



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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# Newsletter

BC Assembly of First Nations

Fall 2022

## Message from Regional Chief Terry Teegee

Chiefs, Leaders, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, Youths, and community members,



Regional Chief Terry Teegee, Chief Harvey McLeod (BCAFN board member and Taylor Behn-Tsakoza (BCAFN Female Youth Representative and Co-Chair, AFN Youth Council) at the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Sharm-El Sheik, Egypt from November 6th to 18th, 2022.

It has been a busy fall for the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) as we participated in important conferences, meetings and initiatives including, the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP27), held this year in Egypt, the BC Japan trade mission to explore new wood markets and the BC Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering. Also, in October we were pleased to announce the launch of the new Centre of Excellence in First Nations Economic Development. On November 29th Prime Minister Trudeau met with the National AFN Executive. I urged the federal government to partner with First Nations in BC on a number of obligations and priorities. We are at a critical juncture when it comes to transformational change in the most important relationship between the Crown and First Nations in Canada.

The global climate crisis has seriously impacted British Columbia – and First Nations have borne some of the worst impacts. Many of us know it's time to urgently act on the climate emergency. COP27 was an opportunity for our delegation of First Nations leaders and staff to unite with other global Indigenous peoples, share ideas and resources, and pressure governments on meaningful climate action.

Indigenous values, which are deeply rooted in our relationship with the land and the natural world, must inform how we tackle climate change. Now is the time to change our collective course and adopt Indigenous peoples' values of reciprocity, respect and care for the natural world to inform the policies and laws we make to halt global warming, address the impacts of climate change, and make life more equitable for everyone.

In BC, First Nations are changing their relationship with the state, informed by our values and traditions. In late 2019, British Columbia became the first jurisdiction in North America to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Almost two years later, Canada followed suit. Article 29 of the UN Declaration affirms that Indigenous peoples have the inherent right to conserve and protect the environment and the productive capacity of our territories and resources. The Declaration also commits governments to establish and implement assistance programs for Indigenous-led climate actions.

This legislation requires colonial governments to share the resources they have acquired through the occupation and theft of Indigenous lands. And while it has been a long time coming, I commend these recent steps as the beginning of a new relationship.

BCAFN board member, Chief Jerry Jack of Mowachaht Muchalaht First Nation, and staff members participated as delegates in the BC trade mission to Japan in early November to explore economic opportunities and engage and strengthen relationships. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an economic and social crisis and leaders are addressing long-existing issues, including social exclusion, inequalities and poverty, that have created seriously vulnerable situations for Indigenous peoples. We must ensure First Nations are not left behind as economic opportunities for the province are explored and expanded.



Delegates from Canada at the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Sharm-El Sheik, Egypt held from November 6th to 18th, 2022.

# New Centre Supports First Nations Push for Economic Prosperity

The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) is launching a new Centre of Excellence in First Nations Economic Development to help advance the role of First Nations in B.C.'s inclusive economy and to work toward true and lasting reconciliation.

***First Nations in B.C. have been advocating for economic reconciliation for decades, and the centre of excellence demonstrates progress toward this goal***

– Regional Chief Terry Teegee

As part of the StrongerBC Economic Plan, the B.C. government is providing more than \$1.2 million to the BCAFN this year to launch the centre. It will increase the capacity of First Nations in B.C. to engage in economic priorities and initiatives highlighted in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan*, distribute best practices and policy papers about economic development to First Nations, and provide consulting services on opportunities such as joint ventures and impact benefit agreements.

***The centre of excellence will multiply the investments First Nations are making to close the socio-economic gap and bring us the prosperity we rightly deserve***

– Regional Chief Terry Teegee

[Read more](#)



## Non-medical Cannabis Legalization and Regulation

Regional Chief Terry Teegee continues to support the work on cannabis being led in BC by the First Nations Leadership Council and the BC-FNLC Cannabis Working Group. He also serves as the Co-Chair of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Cannabis.

The FNLC Cannabis Working Group is working to support the early implementation of the BC First Nations Cannabis Strategy Framework and will continue to advance the development of a BC First Nations Cannabis Strategy, which was mandated by resolutions passed at the BCAFN, FNS, and UBCIC Chiefs Meetings.

The FNLC is also seeking to collaborate with the government of BC's Cannabis Secretariat regarding the implementation of Declaration Act Action Plan 4.47. Current work involves providing feedback on the engagement process and discussion paper for provincial engagement which is planned for Spring 2023.

On the National level, the Federal Cannabis Act review has begun and the deadline for First Nation submissions is January 15th, 2023. To learn more on the process and purpose of the review, and to submit a response, go [here](#)

On August 9th, 2022, the Government of Canada announced its plans to engage with interested Indigenous governments and organizations on a fuel, alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis (FACT) sales tax framework that would support interested Indigenous governments to implement a FACT sales tax within their reserves or settlement lands. The FNLC is sending correspondence to the federal government calling for holistic approaches and partnerships with First Nations people that is in alignment with UNDRIPA when it comes to these processes. The FNLC will also prepare submissions reflecting the priorities and concerns First Nations have shared on cannabis to date regarding key priorities of jurisdiction, cannabis revenues and taxation, health and wellness and targeted economic supports.

The BC Indigenous Cannabis Initiative is a partnership between the provincial and federal

governments, the BCAFN, and FNS, which will create an equity fund and sector-specific expertise targeted toward cannabis-related community engagement and business initiatives. The New Relationship Trust is administering this program, and will be launching presently. The fund is intended to help support interested First Nations communities and Indigenous businesses in BC participate in the cannabis industry by providing funding support for capacity development and decision-making, business planning and regulatory processes, and capital projects. As well, this new fund will seek to connect participants with regulatory pathfinding support and information relevant to this evolving sector.

And finally, the FNLC has brought on Marc Storms as the new FNLC Cannabis Policy Analyst to support this file and facilitate coordination between the FNS, UBCIC, and BCAFN. Marc has extensive experience in the First Nations Cannabis space, as well as with negotiations with the province, federal government and industry.



Check out the Cannabis Toolkit [here](#)



## Women's Representative Update

Louisa Housty Jones  
Heiltsuk Nation

Greetings! As BCAFN Women's Representative I continue to bring the perspectives of First Nations in BC to the dialogue at the AFN Women's Council and advocate with provincial and federal officials regarding the urgent need to prevent and respond properly to violence against Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

On November 24th, the day before the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, I was joined by UBCIC Women's Representative, Melissa Moses, and Lorelei Williams, founder of Butterflies in Spirit and family member, for a press conference demanding police accountability and action on gender-based violence. I shared about the challenges my Nation and others have when it comes to the relationship with police, and the need for community-led community safety work. I expressed my belief that we need urgent support for this from all levels of government and sectors of society.

I look forward to engaging with you on many exciting initiatives that we will be continuing into 2023. Thank you for your support.



## 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative Update

Orene Askew  
Squamish Nation

Hello! I am excited to begin my term as the newly-appointed BCAFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative. My name is Orene Askew. As an Afro-Indigenous and 2-Spirit person I have always wanted to create a safe space for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. I look forward to supporting the advocacy and voice of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people through the new AFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council, and helping to lay the groundwork for representatives to come.

I previously served on Squamish Nation Council, and I am currently an Entrepreneur, Motivational Speaker and Business Coach. I especially love supporting and encouraging youth to follow their passions. I look forward to bringing my knack for communicating with people, my outgoing and energetic personality and professional political experience to this role.

I have worked with the BCAFN in the past as a Moderator and Presenter for the Women's, Gender Diverse, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Dialogue Sessions in 2021 & 2022. I've also worked with my Community on Pride Portfolios such as The Rainbow Crosswalk on the Capilano Reserve and Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations' first ever float in the Vancouver Pride Parade. I currently sit on The Board of The Vancouver Pride Society.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to serving in this role and providing updates on my activities moving forward.

## Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Initiatives

BCAFN continues to connect regularly with provincial and federal officials who are tasked with implementing and coordinating their government's response to the MMIWG2S+ Calls for Justice. We have advanced the need for the Calls for Justice to be actioned within broader Gender-Based Violence strategies that are in progress, and are providing feedback to ensure that First Nations are engaged as partners in this work. We have also engaged the federal government on the need for an oversight body for the implementation of the MMIWG2S+ National Action Plan, a Human Rights Tribunal and Ombudsperson, appropriate implementation planning and coordination, and the potential for a Federal-Provincial-Territorial-Indigenous table on MMIWG2S+.

At the BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly on March 9-10, 2022 the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed [resolution 01/2022](#) Intersectional Advocacy and Capacity

Building Grounding in First Nations Knowledges. In early 2023 BCAFN will be initiating work to advance dialogue and the development of a toolkit to support First Nations approaches to GBA+.

BCAFN continues to work on the development of a Strategic Action Plan to Implement the Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Declaration, with the next phase of engagement on early drafts anticipated in early 2023.

As per BCAFN [Resolution 28/2022](#) Support for the Women, Gender-Diverse, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Dialogue Session Report, BCAFN will be distributing the final version of this report, and is working to support the key-takeaways through BCAFN's initiatives. Early planning for the 2023 Dialogue Sessions is also underway, and we look forward to sharing more information shortly.



Media conference held on November 24, 2022 in Vancouver. Speakers included Louisa Housty-Jones, BC Assembly of First Nations Women's Representative, Lorelei Williams, Butterflies n Spirit, Family Member, and Melissa Moses, Union of BC Indian Chiefs Women's Representative.



Chief Councillor Sharleen Gale, Fort Nelson First Nation, Taylor Behn-Tsakoza and Chief Valeris Askoty, Prophet River First Nations

## Youth Representative Update

Taylor Behn-Tsakoza  
Fort Nelson First Nation

Taylor, alongside BCAFN staff, prepared and successfully received a capacity funding proposal with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) to continue engaging with First Nations youth across BC throughout 2022/23. Taylor will be working with BCAFN staff and consultants to plan and host an in-person forum in Vancouver BC on February 2nd, 2023 to allow First Nations youth to gather in person for the first time in three years. The BCAFN Youth Forum will also be held in conjunction with the BCAFN Economic Development Forum on January 31 - February 1st, 2023. The Youth Representatives will be supporting the planning, hosting, and facilitating of these sessions as well. More information will be made available [here](#)

In November 2022, Taylor was selected to be part of the AFN Delegation to COP27 in Egypt. Taylor participated in several panels while offering an Indigenous youth perspective. Reflecting on her first week attending COP27, she noted that it, "has seen the highest number of Indigenous attendees out of all COPs. To me, as a young emerging leader, that's what makes me hopeful." Overall, Taylor would like to continue to advocate for Indigenous Youth to be included in the international policy arena to drive meaningful change. Taylor is also working with youth from Qwelmintse Secwepemc to plan and moderate a Youth Panel at the annual First Nations Leadership Gathering, which will be hosted November 28-30th in Vancouver BC.

# Forestry Trade Mission to Japan

November, 2022, BCAFN delegates - Chief Jerry Jack, board member and Jaime Sanchez and Sarah Behn, staff



The BCAFN was invited to participate in the first trade mission to Japan since the COVID-19 pandemic started. The invitation by Minister Katrine Conroy (BC Minister of Forests) was extended to BCAFN (Regional Chief Terry Teegee, represented by Chief Jerry Jack - RC Teegee was unavailable to attend due to commitments to attend the UN Climate Summit in Egypt that same week), the First Nations Forestry Council (Lenny Joe, CEO), and the First Nations Summit (Robert Phillips, Executive). The Japan wood trade mission objectives were to support Japan program initiatives aimed at expanding new market opportunities, drive engagement with Japanese industry and government officials to encourage expanded wood use and to reaffirm market commitment and trade linkages among key Japanese stakeholders. The participation of First Nations delegates was important to demonstrate the changes to the legal, political and commercial interests and rights First Nations have in the wood industry in Japan.

Other delegates included representatives from BC Ministry of Forests, BC Wood, Canada Wood Group, Canfor, Coastland Wood Industries, COFI, FII, FPI, Interex Forest Products, NRCAN, Sinclair Group,



Tiger International, Tolko, West Fraser Timber, Wester Forest Products, and the Wood Pellet Association of Canada. The mission included site visits to:

- Tokyo University of the Arts NLT Demonstration Project
- Maeda Corporation ICI Centre (largest wooden multi-family construction developer in Japan)
- Tsuda Sangyo Co. Ltd. (2x4 panel plant)
- Koshi Mokuzai Co. Ltd. (leading wood preservative treating company, long established customer of BC Coastal Hemlock)
- Daido Trust ROOFLAG Mass Timber and Multi-family Apartment Exhibition Centre

The First Nations delegation had an opportunity to make statements with Minister Conroy during a reception at the Canadian Embassy, and at the Canadian Industry Kansai Customer Appreciation Reception in Osaka.

The key messages delivered by the FNLC delegation included:

1. First Nations hold cultural, legal and moral rights to their forests - these rights are non negotiable and protected by domestic (i.e. case law, Constitution Act, etc.) and international law (i.e. UNDRIP, etc.);
2. BC is progressive in their work to reconcile with First Nations, including having passed legislation to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
3. First Nations and Japanese culture have some common themes and values related to respect for and use of wood products - invitation was extended to Japanese officials and forest industry representatives to visit First Nations in BC (on the coast and interior) to further discuss relationship building and business opportunities.

Key facts about Japan interests in wood products from BC region:

- Japan is B.C.'s longest standing market in Asia and one that recognizes the value of B.C.'s high-quality forest products. B.C. continues to sell forest products valued over CAD \$741

million to Japan each year and this relationship is incredibly important to B.C.

- The B.C. industry has been shipping lumber to Japan for nearly 100 years, with over 45 years of in-country market development work led by industry and government.
- Canada was one of few exporters to increase lumber shipments to Japan during the pandemic.
- Over the past 10 years, B.C. has exported an average of 2 million cubic metres of softwood lumber to Japan each year, with an average value of \$750 million Canadian dollars.
- Japan has a history of building with wood, and this cultural preference is most evident in the housing market. Even as the population ages and the demand for housing declines, wooden housing remains at approximately half a million starts annually.

#### **Key take-aways and next steps**

- BCAFN to work with partners to organize and host a mission from Japan to meet with First Nations leaders and forest industry partners - to expand opportunities for wood products and other resources.
- The new Centre of Excellence for First Nations Economic Development (COE) envisions providing supports to First Nations trade related missions in key markets like Japan for several sectors including energy, fisheries, wood/forest products, and tourism. The BCAFN will seek further supports for the COE from the federal government and industry partners.
- Prepare briefings for Chiefs in BC about the opportunities related to trade with Japan, including improving the understanding by Japanese companies on doing business with First Nations in BC.

# BCAFN 18th Annual General Meeting

September 21 - 23, 2022



# BC Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering

November 29 & 30, 2022



## Climate Emergency

### COP27 - United Nations Climate Change Conference

This year, for the first time ever, BCAFN participated in the most important global climate summit, the United Nations Conference of the Parties on Climate Change – COP27. The conference was held from November 6th to 18th in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

The BC Assembly of First Nations and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs sent a delegation, including Regional Chief Terry Teegee, Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Chief Harvey McLeod, and BCAFN Youth Representative Taylor Behn-Tsakoza, as well as Patricia Rojas and Josh Kioke as technical support.

BCAFN participation at COP27 responded to the mandate provided by Chiefs-in-Assembly (Resolution no. 05/21, Supporting First Nations Community-Based Climate Leadership), which directs the Regional Chief and BCAFN staff to pursue advocacy opportunities regarding climate change and sovereignty at multiple scales, including the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change

(UNFCCC), and to build relationships to enable mutual learning with Indigenous Peoples outside of Canada.

At COP27, the BC delegation participated in panels, discussions and meetings with governments and Indigenous Peoples' delegations. We advanced and elevated BC First Nations and First Nations youth voices, perspectives, priorities and climate leadership to the international stage.

Our position and advocacy were centred on calling for an immediate scaling up of global commitments and obligations to keep global warming below 1.5°C and to take bold decisions and actions to tackle the climate emergency by addressing the real roots of climate change, decolonizing climate action, building adaptive capacity and resilience by supporting First Nations-led self-determined climate initiatives, and transforming our financial systems and its structures to deliver climate finance commitments, including creating the space to discuss loss and damage at the BC level.



COP27 in Sharm-El Sheikh, Egypt

We met with Indigenous peoples across the world who are also fighting for the recognition of their inherent rights in climate action. This COP received the largest Indigenous delegation ever; however, our voices were not part of the negotiations and agreement processes.

We expressed our solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters from the global south who are paying the price of climate change without being the cause of the problem. We called on the government of Canada and other developed countries to recognize and take responsibility for the loss and damage caused by the carbon emissions from countries like Canada that have benefited from the fossil fuel industry.

The urgent goal of global emissions reduction was sadly not one of the achievements at COP27. Countries did not advance commitments or show evidence of significant action to decrease global emissions. Parties failed to agree on strong language to phase out fossil fuels. As a result, the UN recommendation to limit global warming below 1.5°C is probably impossible to achieve.

The use of carbon markets and carbon trading to reduce emissions brings high concerns due to the potential impacts of these systems on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. There was no significant progress on this issue at COP27. Discussions about carbon markets and carbon rights must be done directly with rights- and title-holders.

BCAFN will continue working to advance the voices of First Nations in BC at the international level. We applied to the UNFCCC to have "Observer Status" to participate in COPs. If granted, BCAFN could offer accreditation to interested First Nations in BC to participate in future climate summits.

*The values of infinite growth, maximum consumption, individualism, patriarchy and greed have made the wealthiest countries the biggest contributors to climate change...now is the time to change our collective course, and adopt Indigenous peoples' values of reciprocity, respect and care for the natural world to inform the policies and laws we make to halt global warming, address the impacts of climate change and make life more equitable for everyone - Regional Chief Terry Teegee*



COP27 in Sharm-El Sheikh, Egypt



## Water

### Federal Portfolio Update

#### ***Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act***

The Regional Water Coordinator continues to work with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) on the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act (SDWFNA) reform and supporting the AFN in developing a long-term National Safe Drinking Water and Wastewater Strategy.

On June 23, 2022, Canada formally repealed the SDWFNA. As part of the National Class Action Safe Drinking Water Settlement, Canada has committed to replacing the legislation “in consultation with First Nations” by December 2022. As of July 2022, the AFN established a Joint Working Group (JWG) to support the co-development process of the legislative reform. As part of this co-development process, the AFN and BCAFN will be planning to host an All-Chiefs Meeting in early 2023 to discuss a draft legislative framework developed by the JWG for feedback from Chiefs and leadership. More information will be available [here](#)

### Regional Portfolio Update

In Fall 2022, the First Nations Leadership Council released an Intentions Paper entitled, “Towards Revenue Sharing of Water Licence Rentals in British Columbia”. The purpose of this paper is to explore The Intentions Paper explores what revenue sharing of water licence rentals with First Nations in British Columbia might look like, what it could support, and why it should be prioritized. The purpose of the Intentions Paper is to provide a framework for dialogue with First Nations Rights and Title holders to advance discussions and negotiations with the BC Government. BCAFN, UBCIC and FNS Chiefs-in-Assembly passed mirrored resolutions (BCAFN [Resolution 27/2022](#), FNS Resolution #1022.15, and UBCIC Resolution 2022-40) which supported the

FNLC Intentions Paper and mandates the FNLC organizations to undertake the following steps to engage with the BC on water revenue sharing with First Nations Rights and Titleholders:

1. Call for full recognition of First Nations’ jurisdictional water rights, including amendments of provincial policies, regulations, and legislation that support shared decision-making regarding the use and management of water in BC.
2. Initiate and formalize discussions with the BC government on water licence rentals revenue sharing with First Nations.
3. Advocate for the prioritization of water licence rental revenue sharing under BC’s Declaration Act Action Plan.
4. Advocate for water revenue sharing frameworks to be meaningfully co-developed with First Nations Rights and Titleholders.
5. Call for dedicated capacity funding for the FNLC to support discussions with First Nations in BC on water revenue sharing frameworks, including determining options for distributing revenues.
6. Initiate discussions with the BC government to increase water licence rental rates to levels that both reflect the true administrative, ecological, and restorative costs associated with water use, and encourage water users to maximize efficiency and conservation. Include a regular review of water licence rental rates every 3 to 5 years with Rights and Titleholders, including any exemptions.

The FNLC has prepared a proposal submission and letter to BC to initiate the above activities and will keep Chiefs and leadership apprised of updates in 2023.

## Lhats'as?in Memorial Day Honouring Tsilqot'in War Chiefs October 26, 2022

### Homelessness

After the municipal elections concluded in BC, Regional Chief Terry Teegee authored an [opinion piece](#) in the Vancouver Sun calling on new municipal governments to take seriously their obligations under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. The Regional Chief stated, "Local governments also need to consider how their actions contribute to — or hinder — reconciliation, including understanding how each department's budget incorporates reconciliation. Without putting reconciliation directly into budget decisions, there is no way to track the effectiveness of efforts to decolonize municipal governments."

In September 2022, the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) submitted feedback to BC on its draft Homelessness Strategy Framework which was slated to be released in the fall. Due to the feedback received by the FNLC and other Indigenous governments and organizations, BC has decided to delay the release of the Strategy in recognition of a lack of robust engagement with Rights and Title holders and a failure to achieve free, prior, and informed consent.

BCAFN and the FNLC, under joint mandates to address the homelessness issue in British Columbia which disproportionately impacts Indigenous peoples, will continue to engage with BC on key next steps for the Strategy release including a scheduled meeting with Minister Rankin, BC's Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Homelessness, in December 2022.



Chief Joe Alphonse, Tsilhqot'in National Government



Regional Chief Terry Teegee, BCAFN

## Justice and Policing Reform

On September 6th, Regional Chief Terry Teegee met with the Honourable Marco Mendicino, Minister for Public Safety, to discuss matters related to bilateral engagement on the National Indigenous Justice Strategy, Justice Reform, Policing as an Essential Service, and the AFN Taskforce on Policing. Key priorities for BC First Nations were shared in this meeting and were well-received by the Minister. Discussions with the federal government are ongoing in this area and additional meetings are forthcoming.

BCAFN [Resolution 22/2022](#), Support for the Findings and Recommendations from the "What We Heard" Report on Police Reform and Policing as an Essential Service, was presented, affirmed, and endorsed by consensus at the BCAFN 19th Annual General Meeting on September 21, 22, and 23. In light of this new resolution, BCAFN is working to ensure that the priorities identified in this Report are advanced in national level and regional discussions on policing and public safety transformation. BCAFN is initiating work to develop legislative options for consideration by BC First Nations in collaboration with the BCFNJC.

On November 3rd, Region Chief Terry Teegee spoke at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety Study of Bill C-21 (Firearms amendments). Concerns over the impact of this new

legislation on First Nations peoples was brought to the table and the distinct lack of consultation and engagement with First Nations on this matter was highlighted. Parliament must not overlook this issue, as it involves possible impacts on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights to hunt, which have been affirmed in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982.

Co-Chaired by the Regional Chief, the AFN First Nations Policing Taskforce continues to meet regularly. Composed of experts in First Nations Policing, regional representatives, and executive members of the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, the mandate of the FN Policing Taskforce is to provide support and guidance for the co-development of First Nations Policing Essential Services legislation. On November 4th, 2022, the Taskforce met with Minister Marco Mendicino and had an opportunity to discuss key issues related to policing and urged for the Minister to identify a concrete timeline to advance this work.

BCAFN will also participate in ongoing conversations with the BC regarding the Province's response to the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act Report, and will seek to ensure that this work is conducted in alignment with the *Declaration Act*.



BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee, board members and representatives

## Children and Families

After decades of multi-generational dedication, advocacy, and litigation, on behalf of our children and families, First Nations have won some hard-fought victories, both federally and provincially, over the past few months.

On October 25th, 2022, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) released a Letter of Decision on the Final Settlement Agreement (FSA), pertaining to victims and survivors of the child welfare system, reached between Canada and the Assembly of First Nations. In this letter, the CHRT outlined that while the FSA “substantially satisfied” its orders, it did not fully satisfy them, specifically negating some classes and removing some categories of victims, including:

1. First Nations children removed and placed in non-Indigenous Service Canada placements;
2. Estates of deceased caregiving parents and grandparents are not entitled to compensation;
3. Certain caregiving parents and grandparents will receive less compensation; and,
4. Some Jordan’s Principle survivors may receive less compensation.

In response to this, the BCAFN, wrote a joint press release and letter to Prime Minister Trudeau, with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit, calling on Canada, to ensure that all persons impacted by discrimination are covered by the settlement. BCAFN also held engagement sessions this past fall to help inform AFN’s position related to long-term reform and compensation, which will result in a “What we Heard” Report to be released late this year. AFN continues to advocate for direct support to victims and survivors of Canada’s discrimination and is working towards a Final Settlement Agreement with adjustments per the recent ruling.

On October 26th, 2022, the Province introduced, and on November 25th, 2022, passed Bill C38, Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendments Act (Bill C38). Bill C38 affirms the inherent rights of First Nations governance in child and family services and provides space for

Indigenous legal orders, coordination of services, and new arrangements for the Ministry of Children and Family Development to recognize, respect, and implement Indigenous laws. Although Bill C38 is a step in the right direction, the BCAFN acknowledges that much work is still required to ensure full alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As such, the BCAFN will continue to advocate on behalf of First Nations to ensure comprehensive reform and resumption of jurisdiction over child and family services.

Alongside these efforts, the BCAFN recently published a final report titled Bill C92 in British Columbia: Children and Families Jurisdiction Engagements, which includes recommendations from First Nations on the implementation of Bill C92. The BCAFN is currently considering ways in which these recommendations can be utilized and actioned on, so as to ensure that First Nations are supported in exercising their inherent right to self-governance over child and family services.



AFN’s lead negotiator with Canada, AFN Regional Chief, Manitoba, Cindy Woodhouse attending the BCAFN Annual General Assembly 2022.

## Indigenous Languages

The BCAFN has been involved in national level languages work through the AFN Chiefs Committee on Languages (CCOL) and its technical committee. An overview of this work is included below and a more in-depth briefing package was circulated to BC Chiefs and Leadership in November.

As the International Decade for Indigenous Languages begins this year, the AFN has prepared a draft First Nations Action Plan for the International Decade for consideration by Chiefs at the December Special Chiefs Assembly. The draft First Nations Action Plan sets out a vision; objectives; actions associated with enhancing awareness, increasing engagement, and building community strategies; roles and responsibilities; measurement and indicators; and phases of work.

The CCOL has also advanced work on a First Nations Funding Formula in alignment with the Funding Model that was presented at the Languages Dialogue Session at the AFN Annual General Assembly in July 2022. The intention is for this formula to replace the regional funding allocation formula currently used by the Department of Canadian Heritage, with the stipulation that no region will receive less funding than it did before. At the same time, AFN is continuing to advocate for substantively increased and sustainable languages funding so that First Nations' language revitalization activities can be supported on a needs basis.

The CCOL has also overseen work to clarify the implementation of Section 8 and 9 Agreements under the *Indigenous Languages Act* and increase transparency regarding Regionally-Designated Organizations, which operate in some regions, including BC, to distribute federal funding under the Indigenous Languages Component funding envelop.

Regionally, BCAFN will look to advance discussions with partners regarding the implementation of languages related commitments within the Declaration Action Plan.



Check out the BCAFN Annual Report 2021-2022 at [bcafn.ca](https://bcafn.ca)

## Fisheries

Indigenous Fisheries continue as a priority for BCAFN. Our leadership continues to challenge the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on its legal obligations to respect Indigenous rights in fisheries. BCAFN's have been mirrored by efforts made on the Atlantic Coast.

In June 2022, the Senate published their report into the implementation of Rights-based Fisheries for the Mi'kmaw, for which Regional Chief Paul Prosper (Nova Scotia/Newfoundland) and Regional Chief Roger Augustine (Prince Edward Island/New Brunswick) were witnesses. This report reiterated the essential points that stems from the *Marshall* decision: that rights-based fisheries must have priority over privilege-based fisheries. The report, *Peace on the Waters* noted that Department of Fisheries and Oceans does not fully understand the principles set out in Canada's Supreme Court. This has resulted in the outcomes of the *Marshall* decision being at best partially in support of Indigenous fishers and at worst it has made Mi'kmaw fishers the subject of violent conflict and systemic racism.

The Senate's report makes a series of recommendations. First, it proposes a 3-step process to implement rights-based fisheries be put in place: DFO must address its systemic racism, to do this it must incorporate First Nations principles into decision-making around fisheries, and it must maintain any momentum built by continuing open dialogue with First Nations.

After the 2022 Annual General Assembly, the National Fisheries Committee co-chairs met with Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Joyce Murray. Minister Murray pledged to examine her commitments respecting communication about funding for engagement for the future of the *Aquaculture Act*. The co-chairs also made it clear that the *Fisheries Act* must be aligned with the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

The reality is that First Nations salmon stocks of the Northern Pacific and North Atlantic – have been disappearing along with First Nation rights. BCAFN has been communicating the urgent need for action on salmon recovery with other coastal First Nations and Department of Fisheries and Oceans and First

Nations fisheries departments to retain what remains of our cultures and livelihoods that are inextricably linked to salmon. BCAFN and the AFN Yukon have written jointly to DFO Minister Joyce Murray to express their joint concerns on the Pacific Salmon decline seen on all areas of the Pacific coasts that under the Pacific/Yukon Salmon Agreements. Minister Murray responded with an emergency session during the Special Chief's Assembly in December 2022.

At the Special Chief's Assembly, a resolution reaffirmed the need for an end date for open-pen fish farms on the West Coast. It was passed to support Department of Fisheries and Oceans former approach to set a date in 2023 to end open net pen fish farms in BC. The resolution reaffirms that DFO current stalled approach violates the principles, values, and laws of First Nations governments, and threatens the very survival of wild salmon.

The concern for salmon survival and indeed all west coast seafood has prompted greater advocacy work by leadership with the UN Conference of the Parties for Convention on Biodiversity UN Convention on Biological Diversity, together with the Governments of Egypt and China, the Action Agenda for Nature and People was launched "to inspire and take meaningful steps towards building a future global sustainable economy. The agenda is meant for the benefit, prosperity, and well-being of all countries and people to achieve the Convention's Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050." The Conference was held Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

The BCAFN remains interested in the outcomes and approach of Transport Canada's Oceans Protection Plan (OPP), a \$1.5 billion strategy aimed at protecting Canada's coasts and waterways under the core pillars of a state-of-the-art Marine Safety System, Stronger Evidence Base, Increased Community Participation and Public Awareness, Preservation and Restoration of Marine Ecosystems, and Indigenous Partnerships. In particular, BCAFN is monitoring how the Indigenous participation in the assessment of its first phase while affect it reinvestment in its second phase.

## BCAFN Board of Directors

### Chief Harvey McLeod

Upper Nicola

### Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir

Tk'emlups Te Secwepemc

### Chief Jerry Jack

Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation

### Chief Lynda Price

Ulkatcho First Nation

### Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling

Daylu Dena Council

## BCAFN Representatives

### Knowledge Keepers

Dr. Robert Joseph

Gwawaenuk First Nation

Dr. Gwendolyn Point

Sto:Lo Nation

### Women's Representative

Louisa Housty Jones

Heiltsuk Nation

### 2SLGBTQIA+ Representative

Orene Askew

Squamish Nation

### Youth Female Representative

Taylor Behn-Tsakoza,

Fort Nelson First Nation

### Youth Male Representative

Position currently vacant

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Administrative Project Support

Joanna Prince [joanna.prince@bcfn.ca](mailto:joanna.prince@bcfn.ca)

## BCAFN Events

### BCAFN Water Engagement Session

January 25, 2023

Metropolitan Vancouver

[REGISTER](#)

### BCAFN Economic Development Forum

January 31 & February 1, 2023

Westin Wall Centre, Richmond/Vancouver

Airport

[REGISTER](#)

### BCAFN Youth Forum 2023

February 2, 2023

Westin Wall Centre, Richmond/Vancouver

Airport

[REGISTER](#)

### BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly 2023

March, 2023 (date TBA)

Location TBA

Information and registration for all

BCAFN events can be found [here](#)

## AFN Events

### 6TH Annual Water Symposium & Trade Show

February 7 - 9, 2023

Calgary Telus Convention Centre,

Calgary, Alberta

### Save the Date! AFN Annual General

Assembly

July 11 - 13, 2023

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Information and registration for all AFN

events can be found at [here](#)

## BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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