

How do I update my tickets, and who should I speak with?

Response by Aimee Thompson:

If you are missing any pre-employment credentials, you can speak with Jason Alexis or Greg. They can help place you in areas where you can obtain the necessary credentials.

QUESTION 25 | Rodney Teed

When will the reclamation work start?

Response by Aimee Thompson:

We currently don't have enough members interested to begin. We are planning joint training sessions for various Nations. The location will be determined once we have enough participants to fill a classroom.

QUESTION 26 | Rodney Teed

What safety measures are in place for issues such as burst pipelines, and what is the plan for emergency preparedness?

Response from Brody Garbitt:

We have had some initial consultations and are looking to set up a meeting with the Fire Chief to discuss these concerns in more detail.

QUESTION 27 | Reginald Mueller

Are there potential opportunities to contract out work?

Response from Aimee Thompson:

Yes, there may be opportunities, particularly for maintenance contractors.

2021 – 2022

Annual General Assembly

Thursday, August 11, 2022
9:45AM

Saik'uz Administrative Office

NOTE TAKER

Andrea Herrera

ATTENDEES

Council

Councillor Alison Johnny
Councillor Jackie Thomas
Chief Priscilla Mueller

Staff

General Manager – Cora McIntosh
Executive Assistant – Andrea Herrera
Emcee – David Luggi
Interim Health Manager – Vanessa Vandelaar
Prevention Support/ Contractor – Mabel Louie
Social Development Manager – Claudia Martin-Johnny
Language & Culture Coordinator – Deborah Page
Operations & Maintenance Manager – Mickey Phillips
Daycare Manager – Miranda Adams
Housing & Membership Manager – Lesley Raphael
Education Manager – Shawnee Everett

REGRETS

Councillor Jasmine Thomas
Councillor Rodney Teed

GUESTS

Mary Teegee, Jason Morgan, Mitchell McCook,
Geraldine Flurer, Teddy Antoine, Robert Gagnon,
Rosa McIntosh and Maureen Thomas

OPENING PRAYER

Marlene Quaw

Health Update

Vanessa Vandelaar, Interim Health Manager

- Joined the Health Centre in June 2022, starting with the organization of a health fair.
- Excited to be part of the team and to lead the health staff.
- Actively engaging with other health authorities and professionals, including Northern Health and various other Nations.
- The Health Centre has become significantly busier in the post-pandemic period.

Current Programs, Future Programming, and New Staff Hires:

- Focused on expanding the prevention program with new staff hires and enhancing current and future health programming.

QUESTION 28 | Stephen Thomas

I have concerns about issues that occurred with a contract. After my operation, I received no follow-up post-care, and I haven't had any nurses to care for me.

Response from Chief Mueller:

We are currently undergoing staff changes and working to get up to date, and I understand this situation is unfair. However, we have sent homemakers to assist you, but you have refused them entry to your home. We need you to have more respect for our staff, who are doing their best under challenging circumstances.

Response from Vanessa Vandelaar:

I have noticed the lack of services, and I spoke with you last week about this issue.

We are trying to get support from other services. It goes both ways, Stephen. I am working on addressing the gaps in the services available from our providers.

Further Comments from Chief Mueller:

We have had several complaints about our professional staff, and it's important to note that we need to support our people instead of driving them away. We need more compassion for our members.

Comment from Geraldine Flurer:

I know how difficult it is to leave, get an education, and then return to the community. You have a large program to run, and I wish you all the best.

QUESTION 29 | Geraldine Fleur

Do we have any NNADAP (National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program) workers full-time at the Health Centre? I have had personal experience navigating the process of getting into treatment, and I find it challenging that multiple meetings with a counselor are required before getting a referral.

Response from Vanessa Vandelaar:

I'm sorry to hear that, and we understand the need for this support. Currently, we do not have a full-time NNADAP worker. Richard Sampson is available every Monday, and we also bring him in for events and community engagements.

We are collaborating with Vanderhoof to see what types of services and programming can be developed, especially to address the opioid crisis.

QUESTION 29 CONTINUED

Mel Labatch has been leading sacred fires to engage the community every Monday, and she has been contracted to continue this work throughout the year.

We will also have CSFS providing us with a safe supply machine, though the timeline for this is still unclear. This initiative focuses on prevention. I am advocating for all Northern communities, as this is a widespread issue. I speak up at these meetings to ensure our community's needs are represented. Additionally, Olivia Broohry is a counsellor available in the office from Wednesday to Friday and over the phone from Monday to Wednesday.

QUESTION 30 | Darlene Barfoot

How can we access these programs and services?

Response from Vanessa Vandelaar:

I understand that communication has been an issue. We have done some door-to-door distribution of information, and we will continue to provide details about upcoming events and contacts to help access these services.

QUESTION 31 | Jason Alexis

Are there plans to provide COVID booster vaccinations for the elders in the future?

Response from Vanessa Vandelaar:

We are planning to hold a vaccination clinic and hope to provide enough notice so that it can be held within the community. We are also aware that there is some hesitancy regarding the vaccine, so we would like to offer information sessions to help members make informed decisions. Personally, I believe it's

important, but ultimately, it's up to each individual.

Comment from David Luggi:

The Health Centre is open for members to come and get information.

Door Prizes

New Health Centre

- Presentation by Farshid on the health centre, providing a spec of the proposed additional rooms.

Door Prizes

Social Development

Claudia Martin-Johnny

- I have a diploma in Social Work and am currently pursuing my BA.
- I have been the Social Development Manager for four years.
- We have a new assistant, Keisha Thomas, and we are in the process of hiring a Social Assistance Manager. Please be patient and kind during this transition.
- I will be temporarily handling both roles.
- Services Provided: For detailed information, please refer to the booklet.
- I will be transitioning to a new position as the new Band Designate.

QUESTION 32 | Dianne Williams

I am moving back to the reserve and want to know how long it will take to receive assistance.

Response from Claudia Martin-Johnny:

It depends on when we receive the file transfer from the province and obtain the proper paperwork.

Door Prizes

Prevention Presentation

Mary Teegee

- Thank you for having me here. I feel that this is the birthplace of the Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) and these essential services.

History of CSFS:

- We provide health, child, and legal services, and I believe we are one of the best organizations in this field. We have over 350 staff members. CSFS originated from political pressures, driven by your leaders and other Nations advocating for the care of our children. We faced alarming rates of children being removed from their families. Mabel Louie, a former social worker, was among the strong-minded women who fought to prevent the removal of our children.
- Your community has strong women leaders. When I looked at the elections and the Chiefs you've had, such as Jackie Thomas, I saw that strength. We had the first National Chief who is a woman. When our children are hurt, it is the women who rise up to take action.
- Mabel Louie can speak more about the political pressures that led to the establishment of CSFS and the reclamation of our jurisdiction. What started with just four staff members eventually became what is now known as CSFS.
- Our past leaders wanted to ensure that we could become self-governing in these areas, and now we are coming full circle. FNHA's Warner has been instrumental in pushing for self-determination within CSFS, and we have new directors like Julie Dawn, who is leading the expansion of justice services.

- I want to commend the staff who have worked in the community for a long time and those who have remained loyal despite limitations. We saw gaps where MCFD workers were earning \$6 more per hour than our staff.
- When a child stayed on the reserve, we received funding, but if they were placed in care outside the community, the government received all the funding.

Information about CSFS Staff and Programming:

- Our programming and funding were developed through consultations with other programs and by applying for grants. In 2014, we sued the government, and it was ruled that they were discriminatory. Although we won, there was no immediate commitment to change policies. In 2017, we won the right to be paid for actual costs, and since then, we have taken them to court 22 times, including three federal court cases.
- To build capacity, we focus on training social workers with a BA in Social Work. The Tribunal has provided a significant amount of funding—\$40 billion—towards self-determination and paying for actual costs. We will be developing a plan and a process with ISC to roll this out.
- Please refer to the PowerPoint presentation for more information on law-making, future planning, and consultation.
- We will be establishing a working group and hosting an event in October. We want to acknowledge our children in care.

Mabel Louie

History:

- Thank you for the introduction. I am happy to have been part of the initial push for what is now known as Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) since 1976.
- At that time, the Chief of Saik'uz recognized that 34 children were being taken off-reserve, and we had no knowledge of some of the families or where these children were placed.
- This situation led to the inception of the Community Wellness Team, which was created to address these issues. My focus has been to prevent more children from being removed and to work towards bringing those already taken back to their families on reserve.
- Over time, we began to understand the legislative landscape, but we faced many struggles with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). These challenges had to be brought to the Chiefs' table to advocate for these critical issues.

Prevention Programs:

- In February 2022, I was hired to handle budgeting, develop new positions, and implement this new prevention program.
- After reviewing an audit, we recouped \$163,000, which will be reintroduced to programs that have been operating at a deficit.
- We have new staff hires and positions that are now working out of the Health Centre.
- On August 23 & 24, 2022, we will be hosting new community sessions at the multiplex.

Housing:

- We need to address both on-reserve and off-reserve housing, and we will need to determine the best approach to achieve this. Please refer to the presentation slide deck for additional context.

QUESTION 33

What about prevention funding for off-reserve families?

Response from Mabel Louie:

There are significant gaps and instances of discrimination when it comes to funding and support.

For example, on-reserve, a family received new home supplies and support to care for their grandchildren. However, a similar situation for an off-reserve family located in Prince George went unnoticed for over eight months, and they only received a \$350 gift card with no additional support.

Our contracts are often in deficit, and we sometimes have to pull funds from programs such as Jordan's Principle to support families in need. We do have a contract in place for families requiring support.

Our intent is to continue growing and expanding our supports and the number of professionals available to help our community, both on and off the reserve.

Door Prizes

CSFS Updates

Jason Morgan, Mitchell McCook, Geraldine Flurer Presentations

QUESTION 34 | Deborah Page

Regarding consultation, I have been the Cultural Coordinator for Saik'uz and have never been informed about any activities. I have also contacted CSFS about this. As for the Yinka Dene program, we haven't had any training programs, and the teachers who were trained through that program have since retired.

Response from Mary Teegee:

We have been working on funding and making the most of available resources. I have always believed that culture should be included in our programs, and it is currently in development. We will be conducting community consultations on this matter.

The funding attached to Lejac is available, and you can tap into that for certain projects. We hope that culture workers can collaborate with community counterparts. There have been inquiries about reinstating the Yinka Dene program, and we are considering having a dedicated CSFS space for it.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Decker Todd

I got over on my own, and the band office didn't support me. I'm a foster care survivor and my siblings and I had to carry this on my own, and did some review of the past. Analogy of plant cannot grow in an inhabitable environment.

QUESTION 35 | Cora McIntosh

Is the program available on-reserve or off-reserve?

Response from Mary Teegee:

Both. We have a youth mentorship program that includes urban youth and provides Elder-led training for kids in care. We have also opened an office in Vancouver to offer this service.

QUESTION 36 | Mabel Louie

Decker, thank you for sharing your concerns. We plan to have community engagement sessions, and we would like to see you there to help us with planning so that our community and families have the support they need for the children.

Mary Teegee, you have provided training, but we require additional support.

We need meetings to discuss what services are being provided so that we can use funding effectively and avoid duplicating services for our members. It is important for the Chief and Council to know where our members' children are and who is in care, as we have Saik'uz families across Canada. I would like to inquire about a meet and greet—do you support this, or would we need to use our own funding?

Response from Mary Teegee:

We are working on rolling out iPads for all our staff and providing training so they can complete reporting efficiently. We are evaluating the programs, and there is funding available. Community meetings are crucial; we have held meetings with frontline workers and higher-level discussions with leadership. We need to review the comprehensive community plan to get a full view, and the province

QUESTION 36 CONTINUED

has also emphasized the importance of not duplicating services.

One gap we've identified is the lack of support for men, and we are constrained by our funding to address this. However, you can access your Pathways, socio-economic funds, or other resources—Mitch can assist with this.

The agreement signed by the Chief and Council includes updates and information-sharing protocols with CSFS and the Councillors. We recently hosted an information session in Vancouver. If you provide us with details about the families, we can ensure they receive the necessary support. CSFS has protocols with various agencies to facilitate access to information sessions.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Developing an app to reach out to members for updates would be beneficial.

Door Prizes

Family Liaison Unit MMIW

- Teddy Antoine's presentation on available services.

Office Of Probations

Mr. Robert Gagnon presented Chief Mueller with several gifts:

- Clients at the Prince George Centre were taught by the Saik'uz Elders.
- A net for Sockeye salmon fishing was presented on behalf of our territory.

Introductions

- The Prince George Probation Center has provided Indigenous spiritual support for two years through this program. Our detachment covers a vast area, from 100 Mile House to the Yukon and the Rockies. We have limited Indigenous programming, despite the government mandate to reduce the high number of Indigenous people in the system. As an Indigenous person working in government, I believe we can do more, and I want to support building relationships. The Saik'uz was the first nation we approached.
- Refer to the slide for updates and additional information.

QUESTION 37 | Stephen Thomas

Concerns about having a criminal record and being stopped during travel. How does this connect to the Lheidli T'enneh?

Response from Robert Gagnon:

We share borders, which makes this an engaging issue. You are correct that a country can deny you entry based on a criminal record; however, the final decision is up to the country of entry. You do have the option to apply for an appeal. We hope to engage further to develop programs addressing these concerns.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Comments by Maureen Thomas

We are related to Mary John and the Seymours. I want to express my appreciation for what you are promoting and the work you are doing. It's a great job, and I appreciate that it allows people to come back to their communities. I have my own experiences, including those with our Veterans. I value the knowledge

you are sharing, and I believe that even if people make mistakes, they can be forgiven. Holding grudges only makes us age faster.

Comments by Minnie Thomas

We attended a meeting in Prince George; please refer to the video. We have concerns about our people who lack resources and struggle to navigate the system. Once they are caught up in the system and away from home, they lose the support they need. I recall seeing an Elder in the courthouse and approaching her. She explained that she had hitchhiked to attend court and couldn't even afford a meal. We need someone within the legal system, and I would like to see changes to provide better education and support.

Response from Robert Gagnon:

I have been serving as a Junior Elder in Prince George for the past six months, assisting Indigenous peoples in the courts. Perhaps it is time to consider establishing an Indigenous court. Your words resonate deeply with me, and I believe the Society could help advocate for this change.

Comments by Mabel Louie:

I agree with the importance of relationships and want to extend my gratitude for the work you are doing. The individuals you help are loved by someone, and your efforts are strengthening our communities. I also want to add that Vanessa Vandelaar is overseeing prevention delivery in our community. We were just discussing the need for fishing nets, and I know that these nets can greatly benefit the community.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Comments by Tracy John:

Thank you for your presentation. I agree with the importance of building relationships with all the Dakelh nations and approaching issues from a prevention standpoint rather than constantly being reactive. A preventive approach would allow us to move away from merely indigenizing a system that is based on a Western model and instead focus on solutions that work for everyone. (Refer to the minutes for more details.)

You mentioned Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and the challenges it presents. While there are expansions in this area, there remains a significant gap. Many individuals with FASD struggle to understand their situations and, as a result, do not make informed decisions. When someone is pleading guilty, they need to be fully aware of the consequences, whether in family law or other areas, which is a factor contributing to the high representation of Indigenous people in these cases. The application process requires both funding and a lengthy time to navigate.

Forgiveness and mentorship could play a critical role in this context. I would love to be involved in helping develop this framework further and hope to bring it into a more practical context. I agree that we should connect because you are knowledgeable, and your insights would be valuable.

Comments by Rosa McIntosh:

I wanted to extend my gratitude for your efforts. You are helping to build men into who they are meant to be, fostering growth from the inside out. This will help the justice system recognize the need for this kind of development and support.

MEMBER COMMENTS CONTINUED

Comments by Marilyn Vickers:

We need to start working with the youth from a young age. When I look around, I often see parents distracted by their phones. It is often the children who lack discipline that end up getting caught in the system. We need to teach them traditional practices and involve them in meaningful work so they grow into responsible adults.

Door Prizes

Language & Culture

Deborah Page

Introductions

- Review of program language and upcoming.
- Our elders involved in the translations as part of the language revitalization.

QUESTION 38 | Darlene Barfoot

I have an inquiry about the kids getting dresses "regalia".

Response from Deborah Page:

We funded this through daycare and my program, but it would require securing additional funds to continue.

Response from Mabel Louie:

I have spoken with Vanessa about establishing a Saik'uz Dance Group, and we would like to invite you to join us for sessions on August 23 and 24, 2022, to discuss this further and explore how we can bring this project to life. Cheryl Vandelaar has a beading group, and this could also be an opportunity for us to collaborate and move forward with this initiative.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Maureen Thomas

We have a language nest for the little kids, but I also think about our elders, youth, and young adults and how we can create a comprehensive language program for all ages. It's okay to make mistakes; we want everyone to practice and learn together, especially with the youth. I recommend holding a talking circle to gauge interest. I love teaching, and the little kids are fantastic, but I want to see this opportunity available for everyone. Let's focus on making our youth strong.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Teddy Antoine

We are unveiling the Red Dress on September 30, and as a member of Saik'uz, I would like us to be involved and ensure our heritage is represented at this event. We are also looking for dancers to participate.

Comments by Vanessa Vandelaar:

Regarding the upcoming sessions, we are considering a Four Seasons program to ensure a continuous succession of cultural activities—such as hunting, drying, and creating regalia—and we hope to start right away.

QUESTION 39 | Vanessa Vandelaar

How can we coordinate with the Culture and Language Department to teach the service providers involved and integrate these efforts with Health services?

MEMBER COMMENTS | Melanie Labatch

It's awesome to hear about this upcoming initiative. I wanted to touch base on the healing fires and the success we are seeing with them. We are each responsible

for our own healing, and I want to invite others to join us in this journey. Maureen, we would love for you to come and engage with us, and we can hold a circle together. We meet at 5 PM on Mondays, and everyone is welcome to share their knowledge and stories. We have so much strength when we work together as a community.

Door Prizes

Operations & Maintenance

Mickey Phillips

- We handle the development and maintenance of community infrastructure.

QUESTION 40 | Johnny John

Who is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Elder's potlach? I have concerns regarding road access and emergencies. We don't have proper access, and emergency vehicles would not be able to reach me.

QUESTION 41 | Vanessa Vandelaar & Dennis Thomas

Can you provide an update about the bleach and how that can affect members? Concerns about the purple flower, is there anything that can be done? Is the water safe to drink? Also, the people of Stoney Creek handle grass cutting; when will they be able to do the lawns for the elders?

Response from Mickey Phillips:

The advisory was not a boil water advisory; it was specifically for elders, pregnant people, and babies. Regarding the elders' lawns, yes, that work is planned to be done.

Door Prizes

DayCare & Headstart

Miranda Adams

- Manager of the daycare and supportive, we have had many successes.

Housing & Membership

Lesley Raphael

- New housing initiatives due to shortages in housing, detailed report in AGA booklet

QUESTION 42 | Melaine Labatch

Can you please explain the housing guidelines and how housing qualifications are determined? Additionally, there are some homes with mould issues—how does this occur?

QUESTION 43

Inquiries regarding security and housing issues --- Security was hired due to a theft incident involving one of the windows.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Sariah Parker

I have struggled with addiction and faced issues in the workplace. I lost my home while I was in detox, which was very hurtful. I had to struggle to clear out my belongings and had to send my family to retrieve my things. The previous manager had assured me that my home would be secured, but I still ended up losing it.

QUESTION 44 | Maureen Thomas

What happens if "a mother" gets kicked out of their home, and has to move in with family as a single mother with kids?

Response from Lesley Raphael:

Once an application is filled out, the individual is added to the housing list. When the committee meets, they will review the application and make a recommendation, after which Chief and Council will make a final decision.

Door Prizes

MEMBER COMMENTS | Dianne Williams

I did not change my name, but I was denied because I was married, even though I live here. I don't understand this, and I am praying for help as I have had to live in a safe home. I need support from my people; I am 88 years old.

Response by Lesley Raphael:

I can only go by the name listed in the Indian registry; I have no control over this as it is based on the ISC list. If you bring the proper forms to the government and have them updated, I can assist you. For housing, there is a procedure in place, and the Council has the final say.

Housing Committee:

- If anyone would like to join the committee, such as Jason Alexis, Celena Case, Alison Johnny, or Krista John, you are welcome to reach out by email, phone, or in person.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Rosa McIntosh

Since you handle death certificates, could you also consider tracking the graveyard records? This is a recommendation that we should collect this information.

Door Prizes

Education Report

Shawnee Everett

MEMBER COMMENTS | Juanita Peters

For off-reserve students, there isn't enough information available to these members. I have family members who have not been informed, and I will do my best to ensure this information is communicated to them.

QUESTION 45

For post-secondary education, especially for those coming right out of school, I want to understand how prioritization works. I was unable to attend the last meeting.

Response from Shawnee Everett:

There is a process in place. You need to apply and be accepted into a program to be eligible. Applications are accepted in July and October, and then the requests are brought to the education committee for a decision.

Recommendations by Jackie Thomas:

I recommend that we do not work with COPAR, as they are charging our members, and we are losing funds because of this. We should accept everyone, but all 18-year-olds need to learn resilience and be prepared to handle what is to come.

Comment from Melanie Labatch:

We would prioritize students coming straight out of school first, and then consider post-secondary applications in the second round.

Response from Shawnee Everett:

It's the reverse; post-secondary students are prioritized first. A Council-led directive was established in 2017 to ensure that all students receive funding.

Door Prizes

Band Membership Transfer

Angelica on behalf of Michael Lindley and Gabriel Lindley

- Transferring from the Upper Nicola Band to Saik'uz First Nation

MOTION 02:

Move to accept the band membership transfers for Michael and Gabriel Lindley from the Upper Nicola to Saik'uz First Nation. 66% of eligible and present Saik'uz members second the motion.

Motion passed.

- 41 out of 62 members voted in support

Emergency Housing Motion

- Melanie Labatch moves to provide immediate and emergency housing to address current gaps.
- Mauren Thomas seconds.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Comments by Melanie Thomas:

There is a significant need for families to have a safe space, even if it's just a temporary option until they can figure out their next steps.

Comments by April Antoine:

I often have to book rooms, and I want to say that I think this is a good idea.

Comments by Marilyn Vickers:

There needs to be an option for our members who are dealing with family violence or other troubles. This should be a priority and enforced by the housing department, as our people are suffering.

Response by Cora McIntosh:

To provide some perspective, we need a lot of resources to accommodate this need. This would require expanding departments and securing funding for additional support services.

- 27 out of 62 members voted in support, 43% of eligible and present Saik'uz members in support ---- **resolution not passed**

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:37 PM.

Chief Priscilla Mueller

Date

These minutes are confirmed to be accepted as written.

2022 – 2023

Annual General Assembly

Day One | **Saik'uz First Nation Band Office – Gymnasium**
135 Joseph Street, Vanderhoof, BC

NOTE TAKER

Andrea Herrera

ATTENDEES

Council

- Councillor Rodney Teed
- Chief Priscilla Mueller
- Councillor Jasmine Thomas
- Councillor Alison Johnny
- Councillor Jason Alexis

Staff

- General Manager – Cora McIntosh
- Executive Assistant – Andrea Herrera
- Human Resources – Marie Boivin
- Finance Manager – Crystal Franks
- Pathways Coordinator – Amber Teed
- Emcee – David Luggi

GUEST SPEAKERS

Michaela Roque

OPENING PRAYER

Rodney Teed

MOTION 01: Marlene Quaw accepts the proposed agenda. Multiple confirmations to second. **Motion Carried.**

Minutes

MOTION 02: 2021-2022 Annual General Assembly Meeting Minutes – **Tabled**

Council updates:

Chief Priscilla Mueller:

Introductions & Acknowledgements

- Hydro line negotiations are ongoing.
- Clan housing application submitted for prevention and health work.
- Council-to-Council meetings.
- Negotiation on Forestry Tenure with the province.
- Initiatives for Healing Fire.
- Lhive Venture: Due to the resumed Coastal Link project, Saik'uz will terminate its partnership under the Nation's agreement.
- Meetings with Nazko, Saik'uz, and Lheidli elders to address boundary line disputes on the territory.
- RTA Court Case and Appeal Process: Update to be provided by Melinda Skeels Ratcliff.
- Tachick Treatment Resort: Updates on the costs.

Councillor Jasmine Thomas:

Updates on work

Resources and Land-based initiatives

- Focus on economic development and educational opportunities.
- Changes in negotiation processes with Canada and BC, addressing historical redress.
- Capacity constraints at all levels, from political to on-the-ground resources.
- Hybrid work schedules and increased demands

Councillor Rodney Teed:

Acknowledgements

- Community Park
- Expansion of daycare
- New health centre
- New Fire Centre
- Joseph Street Expansion
- Traditional Governance Oversight Committee "T.G.O.C."

Councillor Alison Johnny:

Acknowledgements & Opening

- Condolences to the William family.
- Prevention Work is informed by personal experiences of being in care as a child.
- Collaboration with the Province and CSFS:
- Aim to advance these efforts to ensure that children remain in their community and within their cultural roots.

Councillor Jason Alexis

Acknowledgements & Special Thanks to the Elders.

- Elected on March 27, 2023; new to the portfolio but grateful for the support from the community and those who elected me.
- Currently serving in several technical roles to support ongoing work.

QUESTION 1 | Stephen Thomas

Why are you partnering with Stelat'en for some negotiation tables?

Response from Chief Mueller:

At the last meeting, the community directed us to continue discussions regarding the sharing formula. Chief Mueller has met with Chief Michell, and we will be seeking mediation. Given the size of the Agreement (Artemis), this partnership may not be in the best interest of the Nation to steer away, so we will continue engagement."

Response from Councillor Jasmine Thomas:

Cllr Jasmine Thomas believes collaboration is necessary due to the complexity of various other negotiation tables.

General Manager's Update

Human Resources & Saik'uz First Nation Overview

Current Staffing:

- 14 casual staff
- 90 full-time staff
- 16 vacancies

Increased Demands:

- Demands have increased significantly across municipalities, industries, and federal agencies.

Engagement with Non-Indigenous Organizations:

- A considerable amount of time is spent explaining our values and vision to non-Indigenous organizations and how we intend to move forward.

Growth in Population:

- Canada has seen an increase of 2.5 million newcomers, contributing to growth in areas like Vanderhoof.

Evolving Role of the Band:

- The role of our band is transitioning, with less reliance on financial relationships with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and a shift towards industry funding pathways. We are mindful of changes in the political climate and reconciliation efforts. We have also utilized the courts to protect against RTA (Rio Tinto Alcan).

Path to Self-Governance:

- We are building toward self-governance, a process that began in 2019. This approach places the community at the center, creating a clear pathway for the future.

Human Resources Updates:

- Since January 2023, 27 new employees have been hired, and there are currently 16 open vacancies, including:
 - Administrative Assistant for Operations & Maintenance
 - Event Coordinator
 - Finance Assistant
 - Prevention Manager
 - Maintenance Manager
 - Prevention Administrative Assistant (maternity leave cover)
 - Band Designate
 - Community Health Representative (part-time)
 - On-call Early Childhood Educator
 - Economic Development Manager (term position)
 - Economic Development Assistant

- Payroll Assistant
- NNDAP Worker – Male
- Youth Support Worker (maternity leave cover)

Finance Manager Update:

Finance Manager’s Role:

- Joined the team in 2020, bringing over three years of experience.
- Has taken on substantial responsibilities and implemented significant, beneficial changes, particularly in financial recording and public sector management.

Professional Development:

- Carla Tumbaga, a member of the finance team, is advancing her skills by taking additional courses to enhance her role within the organization.

KPMG comprehensive presentation of the Saik’uz First Nation Audits

Pathways Manager

Overview

- The Pathways initiative is a game-changer for the community. A full report is available in the AGA booklet. These funds aim to foster community growth in alignment with the leadership’s strategic plan. I encourage everyone to review the report, as we invested significant time gathering information and listening to the community’s needs.

Maximizing Funds:

- Our goal is to maximize the impact of the funds by leveraging them through various project funding proposal applications. For example:

- Bednesti Cultural Building: An initiative to bring the building back to the community.
- TGOC (Traditional Governance and Oversight Committee): Aims to create an environment that supports both traditional governance and the elected council established by ISC.
- Committee Formation:
 - We established this committee to rebuild our governance and community structures according to the community’s vision and desires.

2022 – 2023

Annual General Assembly

Day Two | Saik’uz First Nation Band Office – Gymnasium
135 Joseph Street, Vanderhoof, BC

NOTE TAKER	Andrea Herrera
ATTENDEES	Council Councillor Rodney Teed Chief Priscilla Mueller Councillor Jasmine Thomas Councillor Alison Johnny Councillor Jason Alexis
	Staff General Manager – Cora McIntosh Executive Assistant – Andrea Herrera Land & Resources Manager – Kasandra Turbide
EMCEE	David Luggi
GUEST SPEAKERS	Mayor Kevin Moutray, Melinda Skeels, Tracy Michel
OPENING PRAYER	Rodney Teed

Opening

Mayor Moutray

Land & Resources

Kasandra Johnny Turbide

Land & Resources Manager for the past 5 years to present.

Resources Management Presentation “RMP”

- In 2018, we focused on the work related to transmission and the review of cumulative reports and ESI values. We identified discrepancies between our findings and what the province reported, which were based on their models and aerial data collection. Our members knew that the numbers being shared were not fully accurate. These findings were used for the Resource Management Plan.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Shana Labatch

We need to shift the way we are in meeting at that the clan systems are about love, and the disconnect is we aren't hiring seating members. We had a stringent system in our traditional systems.

I like the research and studies, was there a diversification of the lands? Pastureland and we could work with the Cattleman's Association.

What is the long-term plan, either creator or people will cause further detriments to the land and resources. Our people knew how to respond quickly, but institutions have delays.

Consulting, we cannot expect that everyone knows everything, I keep hearing from the community they have knowledge and want to be a part of the conversations.

Discussions about pine needles, the constant fires, and discussions to use of burnt carbon wood, for buildings as it has been treated. Carbon wood stayed for years without rotting; we should figure out how to use that "burnt wood" in collaboration with the District of Vanderhoof. Fences or other thoughts to repurpose this wood-fencing; 3-4 feet to allow wildlife ability to move.

We also have a lot of artists and healing on the land. There is Japanese esthetics, and I'm learning a bit about it.

QUESTION 2 | Shana Labatch

Regarding fire suppression, pesticides, herbicides, and brushing activities, do we need to be concerned about what is being used and sprayed within the territory?

Response from Kasandra Turbide:

TELUS and CN have been difficult to reach, but we have made some progress with Artemis, as well as with fire management teams. We also meet regularly with the VanJam group to address concerns and maintain communication.

I have been looking at how we can look at address the cattlemen and other opportunities, likely economic development initiatives. We are looking at prescribed burning, and plan to address the constant wildfires.

Reusing wood or seeking options would like to fall under special projects and or under the economic development manager.

QUESTION 3 | Cory John

I have formal training as a land monitor. Can I be involved? Is there a budget, and are there any opportunities for expansion?

Response from Kasandra Turbide:

The budget is contingent, and we have been seeking additional staff. There are plans in place, but they still need approval from the council. However, the process is taking longer than expected to complete.

QUESTION 4 | Albert Raphael

Forest Management Plan, do we review the current block and address the gaps – ex. Riparian areas, and improperly deactivation. 200 road is being invaded by species and harvesting places. Is this the fault of the licensees? We keep having to go further away to harvest and practice traditionally. I have noticed missed de-activation on roads.

Response from Kasandra Turbide:

The plans are to address these gaps, the goal of the greenhouse was to become a piece through our economic development department and to bring revenues into the community. complete the work.

I've heard that "goats" are a good alternative. Ashley Raphaels can be a liaison, Avanza or Google Maps, coordinates need to be submitted to our offices. Submit it to my office and we can investigate.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Rosa McIntosh

I discussed with the Education department where we have gaps, and Fire Suppression and Wildfire Crews. If they are only missing some tickets or training, we should ensure that Education and Training is providing these resources

Water management, who is responsible for this I thought it was under lands?

Tatuk, BC Wildfires and the issues with lack of staff and backburning?

Response by Kasandra Turbide:

If you see riparian areas, we can send monitors to review.

Response by Cora McIntosh:

There is no engagement with the BC Wildfire and Indigenous nations. We saw issues and concerns due to the installation of a guard, causing damages. There is a disconnect traditional use of knowledge is what they classify it as. There is no way for BC Wildfire to access information or process communications. It has been problematic for both the nation and the Land & Resources Department. It is a flawed process.

Comments by Cory John:

Have you done any drone mapping? Considerations to do some new mapping.

Comments by David Luggi:

Extends congratulations and commends the hard work, and her place at many technical tables.

Lunch

Prayer led by Cllr Rodney Teed

Daycare

Overview

- Review of the current age groups, policies, and eligibility for acceptance
- Free play approach

Language Nest

- Focused on language for the funding, we have very few speakers left in the community.
- Animals, numbers, and basic expressions and greetings.
- Expanded the infant Toddler classrooms.

Culture & Language

Deborah Page

- Due to the funding our focus is based on language, but other departments are covering the culture pieces. We have very few limited Dakelh Speakers.
- Elders have been doing a lot of work in transcribing and reviewing old audio of those before us, and I do some of the technical work for Celena, Sophie etc. It's been rewarding to hear from those before us.
- It is really sad when we consider that it was the core of our existence, and the land would provide to everyone, due to the damages we have seen it cannot sustain how it did in the past.
- Afterschool Programs with an integration with Culture and Language Revitalization.

Work and Play," which would involve using the language in practical settings like work and everyday activities, thus increasing language exposure and usage.

Another suggestion included integrating language into workplace training and activities, such as trades or construction, to create a new revenue stream and embed language learning in everyday tasks. The speaker emphasized the urgency of these approaches, as the number of fluent speakers continues to decline. They also mentioned a book on the language that's ready for printing, pending funding.

The community is actively working on creative ways to incorporate language learning into daily life and work environments to ensure language survival and revitalization.

MEMBER COMMENTS | Shana Labatch

language revitalization efforts among the Dakelh speaking communities. Recognizing that many villages face a loss of language, a project was initiated to survey all 16 Dakelh speaking communities about their language status, challenges, and plans. The goal is to develop a unified plan to preserve the Dakelh speaking, rather than focusing on individual dialects. The importance of a collective effort to save the language was emphasized.

A speaker shared their experience of intensive language learning and stressed the need for immersive environments to advance language proficiency. They highlighted that current language programs, often limited in hours and settings, are insufficient. The speaker proposed an integrated program called "Indigenous Language and Culture at

MEMBER COMMENTS | Cory John

Discusses the importance of language revitalization and the sense of loss felt when observing other communities, like Creek speakers or immigrants who speak their languages fluently. They express a feeling of shame that, as the original inhabitants of the land, Indigenous people struggle to converse in their mother languages, primarily due to the impact of historical factors like residential schools where fluent speakers were forbidden to speak their native languages.

The speaker emphasizes the need for knowledge sharing between different Indigenous nations to learn what works for language preservation. They highlight that their language dialect extends far south, even down to Arizona, where speakers sound similar, suggesting a broad, interconnected linguistic heritage that should be a source of pride.

MEMBER COMMENTS CONTINUED

Highlights the importance of fluent speakers stepping forward to teach and preserve the language while they still can.

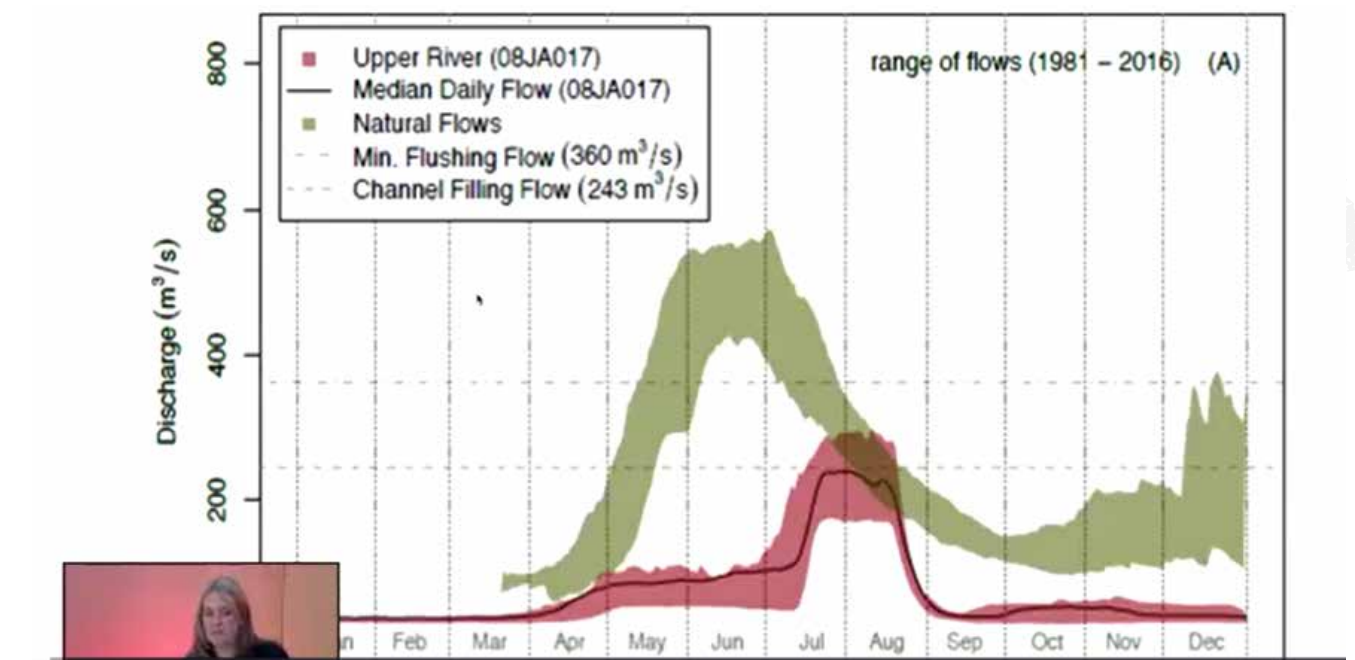
Ratcliff

Melinda Skeels

Introductions

- Began working on the case in 2008 as an articling student.
- Initially worked on an opinion for the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council regarding bringing a claim.
- The claim was filed in 2011 with two claimants First Nations: Saik'uz and Stellat'en.
- The BC Supreme Court struck down the claim in 2013 after an application by Rio Tinto.
- The decision was appealed, and in 2015, the Court of Appeal reinstated the claim, ruling that Aboriginal rights exist before recognition by the Crown or courts.

- Successfully argued that Aboriginal rights could be established and enforced simultaneously in court.
- Established that Aboriginal rights or title can ground a tort claim—this was a new precedent in Canadian law.
- In 2016, Rio Tinto successfully applied to add both the federal and provincial Crowns as defendants.
- The trial preparation took several years; the trial lasted 189 days from 2019 to 2021.
- The decision was issued in January 2022, and the appeal was heard in June 2023.
- key elements of a trial decision and the evidence presented at trial, which formed the basis for an appeal heard in June. The central issue of the case involves the Nechako River, a vital resource for the Dakelh Nations, serving as an essential artery for travel, fish (such as salmon), and sturgeon populations.
- The construction of the Kenney Dam in the early 1950s significantly impacted the river. The dam and additional structures allowed Alcan to divert over 70% of the river's natural flow to the Kemano Station.



A significant change occurred in 1978 when BC Hydro connected the Kemano power station to its grid, allowing Alcan to sell excess power to BC Hydro. This resulted in even less water flowing down the Nechako River, causing further impacts.

- During the trial, evidence was presented on the cultural and material significance of the salmon to the community. Photographs and other exhibits were submitted as evidence, highlighting the deep connection between the river, its resources, and the community.
- The speaker also notes the visual documentation from the courthouse steps and within the courthouse during the trial, reflecting the community's involvement in the legal process.
- Several key witnesses, including Betsy William, Jackie Thomas, Gladys Michell, Jerry Mole, Mary Nooski, Panis Reynolds, and David Luggi, testified during the trial, providing crucial evidence that influenced the court's findings. The trial also included substantial scientific evidence, which was important to the judgment.
- One key piece of evidence was a graph showing the natural versus regulated flow of the Nechako River. The natural flow (represented in green) shows a high discharge during the spring melt (April to June), which then gradually tapers off into the fall. However, the regulated flow (in red), controlled by Alcan, shows a significant reduction in the spring freshen, with water being held back, resulting in an unnatural, flat flow during those months. An artificial bump occurs from June to August as part of a temperature management program to aid sockeye salmon, which is still deemed unnatural. Experts explained that these changes negatively impact both salmon and sturgeon populations.

- The lack of a natural spring fresh affects the spawning success of the white sturgeon, which has been red-listed since 1994 and listed under the Species at Risk Act since 2006 due to the risk of local extinction. Photographs from expert reports highlighted the physical impacts on the river over time, showing significant changes in vegetation and river channels between 1950 and 2000. These changes have severely affected the habitat for Chinook, sockeye salmon, and sturgeon, impacting their ability to spawn and thrive.
- The final piece of scientific evidence presented at the trial showed the age distribution of sturgeon across different populations. The chart highlighted a "total recruitment failure" or near-total recruitment failure of sturgeon in the Nechako River, as indicated by the absence of young sturgeon. In contrast, other sturgeon populations (Lower Fraser, Fraser Canyon, Middle Fraser, Upper Fraser) have a healthier distribution with more young fish. This failure in the Nechako is linked to the unnatural hydrograph created by water diversion and damming.

Key findings from the trial included:

1. Aboriginal Rights Established:

The plaintiffs, Saik'uz and Stelat'en First Nations, successfully established their Aboriginal rights to fish, now legally proven in court.

2. Nuisance Claim:

It was found that Aboriginal interests can form the basis for a nuisance claim. The dam and water diversion activities were determined to cause significant harm to the fish and an unreasonable and substantial interference with the Aboriginal fishing rights of the plaintiff First Nations.

3. Statutory Authorization Defense:

Despite the finding of nuisance, Rio Tinto Alcan was not held legally liable because they could rely on a defence of statutory authorization, which shields them from liability under existing laws.

4. Crown's Duty and Infringement:

The Crown's authorizations were found to result in an unjustified infringement of Aboriginal rights, highlighting the Crown's duty to protect these rights.

- These findings are significant for the case, establishing important legal precedents while also revealing the limitations due to statutory defences.
- The court had no hesitation in affirming that the plaintiffs have Aboriginal rights to fish in their respective areas of the Nechako watershed. This was a significant win, achieved despite strong opposition from all three defendants who demanded strict proof of these rights.
- The court also made an alternate finding regarding Aboriginal title. Although a declaration of title was not sought in this case (unlike in the Chilcotin case), the court found that both plaintiffs had established sufficient title to ground a nuisance claim. However, this finding was limited to two specific reserve locations, and procedural issues (such as not all overlapping title claimants being present in court) led to this part being rejected— an issue currently under appeal.
- A significant aspect of the case was established that Aboriginal interests (rights or title) could ground a tort claim, like nuisance. This is comparable to suing for damage caused by a neighbour, such as a tree falling on a house. Before this case, it wasn't clear if Aboriginal interests could form the basis for such claims. The court in this case

confirmed it is possible if harm to those interests is established.

- The court found that the Kenney Dam and Alcan's river diversion caused harm to Aboriginal interests by creating a nuisance. Specifically, it was established that the regulated river flow caused recruitment failure in sturgeon and increased pre-spawn mortality in sockeye salmon due to higher water temperatures.
- However, the case faced setbacks when it came to the defence of "statutory authorization." This defence allows a party to avoid liability for what would otherwise be considered a tort if they have a government-issued permit or license to carry out that activity. In this case, Rio Tinto Alcan relied on statutory authorization to defend its actions, complicating the plaintiff's ability to seek a remedy for the harm caused.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at TIME.

Chief Priscilla Mueller

Date

These minutes are confirmed to be accepted as written.



Mussi
Thank You



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