

Newsletter

BC Assembly of First Nations



British Columbia
Assembly of First Nations

Message from Regional Chief Terry Teegee

*Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Grand Chiefs,
Elders, Youths, First Nation members
and honoured guests.*

I am from Takla Lake First Nation, a member of the Lax Gibuu clan, and I carry the hereditary name of Maxweeum Tsimghee. I have been married for 13 years to my wife, Rena Zatorski, and we have two children, our daughter Rylie and son Rowan. We live on the Lheidli T'enneh reserve, located 22 kilometers from the city of Prince George.

As the Regional Chief for the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) and on behalf of the BCAFN Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to provide you with this newsletter containing updates on our work. The BC region includes 203 First Nations, some with historic and modern treaties, some with innovative arrangements to manage their lands and resources; all First Nations in BC seek to improve their jurisdictions in all areas from languages, taxation, decision-making and cultural rejuvenation. It is for this reason the BCAFN exists: to support and advocate for the implementation of First Nations Aboriginal title, rights and treaty rights through exercise of their inherent laws and jurisdiction.

I have committed myself to work tirelessly for First Nations in BC and I have prioritized four areas of my mandate including: Establish Relationships and Communications; Education - Securing our Future Generations; Economic Development; and, Children and Families Matters.

We have been connecting with the Chiefs in BC during our Annual General Assembly, Special Chiefs Assemblies and various other meetings to discuss a wide range of issues of importance to First Nations in BC. The BCAFN



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has been working strategically with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit, as the First Nations Leadership Council to press the provincial and federal government to improve their laws for languages ([Bill C-91](#)), environmental assessments ([Bill C-69](#), [Bill 51](#)), fisheries ([Bill C-68](#)), indigenous child welfare (Bill C-92), implementation of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Bill C-262), and others. Some of these have been approved through Crown processes, and we did not get everything we wanted, but we believe we have moved the dial with respect to changing some of the Crown laws to better address First Nations interests and concerns. We must continue to push for improved implementation of First Nations inherent and Aboriginal rights, title, and treaty rights.

As Regional Chief I hold the national Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) portfolios for economic development (Chair of AFN Chiefs Committee on Economic Development), fisheries (Lead for Pacific region of the AFN National Fisheries Committee, alongside Regional Chief Roger Augustine), justice (alongside Regional

Chief Ghislain Picard), human resource development (Chair of AFN Chiefs Committee on Human Resource Development), cannabis, and skills/training (Chair of AFN Indigenous Skills, Employment and Training). We continue to improve how we get the information out to First Nations to support their efforts to secure new arrangements, protect their rights, title and interests. Forging the path to reconciliation is a priority now and we will continue to make progress to advocate and support the implementation of First Nations inherent Aboriginal rights and title and treaty rights.

Maintaining the economic and political status quo is not an option. Although First Nations have over 276 legal victories, the judicial "duty to consult, accommodate and obtain consent" is not creating legal certainty for anyone. Relying on the courts for legal certainty is like relying on pharmaceuticals for good health. Both are reactive and symptomatic and have no foresight. It is also a burden tying up financial and human resources that can be better used to advance similar interests to generate wealth together.

SAVE THE DATE!

SEPTEMBER 18th, 19th & 20th, 2019

BC Assembly of First Nations 16th Annual General Assembly

*X̣ṃəθḳ ̣əỵəm Musqueam Community Centre
6735 Salish Drive, Vancouver, BC*

For more information go to bcafn.ca or call toll-free 1-877-621-1603.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Economic Development

Under the National Portfolio, the Regional Chief has been involved in a number of discussions, negotiations and initiatives including the new "North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)." The Assembly of First Nations were involved in negotiations, which resulted in the inclusion of protections and beneficial provisions for Indigenous peoples. However, there is no Indigenous chapter or mention of the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), as proposed by Canada. The impact of the new NAFTA depends on this future implementation.

In addition, furthering trade relations, promoting opportunity for First Nations, and building capacity are top priorities, and through efforts such as establishing a First Nation's advisory committee to work with Global Affairs Canada, and proposing procurement legislation that carves out space for First Nation's businesses. Indigenous Skills and Training Services (ISETS), previously ASETS, is a new file created by the Assembly of First Nations.

Provincially, there have been two key deliverables that have seen some exciting developments recently. First, the *BCAFN Business Forum 2019* was held on February 19th and 20th in Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George and was well attended with a total of 120-130 people attending the event. Panels and experts presented their insights on a range of topics from trade, and entrepreneurship to accessing capital and financing. There was a strong emphasis on the work of women and youth in the world business.

Second, the [BCAFN Economic Development Toolkit, or BlackBooks](#) were also brought to regional sessions throughout the province during the Fall/Winter of 2018. Incorporating productive feedback, this Toolkit was revised into a final version and released. We look forward to presenting this to our communities as a tool to support the tremendous work taking place across the province in First Nations business and economic development.

Upcoming

- **World Indigenous Business Forum**
October 8 - 10 in Vancouver.
- **BC First Nations Business Forum**
October 11 in Vancouver.
- **BC First Nations Business Forum**
Winter 2020 in Prince George.



Save the Date

BC First Nations Business Forum

Friday October 11, 2019


Westin Bayshore
1601 Bayshore Drive, Vancouver

Go to bcafn.ca for updates or call 1-877 621-1603

Stay tuned for another SAVE THE DATE: FN Business Forum notice to be held in Prince George January 31, 2020!

The Black Books

This bundled [four book toolkit](#) has recently been released and is a tangible and much requested piece of work filling a gap with respect to building capacity for community level economic development initiatives. It provides context and tools to educate and prepare First Nations members in advancing their economies. As well, three key audiences each have their own edition. This significant piece of work builds upon feedback gathered over 3 years and over 20 regional sessions.



IN THE BLACK

INDIGENOUS
ECONOMIC
SUSTAINABILITY
ROADMAP
BOOK ONE

Cannabis

As the Chair of the AFN's Task Force on Cannabis we are working in three priority areas - Jurisdiction, Licensing, and Legal Implications. To facilitate greater dialogue, policy discussions, planning and capacity considerations, as result of the Cannabis Act, we have:

- developed a literature review of Medical Cannabis,
- conducted an environmental scan of Cannabis Legislation across Canada,
- completed preliminary research on economic and jurisdictional aspects of cannabis,
- held monthly meetings with Cannabis Legislation and Regulation Secretariat for information exchange,
- developed AFN Excise Tax Committee,
- held preliminary discussions with NIHB Joint Review Steering Committee on adding medical cannabis to the formulary.

BCAFN continues to support the participation of the FNLC on the Joint Cannabis Working Group with the Provincial Cannabis Secretariat. On March 27, 2019 the FNLC hosted the first BC First Nations Cannabis Forum to discuss and share information on jurisdiction and law, health and social impacts, and economic development opportunities in the cannabis sector. Based on this work the FNLC and community representatives on the group will be advancing a work plan with the Province, with some of the first priorities being aimed at enhancing First Nations participation in the economic market and promoting health and wellbeing.

The AFN national cannabis summit, September 4 & 5 in Vancouver will further discuss how First Nations rights and interests can be implemented in relation to non-medical cannabis.

Additional initiatives include meeting of NCO with Minister of Health and Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction; distribution of cannabis infographics and informational materials; and a final report to Health Canada.



SAVE THE DATE

AFN National Cannabis Summit

The Westin Bayshore Hotel
1601 Bayshore Drive
Vancouver, BC V6G 2V4

Vancouver, BC • September 4 – 5, 2019

The AFN National Cannabis Summit will host plenary sessions and dialogue sessions to facilitate discussion on the implications of the legalization of cannabis. The Summit is an opportunity for participants to hear updates and engage in dialogue on key issues relating to cannabis and First Nations, including policy consultations, safety, health, social development, economic development and awareness building.

Who should attend:

- Chiefs or their representatives in the health, economic, legal and social development sectors
- First Nations organizations and technicians working or interested in First Nations and the cannabis policy landscape
- Industry, academia and other non-governmental entities involved in First Nations and cannabis issues
- Federal/Provincial/Territorial Government representatives

Please watch for updates at www.afn.ca or email any questions to CannabisSummit2019@afn.ca or call toll-free: 1.866.869.6789

Shared Territories and Overlaps

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), First Nations Summit (FNS), and BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), working together as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), have initiated planning to convene a three-day province-wide All Chiefs' Forum for First Nation leaders to come together for a solutions-oriented, strategic dialogue on shared territories and overlaps. At recent meetings of the FNS, UBCIC and BCAFN, First Nations leaders have passed a number of resolutions that mandate the organizations to explore constructive approaches to addressing boundary, overlap and shared territory issues. This dialogue will build upon existing principles and recommendations that came from All Chiefs' Forums in 2008 and 2014, as well as the May 2019 UBCIC Symposium: *Implementing our Title and Rights - Upholding Self-Determination through Nation-to-Nation, Consent-Based Negotiations and Agreement-Making* by providing an opportunity to discuss, evaluate, and recommend options for the resolution of boundary, overlaps and shared territory issues. The BCAFN will provide further information and opportunity for engagement as planning evolves.



Louisa Housty-Jones pulls up her lines. Photo by Ian Gill.

Women's Wellbeing and Leadership

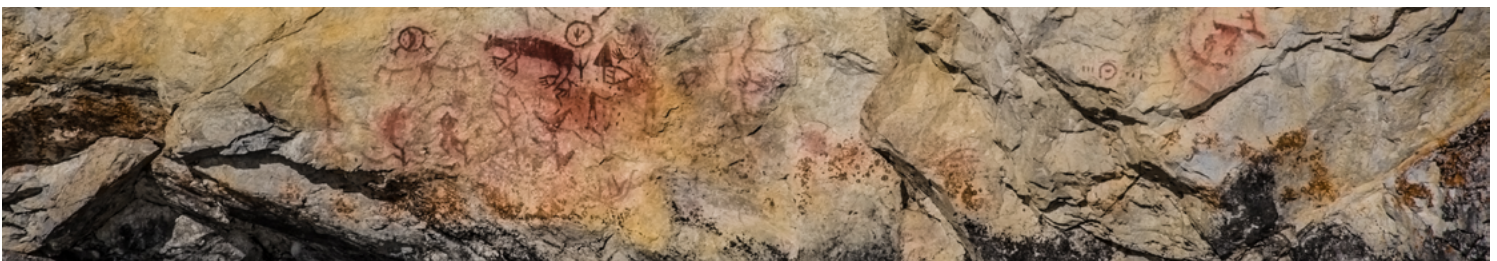
The BCAFN's Women's Representative and Councillor for Heiltsuk Nation, Louisa Housty-Jones, recently participated in the 2019 Women Deliver Conference and a reception in Victoria regarding that National Inquiry into MMIWG. The BCAFN continues to work with like-minded organizations to advance the wellbeing and leadership of First Nations women and girls and engages on the Coalition on MMIWG. Going forward, BCAFN will be holding a second **Women's Dialogue Session** for women and 2SLGBTQIA individuals in leadership to come together on January 24, 2020, build upon the *Women's Declaration* that was endorsed at BCAFN's first Dialogue Session in 2017, and engage in supportive and equipping activities.



BCAFN Youth Forum

The 2nd Annual BCAFN Youth Forum took place from March 29-31, 2019 in Richmond, BC. Along with BCAFN Youth Representatives Angela Charlie and Johnny Hanuse, 33 youth from across the province came together to explore ways to develop a provincial network to support the work of the Youth Representatives in both the provincial and federal arenas. The youth worked with forum facilitator, Zandra Ross, in identifying ways in which youth can encompass leadership roles within

their local communities and externally. The conference included presentations from the Regional Chief, Youth Representatives and included an empowered dialogue with Keynote Speaker Trent Seymour. The highlight of the three-day event was the commitment of the youth in attendance to maintain an on-going connection through social media platforms so that a network can be developed and grow into the future as more youth become engaged.



Language and Culture

Regional Chief Terry Teegee was happy to attend and provide a keynote speech at *HELISET TTE SKÁL - Let the Languages Live* (June 24 – 26th) international conference for Indigenous people celebrating the **UNESCO 2019 Year of Indigenous Languages**. This designation and celebration recognizes the significance of Indigenous languages to matters of sustainable development, peace building and reconciliation. At this conference National Chief Perry Bellegarde highlighted the success that the AFN and many other Indigenous language supporters across the country achieved with the recent passing of [Bill C-91, An Act respecting Indigenous languages](#), which will establish an Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous languages, and facilitate collaboration between federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments to deliver supports for Indigenous languages.

First Peoples' Cultural Council hosted attendees from around the globe to share knowledge and support each

other in revitalizing our languages. Indigenous language experts and advocates from New Zealand, Germany, Norway, the United States, and many other places met to share their knowledge and learn by hearing and telling stories about keeping their languages thriving. Multiple collaborative working sessions and story-telling topics included local BC language advocates Kukpi Ron Ignace and Dr. Marianne Ignace, Dr. Lorna Wanosts'a7 Williams, Dr. Onowa McIvor, Dr. Lolehawk Laura Buker, Elizabeth Phillips, Willow Mussell, Kai Thompson, and Elder Siyamiyateliyot.

In March 2019, the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly mandated the Regional Chief, through [Resolution 03/2019](#), to call on the Government of BC to co-develop and implement legislation to support the revitalization and protection for Indigenous languages in BC. Staff are currently working on developing the concept of this Provincial legislation.

Climate Change

Climate change endangers the security and way of life of Indigenous peoples throughout British Columbia and the world. The effects of the warming climate, such as rampant forest fires, flooding, drought, and elevated air and water temperatures, are impacting First Nations' traditional territories and food sources, and ways of being that have been practiced since time immemorial.

First Nations are also essential drivers of effective climate change action. Indigenous ecological knowledge, authority and deep responsibilities to traditional lands and waters are critical to achieving world targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions and developing effective climate adaptation strategies.

In recognition of the climate emergency, the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a Resolution no. 04/2019: [Climate Emergency and Support for the Development of a BC First Nations Climate Change Strategy](#), mandating the BCAFN, work with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), to take action to respond to climate change, to develop a climate change strategy, and communicate to partners about priority areas. We are currently seeking funding to develop the activities envisioned in the mandate.

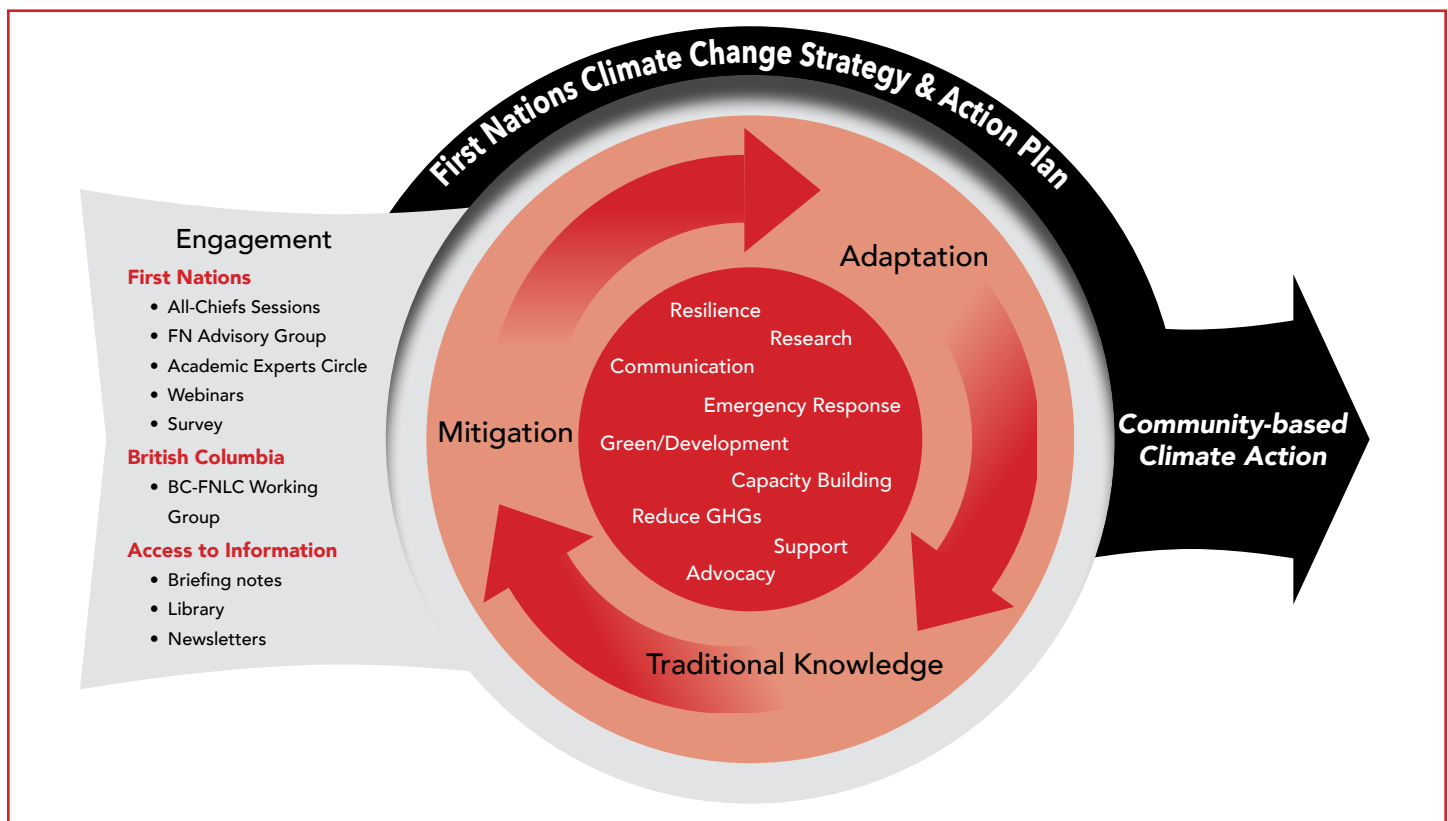
Likewise, with the FNLC, the BCAFN strongly advocates for First Nations in BC to be true partners with the

Provincial and Federal Governments to tackle climate change. This approach is consistent with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and respectful of First Nations' inherent Aboriginal Title, Rights and Treaty Rights.

Currently, we are in conversation with the Province to establish a staff-level BC-FNLC working group to engage in dialogue, exchange information, develop recommendations, provide strategic advice and review progress on provincial climate change actions.

On June 17, 2019, Canada's House of Commons passed a motion to declare a **National Climate Emergency**. This motion requires Canada to: meet its national emission target under [The Paris Agreement](#); make deeper reductions in line with the agreement's objective of holding global warming below 2oC, and; pursue efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 oC.

The BCAFN welcomes the *National Climate Emergency Declaration*. However, all governments must recognize that many First Nations in BC are already in the process of developing their own strategies to mitigate emissions and respond to impacts during this climate emergency and support is needed to continue and expand these efforts. The diagram below outlines the process for the *BC First Nations' Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan*:





Fisheries

As Co-chair of the National Fisheries Committee, there has been work underway to develop a secretariat regarding the implementation of Supreme Court of Canada decisions as they relate to our fishing rights. As per Resolution 61/2018 passed at the December 2018 AFN Special Chiefs Assembly, the AFN will work to support the respect, protection, and preservation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), including IKS in the context of fisheries through federal, provincial, and territorial advocacy, and coordinating the development of an IKS Framework. This will include calling upon the relevant Ministers to provide adequate funding directly to individual First Nations to support the protection, practice, preservation, and promotion of IKS for future generations.

We are monitoring the Big Bar Rock Slide and the impacts to migrating salmon up the Fraser River. We are deeply concerned about impacts of climate change and mounting challenges for salmon populations.

Justice

The national AFN Justice Portfolio is shared between the BC Regional Chief Terry Teegee and Quebec Regional Chief Ghislain Picard. Together, they continue to advocate and promote for fundamental change in the Canadian Judicial system. BC is fortunate to have a First Nations Justice Council (FNJC), with the mandate to represent and advocate on behalf of First Nations in the province for structural transformation of the BC Judicial System.

The FNJC recently brought together First Nations leaders, First Nations organizations, practitioners, and subject matter experts with an in-depth understanding of Indigenous justice issues to discuss opportunities for transformative change. They will be sharing insights they have gathered from BC First Nations leaders and community for the purpose of the provincial Indigenous Justice Strategy development.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry presented its report and [231 Calls for Justice](#) on June 3, after two years of hearings and evidence gathering. The final report speaks to what many of us already know as lived realities. Now is a time for action, and to hold governments to account and to ensure the Calls to Justice are acted upon and implemented.



Photo Credit: FNHA

First Nations Children and Families

[Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019, National Indigenous Peoples Day. This legislation affirms the inherent jurisdiction over children and families held by First Nations and is a critical step in addressing the humanitarian crisis that exists surrounding Indigenous child welfare. The devastating impacts of separating children from their families, communities and cultures will be diminished as Indigenous children's best interests will be prioritized under the jurisdiction of their own communities. Keeping children connected to their families and to their culture will work to make Indigenous communities and Nations stronger and healthier.

Sustained collaboration respecting First Nations child and family well-being is intended to support the mutual goal of improving outcomes for First Nations children and families. With commitment from the federal and provincial governments, the established Tripartite Working Group will work towards this goal by:

- Supporting improved relations and engagement between First Nations, the Province and Canada as they relate to child and family well-being;
- Identifying potential governance models for First Nations communities relating to child and family well-being; and,
- Identifying equitable and impactful investment approaches for governance relating to child and family well-being in First Nations communities.

The Working Group has established and supported a Reconciliation Charter, Terms of Reference and a work plan which outlines short, medium, and long-term objectives. A number of current priorities include development of a political accord with MCFD which will set a pathway for implementation which supports rights and title holders, and ensuring provincial alignment and negotiations regarding funding models.

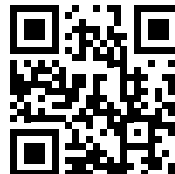
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Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER

[AFN Cannabis Forum](#)

Vancouver, BC September 4&5

[BCAFN Annual General Assembly](#)

Vancouver, BC September 18-20

OCTOBER

[World Indigenous Economic Development](#)

Vancouver, BC October 8-10

[BCAFN Business Forum](#)

Vancouver, BC October 11

NOVEMBER

[BC Cabinet & First Nations' Leaders Gathering](#)

Vancouver, BC November 5 & 6

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