

BC Assembly of First Nations

Annual Report

2022 - 2023



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS



Cover photograph by David Luggi, Stelat'en First Nation



“Governments must listen when Indigenous peoples decide according to their own laws, customs and traditions whether a project should proceed, be modified or be rejected.”

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United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples





Annual Report 2022-2023

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**“Human rights bodies have
recognized that free, prior and
informed consent is essential
to protect a wide range of
Indigenous peoples’ fundamental
rights, including rights to culture,
food and health.”**

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Message from Regional Chief Terry Teegee

Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Youths, First Nations members:

The last year at the BC Assembly of First Nations has been a hard one, but also one full of accomplishments and milestones. This report focuses on the 2022-2023 fiscal year, and many of our staff will also be speaking to some of the important issues we are addressing through the summer of 2023.

A number of important events have happened over this period related to implementing the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* both nationally and in the province of BC. The BCAFN, along with our partners at the First Nations Leadership Council, have led the way in engaging with the federal government on the *UN Declaration Act National Action Plan (NAP)*. The Plan was tabled by the Federal Government on June 20th of this year after a great deal of work by First Nations and other Indigenous groups and on June 21st, I travelled to Ottawa to witness the announcement. The NAP reflects a year of engagement with Indigenous peoples across the country and though imperfect, the NAP represents a significant step forward in bringing Canada's laws, policies, and practices into alignment with the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The ongoing and effective participation of First Nations in the implementation of the UNDA Action Plan will be critical to its success. The BCAFN will continue to work to ensure that the priorities and perspectives of First Nations in BC are represented in the work to come.



Of course I have been around long enough to know that this will mean more work from all of us – and that First Nations will need to continue to hold colonial governments to account. To this end, last March I was able to meet with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Francisco Calí Tzay, alongside representatives of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, the Office of the Wet'suwet'en, former Chief of Neskonlith Indian Band, Judy Wilson and the FNLC. We brought our concerns about the continuing infringement of our rights by Canada, as well as the continued targeting of First Nations and Indigenous people in general by police and prosecutors. This meeting allowed our BC First Nations to elevate our concerns to the level of the UN, and the Special Rapporteur also provided us mechanisms at that level to pursue our goals.

Here in British Columbia, we have seen some successes with the implementation of the *Declaration Act*. The Provincial Action Plan was tabled just before last fiscal year, in March 2022. The *Declaration Act* provides us with a tool to continue to advance our rights and hold the Province to their promises. Over the last year, working with the BC First Nations Forestry Council, we were successful in stopping further changes to forestry legislation without our input, and have begun working with the Ministry of Forests to make regulations *DRIPA* compliant. *DRIPA* Implementation has also meant progress on policing and justice reform with steps taken towards reforming the *Police Act*.

BCAFN staff and leadership continue to push for changes in all our mandated including cannabis, climate and environment, water, 2SLGBTQIA+ issues, and the others you can read about in this report.

I would like to highlight that the period covered by this report witnessed challenges and changes at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). We are working together to make sure that the national organization and First Nations across the country are accountable and transparent, while striving to achieve the best outcomes for communities.

Finally, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Chiefs who continuously hold me up. I am truly humbled by the ongoing confidence and trust shown in me as I embark on another term as Regional Chief, elected by acclamation. This overwhelming show of approval marks an historic achievement for a Regional Chief in British Columbia. Mussi cho for your unwavering support.

Terry Teegee has served as the elected Regional Chief of the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) for the past six years and is currently serving his third term in this position. His exceptional leadership and dedication have recently earned him a unanimous nomination. Terry's ancestry includes Dakelh, Gitxsan, and Sekani descent, and he is a proud member of the Takla Nation.

Prior to assuming his role of Regional Chief, Terry worked as a successful Registered Professional Forester, where he was responsible for the management of forests, forest lands, and forest resources. His expertise and passion led him to become deeply involved in natural resources management, particularly in improving laws, regulations, and policies that impact First Nations in British Columbia.

As Regional Chief, Terry played a significant role in developing and successfully passing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) and the federal UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDA). He has also demonstrated strong leadership on various portfolios and issues, both at the provincial and national levels. These include serving as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chair on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Committee, Co-Chair of the AFN National Fisheries Committee, Co-Lead on the AFN Justice and Policing Portfolio, Co-Chair for the Champions Table with BC Business Council, a member of the Tripartite Working Group (TWG) to implement Bill C-92 (Indigenous Child Welfare Jurisdiction Bill), and as an AFN Representative on the UN Convention of Biodiversity. Furthermore, Terry is a member of the BC First Nation Gaming Commission.

Terry is highly regarded for his caring and collaborative leadership style. He is dedicated to unifying and supporting people toward the recognition of their inherent rights, Title, Treaty Rights, and Human Rights as Indigenous Peoples. He values the guidance and direction of Chiefs in British Columbia and has worked closely with them to advocate for the protection and enhancement of First Nations' inherent and treaty rights. Terry has had the opportunity to meet with various leaders at all levels, including the Pope during his visit to Canada in 2022, Prime Minister Trudeau, federal ministers, provincial ministers, and foreign dignitaries, such as ministers, ambassadors, and indigenous leaders from around the world.

Prior to becoming the Regional Chief, Terry held the position of elected Tribal Chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) from 2012-2017, as well as the CSTC Vice Tribal Chief from 2009-2012. He has also held forestry and natural resources roles with the CSTC and Takla Nation. Terry holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Natural Resources Management (Forestry) from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and a Natural Resources Technology Diploma from the College of New Caledonia.

With over 20 years of political experience and a fervent dedication to working with First Nations in British Columbia, Canada, and internationally, Terry Teegee is a passionate and experienced leader. He resides with his wife Rena Zatorski, on the Lheidli T'enneh Shelley Reserve, 22 km up the Fraser River from Prince George. They have been happily married for 20 years and are proud parents to their two children, Rylie and Rowan.



Message from Interim National Chief Joanna Bernard

'Qey/'Kwey, bonjour and hello to all the Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Elders, Youth, and participants. It is my honour to extend my best wishes for the British Columbia (BC) Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Annual General Assembly, held on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. I congratulate every one of you on a momentous year.

The BCAFN Annual General Assembly is a time to reflect on our shared achievements, address challenges, and chart a collective path forward. It also holds great significance, as it brings together members from across the BC Region, representing our spirit, diversity, and strength. The resilience of our communities, particularly during the wildfire season, is a testament to our collective spirit, diversity, and strength. The leadership of BCAFN, along with the relentless efforts of community members, emergency management teams, first responders, and healthcare professionals, is truly inspiring.

In collaboration with BCAFN, the AFN has been persistent in our advocacy to address the priorities and concerns of Nations, including the pressing need for climate action. As original stewards of this land, First Nations are often at the forefront of climate crises, working tirelessly to ensure the safety, well-being, and future of our communities, environment, and resources, for generations to come. In our shared advocacy, we continue to urge all levels of government to strengthen emergency response mechanisms, increase resources for wildfire prevention, mitigation, and relief, and ensure that the rights and well-being of our people remain a top priority.



We have been proactive in making progress on addressing regional needs, implementing resolutions, and championing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Leveraging Canada's United Nations Declaration Act (UNDA) Action Plan, we have enhanced our advocacy in key areas, including Indigenous policing and specific claims reforms, and upholding and affirming First Nations' fishing rights. I extend a special acknowledgement to the BC Region's Youth and Knowledge Keepers for their contributions, perspectives, and knowledge in these areas, as they are essential in moving forward our discussions.

As Interim National Chief, my focus remains on stabilizing the AFN as an organization and protecting the safety and well-being of all staff at AFN. By taking action on the Panel 13 report recommendations, we are advancing actions that will create an inclusive and progressive working environment. This is essential so that we can also uphold the work we have been mandated to do by resolution and that is ensuring that the rights and interests of First Nations are heard and respected by all. As part of this work, I am dedicated to ensuring that the AFN is advancing First Nations' priorities as directed by First Nations-in-Assembly. Your voices and guidance are essential to ensure we are driving our collective priorities forward.

I would like to acknowledge BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee for his leadership and dedication to the AFN Executive Committee. As Regional Chief Teegee begins another term as Regional Chief, I look forward to the positive changes he will bring to all communities across the BC region, with the guidance and support of the Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Youth, and Knowledge Keepers.

In closing, I wish you all a productive Assembly. Let us continue to push forward and reaffirm our collective commitment to advancing the rights, title, jurisdiction, and well-being of our people to ensure a brighter future for our Nations. I look forward to seeing you all in December, at the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly 2023. Woliwon/Wela'lin, Merci, Thank you.

Read more about the National Chief at the AFN [website](#)



Message from Chief of Staff Vanessa West

BC First Nations Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Youths, First Nations members and honoured guests:

It is once more an honour and a privilege to report to you as the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) Chief of Staff on the administrative aspects of the organization. I would like to begin by acknowledging the leadership provided by Regional Chief Terry Teegee and our BCAFN Board of Directors, Knowledge Keepers, and Women's/Youth/2SLGBTQQIA+ Council Representatives. It is through their guidance, support, and continued focus on the betterment of the lives of our BC First Nations that BCAFN has steadily moved forward on various issues since our last AGM in September 2022.

Over the past year, BCAFN has experienced unprecedented growth in our policy staff contingency. Our team expanded with the retention of a new FNLC Cannabis Policy Analyst, Climate Change – Environment Policy Analyst, Policy Analyst for Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Initiatives, and a Senior Policy Analyst focusing on UNDA. Further staff will be retained to support the BC First Nations Centre of Excellence in Economic Development, inclusive of a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Executive Assistant, and Policy Analysts. The Climate Change portfolio will be seeking further policy support through the retention of a Climate Change Junior Policy Analyst, and BCAFN is currently in the process of filling the position of Housing Policy Analyst. Since my retention in April 2018, our staff has grown from 4 members to 17, with 6 additional staff to be hired by the end of the year.

As we experienced growth in one area, we were also affected by the loss of staff through the organization's administrative arm. Due to funding shortfalls in core funding from AFN, we had to make the difficult decision to remove the Administrative Support Worker position. This position will remain vacant until sustainable funding can be acquired, and responsibilities will be absorbed by the remaining staff.

BCAFN's Finance Manager left the organization earlier this year to pursue another opportunity, which was very impactful on operations as this was a senior management position. The Finance Manager position was left vacant, with contractors retained to oversee the financial management of the organization, and this arrangement was going to be in place until the outcome of the Regional Chief Election was decided upon. To post this crucial senior management position without being able to guarantee employment past October 2023, as there were implications from the RC election, would not have garnered the level of expertise required to fill this role. This position was then posted on August 8, and the position has since been filled with staff starting in October 2023.

As a result of these circumstances, the effective dissemination of the financial information in a timely manner to KPMG was negatively impacted, which then affected the timeframes for completion. This was not a reflection of any issues with KPMG in meeting their obligations but the fact that BCAFN was in a situation in which the needed financial management was not available for the oversight of this vital process.

Based upon this, the audited financial statements to March 31, 2023, are unavailable to be presented to the Chiefs-in-Assembly at our AGM. Options for the review of these statements will be discussed at the AGM. The BCAFN Board and staff have full confidence that the audit will result in unqualified approval of the BCAFN financial statements. On behalf of the BCAFN Board and Regional Chief, I apologize for the inconvenience this has caused.

Since I last reported to you in 2022, BCAFN has returned to in-person engagements for our Special Chief's Assembly, Annual General Meeting, and portfolio-specific events. Although this has been a welcome return to the normality we had



prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the current financial situation has put these types of engagements at risk. Rising costs associated with travel, accommodations, venue rentals, and logistical needs have placed in-person meetings at risk for reduction moving forward. BCAFN will continue to look at ways to maximize funding while offering the highest quality of services for our membership to engage, but there may be modifications in how we host our events moving forward.

On behalf of the BCAFN administration and policy staff, I look forward to continuing to work with our BC First Nations leadership as we collaboratively work towards forging a path forward for the betterment and benefit of our First Nations people through the advancement of our collective rights, title and jurisdiction.

Vanessa West (she/her) is a member of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and had served as an elected member of Council from 2001 to 2009 and from 2015-2019. She previously worked as the Treaty Office Manager for the Lheidli T'enneh Treaty Office for nine years from 1998-2007. Prior to taking on the role of Chief of Staff for the BC Assembly of First Nations, she worked with Positive Living North, an Aboriginal HIV/AIDS non-for-profit service organization, transitioning her career from First Nations politics to the social services field. Initially managing the street-level HIV/AIDS/HCV Prevention Program, the Fire Pit Cultural Drop-In Centre in 2007, she then moved into the role of Executive Director, which she held from 2008 to 2018.

To expand her knowledge and understanding around addictions and street- involved populations, she began working for the AIDS Prevention Program/Needle Exchange in Prince George from 2008 to 2013 as an after-hours Intake/Support Worker. During this time, Vanessa also volunteered as a Board Member for the Canadian AIDS Society and served two terms with this national organization.

Vanessa is the proud mother of three children, Jordan, Alexandria and John-Michael and a grandmother to her first grandson, Koa. She currently lives in her community with her partner of fourteen years, Randy, and joined the BCAFN team in April 2018.





DEVELOPMENT

VISION

First Nations governments exercising title, rights', and jurisdiction for our lands, resources and peoples in harmony with our customs, languages and laws.

MISSION

BCAFN will ensure that:

- First Nations title, rights, and jurisdiction are recognized and respected;
- First Nations cultural identities, systems of government and approaches to self-determination are the foundation of our success;
- First Nations jurisdiction, laws, territories and traditions are respected by governments, industry and the public;
- First Nations are empowered by governmental legislation, policies, programs and processes; and
- Our efforts support nation building, collective action and a focus on solutions.

MANDATE

- Advance the rights and interests of First Nations people in British Columbia;
- Restore and enhance the relationship among First Nations in British Columbia, the Crown and people of Canada;
- Develop and promote policies and resources for the benefit of First Nations in British Columbia including, but not limited to, governance, lands and resources, economic, environmental, social, education, health and cultural matters; and,
- Take direction from the Chiefs-in-Assembly according to the resolutions passed at Assemblies.

About the ASSEMBLY of FIRST NATIONS

First Nation leaders (Chiefs) from coast to coast to coast direct the work of AFN through resolutions passed at Chiefs Assemblies held at least twice a year. The AFN National Executive is made up of the National Chief, 10 Regional Chiefs and the chairs of the Elders, Women's and Youth councils. Regional Chiefs are elected every three years by Chiefs in their regions. Chiefs, who are elected by the citizens and members of their respective communities, elect the National Chief every three years.

The role of the National Chief and the AFN is to advocate on behalf of First Nations as directed by Chiefs-in-Assembly. This includes facilitation and coordination of national and regional discussions and dialogue, advocacy efforts and campaigns, legal and policy analysis, communicating with governments, including facilitating relationship building between First Nations and the Crown as well as public and private sectors and general public.

The term "First Nations" refers to one of three distinct groups recognized as "Aboriginal" in the Constitution Act of 1982. The other two distinct groups characterized as "Aboriginal" are the Métis and the Inuit. There are 634 First Nation communities in Canada, each a part of a unique larger linguistic and cultural groups that vary across the country. In fact, there are over 50 distinct nations and language groups across the country.

First Nations have a unique and special relationship with the Crown and the people of Canada as set out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and manifested in Treaties, the Constitution Acts of 1867 and 1982, Canadian common law and International law and as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This special relationship between First Nations and the Crown is grounded in First Nation inherent and Aboriginal rights and title, Treaties and negotiated agreements with a view toward peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, recognition and the equitable sharing of lands and resources. Many Treaties, reflected in written documents, wampum and oral understanding, were entered into between First Nations and the British Crown (the Government of Canada after Confederation) between 1701 and 1923. Treaty promises and agreements included non-interference, protection of hunting and fishing rights, sharing of lands and resources, health and education benefits, economic tools and benefits for the duration of the Treaty relationship.

Go to the AFN [website](#) to learn more.



“When governments point to agreements with one Indigenous Nation as an excuse for ignoring the opposition of another, they are perpetuating old practices of ‘divide and conquer’ that have no place in reconciliation”

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BCAFN NATIONAL ACTIVITY

CANNABIS

Over the past year, the BCAFN has continued to advance BC First Nations title and rights in regard to cannabis, consistently emphasizing colonial governments' obligations to respect First Nations jurisdiction.

Declaration Act Action Plan Action 4.47

The FNLC has been working with the BC Cannabis Secretariat (BCCS) to advance the implementation of Declaration Act Action Plan action 4.47. The BC Cannabis Secretariat held four virtual engagement sessions with BC First Nations sessions in February and March 2023 in order to support the implementation of action 4.47. A "What We Heard" report was developed and was released on September 1st, 2023. The FNLC technical team supported the design and implementation of these sessions, as well as the What We Heard report. The BC-FNLC Working Group has also been briefed at key milestones, and the intention is to continue to seek strategic guidance from this group. However, challenges in the co-development process have contributed to delays in moving this work forward, and the FNLC is seeking to recalibrate this work to align with the Interim Approach.

Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples Report

In October 2022, the [Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples](#) held hearings to better understand the current cannabis laws, economic opportunity, and barriers to First Nation participation. In June 2023, the committee published their findings and recommendations. Among the other First Nation leaders who spoke to the committee, the report cited important concerns raised by Chief Councillor - waamiš (Ken Watts). The committee found that many of the problems identified by First Nations prior to the legalization of cannabis have not been addressed.

The committee made 13 recommendations, including that the Minister of Health introduce legislation to amend the *Cannabis Act* to permit First Nations to regulate the possession, sale and distribution of cannabis on their lands. The committee also recommended that there be increased funding for policing and enforcement of First Nations cannabis laws and additional funding and training for First Nations police services.

Federal Cannabis Act Review

The timing of this report is critical to BC First Nations as Health Canada initiated a review of the federal *Cannabis*

Act, and established an Expert Panel to "help identify priority areas for improving the functioning of the legislation.

Regional Chief Teegee is the Co-Chair of the AFN Chiefs Committee on Cannabis. While this Committee has been challenged to secure sufficient resourcing, the AFN has advocated for First Nations to be fulsomely engaged in the federal government's review of the *Cannabis Act*, and efforts are underway to reconvene the Committee and meet with the *Cannabis Act* review Expert Panel.

The FNLC supported the Expert Panel to meet with BC First Nations in Vancouver on March 28th, 2023. The Panel voiced their understanding of the challenges and barriers and committed to further engagement.

BC Indigenous Cannabis Business Fund

In fall 2022, the FNS, BCAFN, the province of BC, and the federal government launched the Indigenous Cannabis Business Fund, which will deliver \$9.75 million for First Nations cannabis-related activities over 3 years. This fund is administered by the New Relationship Trust in partnership with three Aboriginal Financial Institutions. Funds continue to be available for community engagement, the development of business plans, as well as capital grants up to \$250,000. Path-finding supports are also available through the [New Relationship Trust](#).

As of now, 8 projects have been approved for funding amounting to \$1,134,625 in grant commitments, and several more are "in progress" for approval. In most of those cases, the AFI is waiting for documentation from the applicant to move ahead with the file. The funding from the Province, including a top-up addition received in April 2023, in addition to Canada's portion that has been received thus far, is being carried forward to this fiscal year. We have received a total of 68 applications since the fund was launched 9 months ago in December 2022.

While the total value of the program is \$9.75 million, \$7.25 has been received, and of that, approximately \$1.3m is committed, comprising \$1.134m in grants and \$200K in administration.

This Fund is an example of positive, tangible collaboration to support challenges in accessing capital; however, there remains much more substantive work to be done on a wide range of First Nations' interests,



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including jurisdiction, health, safety, traditional use, taxation, and economic development.

BC First Nations Cannabis Strategy

Within the context of this work, BCAFN continues to advance the key areas of the BC First Nations Cannabis Strategy Framework, which the BC First Nation Chiefs provided in-principal support for through [Resolution 09/2022](#). The 6 priority areas identified in the framework are:

1. The recognition of inherent jurisdiction over cannabis;
2. Cannabis taxation and revenue sharing jurisdiction;
3. Support First Nations cannabis businesses and entrepreneurs;

4. Prioritize community safety;
5. Strengthen health and wellness advocacy work through First Nations institutions and
6. The necessary infrastructure, institutions and other supportive resources are required to be successful in the Cannabis market.

BCAFN is advancing work to complete the final draft of the Strategy as a resource for First Nations and to strengthen the FNLC's advocacy. It is anticipated that the final draft Strategy will be brought to Chiefs in Assembly for consideration in Spring 2024.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regional Chief Teegee shifted his national portfolio this year, regaining his position as Chair of the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCED). The CCED is working on several national actions including a federal government procurement process for First Nations, international trade, banking regulation, and digital currency.

The CCED has been in flux over the last year, adjusting to the national economic climate and bringing in new leadership on the economic development portfolio. The next CCED meeting in October will seek to revitalize this important national portfolio and seek key focus areas from leadership.

FISHERIES

Regional Chief Terry Teegee Co-Chairs the AFN National Fisheries Committee with Regional Chief Joanna Bernard (New Brunswick), and Regional Chief Darlene Bernard (PEI). This committee has been working to implement a national fisheries strategy, and is focusing on:

- Aquaculture - ocean and in-land (fresh water)
- Federal programs (i.e. Oceans Protection Plan, Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, etc.)
- Federal policies and legislation (i.e. wild salmon policy, Fisheries Act, etc.)

We have been working with the new Minister Diane Lebouthillier to bring her up to speed on these issues, and the changes that DFO needs to make to bring it in line with our rights. One of the key points that RC Teegee has been pushing is that Canada must work with First Nations and the Province to ensure that our governments are leading the work to protect marine habitat and ocean

resources – and are not being consulted as stakeholders. Many Coastal First Nations have been successful in this regard by building government-to-government agreements to collaboratively manage their resources with the Crown, and we commend you for these breakthroughs.

Of course we continue to see colonial attitudes from DFO in how they attempt to regulate fisheries. Last year, in asserting their inherent and treaty rights to fisheries resources, the the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoquiyik and Peskontomuhkati peoples were faced with racism and incompetence by both the DFO and RCMP.

Regional Chief Teegee took these messages to the IMPAC5 - Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress, held in Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh territory earlier this year. He spoke on the need for First Nations to be central players in

oceans management, protection, conservation and enhancement.

Finally, another year of record-breaking drought and fires in the province has demonstrated the direct link between climate change and our own food security. The drought has put already endangered salmon runs in

further peril, as hot, sluggish water reduces fertility and increases mortality. We must continue to push all levels of government to take climate change seriously as it is directly impacting our communities' rights.

JUSTICE & POLICING

This year, the landscape of justice and policing for First Nations continued to shift and evolve. First Nations continue to advance work and advocacy that will support the establishment and maintenance of their own justice systems and reduce the negative effects of the colonial justice system. BCAFN continues to uphold the importance of culture and the recognition of First Nations jurisdiction as a foundational element of this work.

Federal Legislation recognizing First Nations Policing as an Essential Service

Co-Chaired by Regional Chief Terry Teegee and Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, the Assembly of First Nations Policing Taskforce continues to meet regularly. The Taskforce is composed of experts in First Nations Policing, regional representatives, and executive members of the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association from across Canada. From BC, this work is supported by Chief Jerry Jack and Chief Dean Nelson. The mandate of the Taskforce is to provide support and guidance for the co-development of First Nations Policing Essential Services legislation. Through BCAFN Resolution 06/2023: Support for The Recommendations and Principles of The Federal First Nations Police Services Legislation Strategy Paper, Chiefs-in-Assembly provided direction and guidance to the priorities that BC representatives and technicians should bring to this work. At present, a subgroup of the Taskforce has been working to further develop First Nations priorities for the federal legislation.

As a result of an ongoing lack of meaningful collaboration by Public Safety Canada (PSC) and their lack of mandate regarding the recognition of First Nations jurisdiction, at the AFN AGA in July, the First Nations-in-Assembly passed Resolution 34/2024 Support for Equitable Funding for First Nations Policing. The resolution directs AFN to call upon Canada to "reset" the co-development process. The Policing Taskforce Co-Chairs have sought a meeting with the new Minister of PSC, Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, to seek a viable path forward.

On June 12th, 2023, the AFN was granted intervenor status on behalf of the Indigenous Police Chiefs of Ontario (IPCO) concerning their ongoing federal court motion. Three police services, the Treaty Three Police Service, the UCCM Anishnaabe Police Service, and the Anishinabek Police Service, faced a critical funding shortfall due to stalled negotiations with PSC. Several of the communities affected by this disruption declared a state of emergency. Each of these police services faced oppressive, coercive, and fundamentally unacceptable treatment by PSC in the renegotiation of their funding under the discriminatory terms of the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program. IPCO also filed a motion asserting violation of Section 5 of the Canadian Human Rights Act through the discriminatory provision of services. On June 30, 2023 Justice Denis Gascon ruled that PSC must immediately flow funds to the affected parties and that PSC's conduct was not in keeping with the Honour of the Crown and that their actions violate the principles of reconciliation. As co-chair of the Policing Taskforce, Regional Chief Terry Teegee participated in a press conference supporting IPCO during the AFN AGA in July 2023.

International Advocacy

José Francisco Calí Tzay, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, delivered his preliminary report on March 10, 2023. This report followed a 10-day trip across Canada, which included a meeting with the FNLC held in North Vancouver hosted by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. In this preliminary report, Mr. Calí Tzay expressed particular concern about the forced and coerced sterilization of Indigenous women, the militarization of Indigenous lands, the criminalization of Indigenous human rights defenders, and the over-incarceration of Indigenous peoples across the country. He urged Canada to address the systemic issues underlying the poverty-prison pipeline, reduce the drastically disproportionate number of Indigenous children in the child-welfare system, and condemned the



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appalling legacy of residential schools, residential school denialism, and violence against Indigenous women and girls. The Final Report from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be released by September 2023.

In August 2023 BCAFN also joined the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC), the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and Prisoners' Legal Services (PLS) in drawing international attention to Canada's continued mass incarceration of Indigenous people leading up to Canada's 4th Universal Periodic Review Pre-Session. The organizations are calling on Canada to redirect one third of Correctional Service Canada's approximately \$3 billion annual budget – or \$1 billion annually – to Indigenous governments and organizations to decarcerate Indigenous people in a manner consistent with the UNDRIP.

Provincial Policing and Public Safety

The BCAFN is also working with the FNLC and the BC First Nations Justice Council to advance policing and public safety modernization efforts with BC in alignment with the UN Declaration through the process outlined

in the Interim Approach. The full participation of First Nations in this work is of utmost priority as BC considers legislative and policy changes. The recognition and utilization of recommendations borne from the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+, and various other Indigenous-led reports and advocacy work will be central in the co-development of any future legislation. We anticipate that this work will be a significant priority in the coming months. BCAFN also continues to engage with BC on a number of other legislative and policy initiatives related to community safety, gender-based violence, justice, and policing.

The FNLC is in the final stages of finalizing the FNLC-RCMP Public Safety Cooperation Protocol. This protocol now clarifies the important role that the BC First Nations Justice Council will have moving forward on matters of justice with the BC government and with First Nations communities.

UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

On June 21, 2021, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDA) came into force. This Act requires the Government of Canada, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, to:

- Take all measures necessary to ensure that federal laws are consistent with the Declaration (Section 5);
- Prepare and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of the Declaration (Section 6); and
- Develop annual reports on progress and submit them to Parliament (Section 7).

The deadline for the Canadian government to table a National Action plan to implement the UNDA was June 23, 2023.

Lead by the Department of Justice, Canada asked Indigenous nations, governments, and organizations across Canada to submit their priorities for inclusion in a National Action Plan (NAP).

On June 20, 2023, the Department of Justice tabled its UNDA NAP in Parliament.

The NAP contains 181 recommendations divided across five distinct chapters: 1) Shared Priorities; 2) First Nations Priorities; 3) Inuit Priorities; 4) Métis Priorities; 5) Indigenous Modern Treaty Partner Priorities. The NAP outlines a whole of government roadmap for advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through a national-to-nation relationship. The NAP aims to address departmental injustices, violence, prejudice, systemic racism, and discrimination. The measures also aim to ensure the consistency of all Government of Canada laws and policies with the UN Declaration.

The NAP supports the advancement of self-determination and self-government, treaty implementation, participation in decision-making over lands, territories, and resources, as well as the creation of a healthy environment and the revitalization of languages, cultures, and legal systems.

While The NAP has been acknowledged as a positive



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step forward in the realization of the rights of Indigenous peoples as articulated by the UN Declaration, many have noted significant concerns regarding particular flaws which require improvement if the NAP is to be successful.

In recognition of these shortcomings the Department of Justice has committed to reviewing and revising the NAP as an evergreen document, in cooperation with Indigenous peoples, to ensure that the document reflects the needs and priorities of Indigenous peoples.

The success of the NAP will be contingent on the specific process and mechanisms utilized by Canada, to co-develop and implement the provisions of the NAP alongside an adequate investment in building First Nations' capacity to undertake what will be a significant amount of work to ensure Canada's laws, policies and practices are aligned with the standards of the UN Declaration.

To ensure that the priorities and interests of First Nations in BC, the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) developed the FNLC Priorities Paper to articulate guiding principles and priorities actions to be included in the NAP. These principles and priorities were developed based on direction and input from First Nations in BC including through resolutions of the BCAFN, FNS, and UBCIC; circulation and review of the principles and priorities by First Nations and sectoral First Nations organizations; and through dialogue at an All-Chiefs' Assembly hosted by the FNLC on March 29, 2023, in Vancouver. The FNLC Priorities Paper was submitted to Minister Lametti on May 3rd.

In summary, the FNLC Priorities Paper called on the Government of Canada to adopt the following principles to guide the development of the NAP and the implementation of the UNDA:

1. Comprehensive and Coherent
2. Progressive
3. Clarity of Scope
4. Distinctions-Based
5. Inclusivity
6. Integrative
7. Measurable
8. Expediency

With these principles in mind, the FNLC identified the following five priority areas around which the NAP should be organized, all of which are expanded upon in the submission:

1. Lands, Resources and Territories

2. Self-determination and the Inherent Right of Self-Government
3. Eliminating Indigenous-Specific Racism, Discrimination and Violence against First Nations People
4. Social, Cultural and Economic Well-Being; and
5. Accountability and Implementation.

To complement the FNLC Priorities Paper, the BCAFN draft the Options Paper which compiled a list of action items and guiding principles to be included in the NAP. These principles and priorities were developed based on existing mandates passed through resolution at the regular meetings of the BCAFN. The BCAFN submitted this paper on May 11, 2023.

The BCAFN Options Paper identifies 15 principles which should guide the interpretation of the actions and priorities put forth by the FNLC and should guide the actions of the Government of Canada in the implementation of the UNDA.

In addition to the 15 principles the paper identifies 204 actions divided into the following sections:

1. Self-Determination and Inherent Right of Self-Government
2. Lands, Territories, and Resources of Indigenous Peoples
3. Ending Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination
4. Social, Cultural and Economic Well-Being
5. Participation in Economic and Social System Decision Making
6. Ecological Prosperity and Stewardship
7. Indigenous Justice and Liberty
8. Accountability and Implementation

The FNLC and the BCAFN continues to advocate to Canada for prioritization of a BC-Specific Process as called for by resolution at the UBCIC, FNS and BCAFN, as well as dedicated capacity funding for First Nations, to ensure that the priorities of First Nations in BC are reflected in the ongoing review and implementation of the NAP.

The FNLC continues to engage with the new Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, the Honourable Arif Virani, to implement the LOU between the previous Minister and the FNLC to develop a BC-Specific process for the implementation of the UNDA to ensure that the priorities and interests of First Nations in BC are reflected in the NAP.



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UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In March 2023, Regional Chief Terry Teegee met with United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Francisco Calí Tzay, alongside representatives of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, the Office of the Wet'suwet'en, former Chief of Neskonalith Indian Band, Judy Wilson and the FNLC. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur includes reporting on the human rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide and addressing specific alleged cases of violations of Indigenous rights. Special Rapporteur Calí Tzay is on a ten day visit to Canada to hear from Indigenous peoples on a range of issues including how the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("UNDRIP") is being implemented in Canada.

This meeting was an opportunity to convey our concerns to Special Rapporteur Calí Tzay regarding the ongoing infringements of the human rights of first Nations in

Canada and BC including Canada's implementation of UNDRIP in Canada, the ongoing crisis regarding the overpolicing, overcharging and overincarceration of Indigenous peoples in Canada's justice system, the use of force, surveillance and criminalization against Indigenous land defenders and for Canada's failure to obtain the free, prior and informed consent from First Nations for the Coastal Gaslink project and the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project. Mr. Calí Tzay recommended several UN mechanisms to pursue and expressed support in our efforts. We were honoured to meet with Mr. Calí Tzay and we thank him for taking this time.

The Special Rapporteur released his report following his visit to Canada on July 24, 2023, and can be found [here](#)





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CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The 2023 wildfire season has been exceptionally severe, with record-breaking blazes across British Columbia. Over 2,025 wildfires have ravaged approximately 1.9 million hectares of First Nations traditional territory, prompting a state of emergency in the province. These fires have inflicted devastating damage on infrastructure, homes, cultural sites and the forest that First Nations people rely on, altering many lives forever.

Human-induced climate change has played a pivotal role in the severity of the wildfires. Rising temperatures, prolonged drought, and increased dryness have fundamentally altered fire patterns, elevating the risk, scale, intensity and aggression of wildfires. Mother Earth has warmed about 1.1°C since the preindustrial era, primarily due to fossil fuel combustion. Existing global policies are on track to cause a further 2.7°C of warming.

In light of the climate emergency's urgency and our mandates, Regional Chief Teegee and the BCAFN climate change team are committed to advancing community-led climate leadership. Our efforts aim to assist communities in preparing, adapting, building resilience and mitigating carbon emissions for a future that ensures the continuity of First Nations culture, knowledge, rights and wellbeing.

Here is a summary of our key initiatives:

- **Webinar and workshops 2023.** BCAFN partnered with FNESS to host a [webinar and two virtual workshops](#) in 2023. These events focused on utilizing climate projections, data, and tools to empower climate action and decision-making
- **First Nation Low-Carbon Transportation Project.** In alignment with Resolution 12/2023 and supported by the BC government's Clean Transportation Branch, we are executing a [two-year project](#) aimed at promoting equitable access to low-carbon and active transportation within and between communities. This initiative seeks to uphold the rights and well-being of First Nations in BC while reducing carbon emissions. Activities during last year include desktop research, a [kick-off and info session](#), and securing pilot projects in five First Nations communities, each receiving \$65,000 in flexible funding. This research and pilot projects will contribute to a Transportation Assessment Report and a First Nations Low-Carbon Transportation Planning Guide.
- **First Nations Forest Carbon Offsets.** In partnership with Ecotrust Canada, we support First Nations to engage in carbon forest carbon offset projects while affirming their inherent and constitutionally protected Title, Rights and Treaty Rights and ways of life and protecting biodiversity. Last year, we finalized the first drafts of the First Nations Carbon Portal Website, the Forest Carbon Toolkit, and the Project Idea Note to explore the feasibility of potential carbon offset projects. Among policy advocacy, we reviewed, raised concerns and provided recommendations to the second version of the BC Forest Carbon Offset Protocol and the Federal Improved Forest Management (IFM) on Private Land Protocol.
- **First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda (FNCL Agenda).** BCAFN is actively working to facilitate the co-development of the FNCL Agenda in BC, as per Resolution 03/2023, in response to a federal commitment to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. This agenda will provide recommendations, policy directions, and tangible outcomes for Canada's climate policies and legislation. It aims to support First Nations' exercise of self-determination, constitutionally protected rights, meaningful involvement in national climate governance, and federal support in line with Canada's fiduciary obligations. A Steering Committee, comprised of First Nations leaders and Knowledge-keepers from across BC, is overseeing this initiative. Naqmist, meaning "many coming together as one," will lead engagement activities. A kick-off and information session for First Nations leaders and staff will discuss co-development processes.
- **Climate Information Sharing.** We continue to share climate-related information with First Nations governments and community members through the Climate Change Distribution List and the monthly [Climate Change & Water Newsletter](#).
- **Implementation of the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan (the Strategy).** We're actively working with the UBCIC and the FNS on implementing the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan, focusing on defining a pathway for full implementation, community-level toolkit, capacity building, and creating a BC First Nations Climate Fund or Council. A



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comprehensive website for the Strategy has been launched, and a full-time Project Manager to coordinate this work will be hired.

- **Engagement with British Columbia and Canada.** We continue engaging the provincial and federal governments through the BC-FNLC Technical Working Group on Climate Change (TWG) and the federal Joint Committee on Climate Action (JCCA). Our participation includes analyzing and providing recommendations for policy and program reforms, such as forest carbon offsets, the National Adaptation Strategy, the First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda, the BC Clean Transportation Action Plan, the BC Net-Zero New Industry Policy, BC Output-Based Pricing System, the BC Flood Strategy, among others. We also advocate for meaningful engagement and consultation with First Nations rights-holders.
- **Liaise with AFN's Environment Sector and other Regions.** We maintain communication

with other regions and the AFN National Office through various networks and committees, such as the Regional Climate Change Coordinators Network and the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACE). The ACE has completed the First Nations National Climate Strategy, endorsed by First Nations in the Assembly on AFN AGA in Halifax 2023.

- **International engagement.** Resolution 05/2021 mandates us to engage in climate advocacy at the international scale. This includes participation in events like COP27 in Egypt in 2022 and the Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) in Vancouver in 2023. We're also exploring partnerships between BC First Nations and Indigenous communities in the global south.

We remain dedicated to addressing the climate crisis, reaffirming First Nations' rights, and fostering community climate leadership for a healthy future for everyone.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

While the global community transitions from the pandemic and adjusts to living with COVID-19, the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) continues its steadfast commitment to the health and safety of First Nations peoples and communities across British Columbia. The reality is that First Nations in BC have lower rates of vaccination and boosters than the rest of the population. According to First Nations Health Authority Data, First Nations youth have among the lowest rates of boosters.

During Winter 2022/Spring 2023, the BCAFN collaborated with Prince George-based Indigenous AIDS Service Organization No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society, also known as Positive Living North (PLN). Together, we hired Stance Media, an Indigenous-led video production company, to produce a series of five impactful videos. In less than a minute, these videos capture the authentic

and personal stories of BC First Nations youth, athletes, entrepreneurs, and members living with and affected by HIV/ AIDS who have chosen to receive the COVID-19 booster. Their stories are powerful reminders of the importance of vaccination and its profoundly positive impact on our communities.

As we navigate the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout, alongside other intersecting social, health, economic, and environmental crises, the BCAFN remains committed to advocating for the rights and well-being of First Nations across British Columbia. We strongly encourage everyone to remain informed and actively seek all available COVID-19 booster doses. We recognize the significance of staying protected and keeping our loved ones safe during these uncertain times.

DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act includes tools and obligations to advance tangible actions and structural changes that ultimately will support reconciliation and transformative change. As described below, progress has advanced in some of these obligations more quickly than others.

Alignment of Laws

Section 3 of the Declaration Act obligates the Province to take all measures necessary to ensure its laws are consistent with the UN Declaration, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples. Consultation and cooperation is informed by the [Interim Approach to Implementing the Requirements of the Section 3 of the Declaration Act](#), which describes a legislative development process that involves five points in time.

This creates space for First Nations governments to be involved in legislative development in accordance with their needs and priorities, and to ensure that the province's laws uphold First Nations self-determination and role in decision-making, among other UN Declaration standards.

This is also creating pressure, with First Nations facing an incredible volume of requests for participation in consultation and cooperation, and often engaging with Ministries that have not done sufficient work to undertake UN Declaration analysis or educate themselves about the rights of First Nations.

In recognition of the capacity that First Nations governments require to participate in consultation and cooperation, a [Declaration Act Engagement Fund](#) has been established, providing a four-year funding contribution to First Nations to support their capacity to engage with the Province.

Additionally, this past year, some legislation was passed that was grounded in significant consultation and cooperation: the Health Professions & Occupations Act and the Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act.

This coming year, we will continue to press to conclude co-development of a number of critical bills of interest to First Nations, including the Heritage Conservation Act, the Mineral Tenure Act, and new emergency management legislation.

Action Plan

Section 4 requires the Province to develop and implement an action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration. The five-year [Declaration Act Action Plan](#) released in 2022 sets out 89 actions in four key theme areas.

This past year was the first full year of implementation of this action plan. Some actions have been completed: establishing a Declaration Act Secretariat, and releasing new civil litigation guidelines.

Actions partially underway and requiring urgent progress include: releasing a provincial policy to guide their distinctions-based approach, recognizing that only First Nations hold title and associated rights in BC; establishing a new fiscal framework that recognizes First Nations title and rights and which includes immediate improvements in revenue allocation; and, development of essential training for the public service, providing consistent and basic knowledge about the UN Declaration and obligations under the Declaration Act.

Annual Report

Section 5 requires annual reports by June 30 of each year on progress on the alignment of laws and implementation of the action plan.

This year's [Declaration Act Annual Report](#) is based on better data and evidence, and is directly reporting on obligations described in the Action Plan and the Interim Approach released in 2022. It will be key to continue to improve the data presented in the Annual Report, to ensure we can uphold proper accountability for progress through time.

Agreements

Sections 6 and 7 enable the Province to enter into decision-making and consent-based agreements with Indigenous governing bodies.

A major barrier is that these agreements require further legislative enablement across all sectors. It is a slow process to enable these agreements across individual statutes, as was done for example in the Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services Amendment Act. This will take years to produce sufficient space for shared decision-making and consent agreements



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across all sectors of interest and priority to First Nations governments, which is why so few of these agreements have been reached to date. It is imperative that this work be accelerated in a more comprehensive and consistent way.

This report highlights the important progress that has been, and continues to be made, pursuant to the *Declaration Act*. We continue to lead across the country

and the world in the work we are doing here in BC. However, as the provincial election approaches, it is key to maintain focus on high priority issues and initiatives that can be substantially advanced during this term of the provincial government. The coming year will be a critical time to advance legislative and policy decisions that are long overdue.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The BC Assembly of First Nations has worked hard over the last year to bring projects to fruition that meet the needs of First Nations. In British Columbia, First Nations are flourishing with increased opportunity and greater self-determination amongst a myriad of challenges. The Canadian economy has presented historic challenges with the climate crisis, inflation, cost of living, and ongoing infrastructure and transportation issues.

As a representation and advocacy organization for First Nations in BC the BCAFN engages with the province across a wide variety of initiatives, projects, and focus areas. This year the economic development team has engaged on Indigenous food sovereignty, the Provincial procurement initiative, cannabis regulation and funding, infrastructure, transportation, and international trade.

The BCAFN's ongoing priorities for research include ground-breaking studies on the economic well-being

of First Nations in BC to guide our future work. This year we published a baseline report, [The Economic Participation and Contributions of First Nations in BC](#). To supplement this work and provide a more fulsome view of well-being the BCAFN is in the process of publishing the second chapter of [Centering First Nations Concepts of Wellbeing](#), which explores non-GDP-based wellness indicators.

This February, the BCAFN Economic Development team hosted over 160 participants in Vancouver and virtually at our Economic Development Forum. Participants from across the province enjoyed two days of speakers, panels, and cultural performances. Our upcoming forum is in Whistler from October 16-18, 2023 at the Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND WILDFIRE & FLOOD EMERGENCY RESPONSE

From raging wildfires to devastating droughts, the climate crisis continues to disproportionately impact First Nations in British Columbia. The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) supports the First Nations Emergency Management Society (FNESS) to advance our advocacy efforts for enhanced First Nations jurisdiction over emergency management.

Key to these efforts is the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) Memorandum of Understanding on Emergency Management with Canada and the Province of British Columbia. This agreement has served as a crucial step for securing high-level support for legislative

reforms, capacity building, and operational requirements within First Nations communities. Notably, this year marks the completion of the inaugural Sendai Framework action plan, a collaborative effort directed by Chiefs in BC and developed with the support of FNESS, BCAFN, UBCIC, and FNS.

In tandem, the BCAFN is actively engaged with FNESS in its structural and governance reform, working to improve accountability to Chiefs and establish a comprehensive emergency management approach—a remarkable achievement not replicated by any other First Nation organization in Canada.



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Advocacy efforts by the FNLC are urging the Province to align the Emergency Program Act with the Declaration Act and the United Nations Declaration in its entirety, emphasizing the need for engagement with First Nations governments. In anticipation of new legislation, it is vital to develop regulations supporting First Nations' jurisdiction over emergency management.

Shifting the focus to disaster risk reduction, the need for a "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai) Action Plan" was recognized by the Chiefs in Assembly. Acknowledging that environmental disasters are inevitable, our emphasis is on proactive disaster

risk management, recognizing its cost-effectiveness in contrast to emergency response.

Despite the growing intensity and frequency of disasters, a disproportionate amount of funding has been allocated to emergency response rather than prevention and mitigation. Shifting towards prioritizing disaster risk reduction is crucial, as well as ensuring investments in preparedness and resiliency initiatives to minimize the impact of disasters. We must understand the equation "Hazard x Vulnerability = Risk" and utilize this concept to inform future actions and investments through a "disaster risk reduction lens."

ENVIRONMENT - CLEAN ENERGY AND MINING INITIATIVES

BCAFN has continued working closely with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and the First Nations Energy and Mining Council to advance the mandates provided by First Nations in BC as they relate to energy and mining. During the last year, we have been engaged in three specific processes:

- The Regional Economic Resource Table (the "Regional Table") is a federal pan-Canadian initiative designed to engage all First Nations, provinces, and territories to identify economic opportunities and focus our collective efforts on developing a cleaner, greener economy. In May 2023, the BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council and the BC First Nations Forestry Council, who are leading this process, organized a province-wide meeting to hear from First Nations communities. In June 2023, the First Nations Leadership Council jointly announced the commencement of the Regional Table for BC, which includes opportunities for rights holder engagement on: Critical Minerals, Clean Fuels and Hydrogen, Forest Sector, Carbon Management and Technology Systems, and Electrification (Infrastructure and End-Use), and
- The Mineral Tenure Act Modernization. The government of BC committed in the Declaration Act Action Plan to reform the Mineral Tenure Act. The First Nations Leadership Council is currently in early discussions with the Ministry of Energy, Mining and Low Carbon Innovation toward the MTA modernization. Rights holder engagement is expected in September and October.
- Critical Minerals. The security of critical minerals supply has become a major concern in all industry

and technology sectors worldwide. Notably, shortages in the automotive and household appliance sectors have emerged due to a widening shortage of critical minerals, including silicon, gallium, arsenic, cobalt, and more, which are vital for semiconductor production. These minerals are crucial in facilitating a seamless transition to a zero-carbon economy and enhancing the supply security of numerous products across industries. While some critical minerals like aluminum, copper, and nickel are abundant, others like lithium, germanium, zinc, and rare-earth metals (REEs) are less abundant and predominantly supplied by a few countries, posing supply chain security risks. To mitigate this dependency and enhance supply security, it is imperative to develop local resources and domestic processing capabilities for critical minerals.

The First Nations Energy and Mining Council will hold 4 workshops for First Nations this fall to draft a Critical Minerals Strategy. Canada drafted a strategy in 2022, and BC is in the process of drafting a provincial strategy.

BC's development of a critical minerals strategy is occurring in parallel with the First Nations strategy. BC has identified an advisory committee of First Nations, industry, labour, NGOs and academia to provide direction to their plan.

In the first quarter of 2024, FNEMC and BC will co-host a province-wide discussion on potential alignment of the strategies.

ENVIRONMENT - WATER

Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act Repeal and Replacement

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 which was repealed on June 23, 2022, as mandated by the [First Nations Drinking Water Class Action Settlement Agreement](#). The Assembly of First Nations passed Resolution 47/2023 entitled "Proposed Federal First Nations Drinking Water and Wastewater Legislation" at the Annual General Assembly reaffirming the specific requirements that the replacement legislation must obtain in order to receive support from First Nations in Canada. Indigenous Services Canada has shared a [second version of the draft legislation](#), which does not meet the current threshold set forth by the AFN First Nations in Assembly and is available for feedback until September 8, 2023.

For those who were impacted by a long-term drinking water advisory, the claim period has been extended to March 7, 2024. For more information, please go [here](#)

FNLC Intentions Paper: Towards Revenue Sharing of Water Licence Rentals in BC

In Fall 2022, the First Nations Leadership Council released an Intentions Paper entitled, [Towards Revenue Sharing of Water Licence Rentals in British Columbia](#),

supported by First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) Organizations through BCAFN Resolution #27/2022, First Nations Summit (FNS) Resolution #1022.15, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) Resolution 2022-40. The Intentions Paper explores what revenue sharing of water licence rentals with First Nations in British Columbia might look like and provides a framework for dialogue with First Nations Rights and Titleholders to advance discussions and negotiations with the BC Government. The First Nations Leadership Council continues to advocate for BC to collaborate and initiate this important work, including a comprehensive engagement plan with Rights and Titleholders.

BCAFN Climate and Water Newsletter

The BCAFN Environmental portfolios have teamed up to distribute a monthly [BCAFN Climate Change and Water Newsletter](#). This newsletter will feature updates, community-led projects, and share funding opportunities for environmental community-based initiatives. If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter or have a community environmental initiative you would like featured in the newsletter, please email sophia.iliopulos@bcafn.ca or patricia.rojas@bcafn.ca for more information.

FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES/ AIP/JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

First Nations have been working diligently to address the challenges surrounding exercising jurisdiction over child and family services. This includes identifying barriers such as ongoing cycles of child removal, socio-economic issues, insufficient funding, and legal challenges. Furthermore, they have outlined solutions such as recognition of jurisdiction, clear communication, and involvement of First Nations Title and Rights holders in decision-making processes.

In legal matters, First Nations have made progress in presenting oral arguments at the Supreme Court of Canada in the Quebec Reference Case, focusing on the impact of the UN Declaration on the rights of First Nations governments and peoples. Additionally, there have been efforts to address compensation and funding for victims and to seek extended timelines for eligible claimants under the Final Settlement Agreement.

Significant steps have also been taken in British Columbia with several Nations demonstrating their intent to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services. This

includes entering coordination agreements and bringing child and family services laws into force within their communities.

Efforts towards achieving acknowledgement and compensation for the harms experienced by First Nations children and families due to discriminative provision of services and Jordan's Principle have been notable. This includes passing resolutions, seeking confirmation of the Final Settlement Agreement, and calling on the Canadian Prime Minister to apologize to those affected.

While there is acknowledgment of the substantial progress, there is recognition that much work remains in terms of jurisdictional steps, compensation, and the transformation of services for First Nations communities. Ongoing engagements with governmental bodies for the development of new funding frameworks and the review and reform of child protection for First Nations children and youth also continue to be a priority.

FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES

The BCAFN is involved in national level languages work through the AFN Chiefs Committee on Languages (CCOL) and its technical committee. Kukpi7 Fred Robbins is the BC region representative on the CCOL and Chair Khelsilem is the alternate. Tracey Herbert is the BC region representative on the TCOL. Regionally, BCAFN is committed to supporting the implementation of languages related commitments within the Declaration Act Action Plan.

The International Decade for Indigenous Languages began in 2022, launching in December. The AFN developed a First Nations Action Plan for the International Decade that 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.

In October 2022 the AFN made a [submission](#) to Parliamentary Committee on Official Languages regarding amending the Official Languages Act. However, the recommendations were not accepted by the Committee. The Senate Standing [Committee](#) on Official Languages affirmed the importance of recognizing First Nation, Métis and Inuit languages as the first languages of the land, and noted the barriers that currently exist for Indigenous languages revitalization.

In early 2023 the [Band Reparations Class Action](#) settlement agreement related to loss of language and culture at residential schools was reached and approved by the federal court.

In February 2023 FPCC released the fourth [report](#) on the status of B.C. First Nations languages. The report demonstrates a more than 20% increase in learners as well as growth in semi-speakers and language learning opportunities.

The Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) conducted an Indigenous Languages Study to analyze the success of the government compared to the objectives set out in the Indigenous Languages Act. The AFN made a [submission](#) highlighting recommendations regarding funding levels, First Nations control over allocation of funds, and the need

for a whole-of-government approach. The Committee presented its [report](#) to the House of Commons on June 16, 2023 and has requested a government response.

In June 2023 the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages launched their [website](#).

In July 2023 at the AFN AGA, First-Nations-in-Assembly voted to not pass draft resolution 26 Equitable Funding for Languages Revitalization, which sought ratification for a new regional funding allocation formula for the Department of Canadian Heritage Indigenous Languages Component funding. BC Chiefs expressed concern that the proposed formula would significantly negatively impact the amount of funding for the BC region (as well as several other regions), and that more work was needed to arrive at a consensus-based, data-driven formula. An in-person CCOL meeting is scheduled for October 2023 in order to advance discussions on this topic and discuss advocacy strategies regarding increases for languages revitalization funding.

The Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH) is currently accepting applications for time-limited [funding](#) under Sections 8 and 9 of the Indigenous Languages Act. The AFN worked with DCH to develop the application process, while at the same time advocating for enhanced commitments and longer-term funding.

This past year the AFN also released several useful reports:

- AFN Language Policy [Report](#) Research, a comparative report about:
 - federal, provincial and territorial legislation, regulations and policies that concern the revitalization of First Nations languages and other Indigenous languages in Canada, and
 - legislation, regulations and policies that relevant international jurisdictions have put in place for revitalizing Indigenous languages in those places.
- AFN Revitalization First Nations Languages, A Costing [Analysis](#).

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SECURITY

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) Executive and FNLC technical staff continue to meet with the Honourable Minister Ravi Kahlon and his ministry staff to discuss critical issues related to First Nations housing gaps and homelessness including legislative proposals and amendments related to housing.

Regional Chief Teegee joined City of Prince George Mayor Simon Yu and Premier Eby in Prince George in June to witness a Memorandum of Understanding between BC and the City of Prince George to collectively address the homelessness crisis and work together on shared priorities to fast-track the development of shelter space and build new permanent supportive housing

for Prince George's dehouseed and precariously housed residents, 70% of whom are Indigenous. Regional Chief Teegee continues to advocate for municipal governments to recognize their legal obligations to uphold the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, particularly regarding their responsibilities to the human right to housing within their mandates.

BCAFN will be hosting a two-day hybrid Housing Forum on October 25 - 26, 2023 at the Prince George Civic Centre on traditional and unceded territories of the Lheidli T'enneh.

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

On January 21st, 2023, a \$2.8-billion settlement was announced in a class action lawsuit over residential schools. Initially filed by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and shíshálh Nations of British Columbia, plaintiffs in the case (involving 325 First Nations) sought reparations for the loss of language and culture brought on by Indian residential schools. The disbursement of funds into a trust is currently pending court approval. This is the first time bands have specifically been compensated. The funds will be used to support the revival, protection, promotion, and wellness of Indigenous languages and cultures.

The 3rd National Gathering on Unmarked Burials was held from January 16th-18th, 2023 in Vancouver. The primary focus of this gathering was to generate discussion and to provide information on Indigenous data sovereignty and community control over information and knowledge in relation to the recovery of missing children. Supported by the work of the Office of the Special Interlocutor, the event offered critical insight into the barriers faced by communities and families conducting searches.

On February 7, 2023, the Province of British Columbia introduced legislation to make September 30 a statutory holiday. Under this new legislation, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation will be enshrined in B.C. law to honour the strength and resilience of residential school survivors and remember the children who never came

home. This will be a day for all British Columbians – Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous neighbours – to reflect and breathe life into what reconciliation means and take steps to build a better future together.

The 2023 BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly, held from March 9-10th, was an opportunity to support the work and findings of Tseshah First Nation via Resolution 11/2023: Support For Tseshah First Nation, Alberni Indian Residential School (Airs): Calls For Truth And Justice. This resolution reflects the initial next steps, actions, and justice for Tseshah First Nation after their Phase 1 scanning and research of the Alberni Indian Residential School and the ensuing 26 Calls for Truth and Justice. Chiefs-in-Assembly recommended that the Regional Chief support Tseshah leadership and the Tseshah First Nation to ensure that the Province of BC, Government of Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and all relevant faiths and churches to meet with Tseshah and implement all of the Alberni Indian Residential School 26 Calls for Truth and Justice.

On July 6th, 2023, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) hosted engagement sessions across Canada for guidance and recommendations that will help guide the design and development of the Centre's new building and ceremonial grounds. The NCTR was created to preserve the memory of the Indian Residential School system and its legacy. It is located on



BCAFN PROVINCIAL ACTIVITY

the campus of the University of Manitoba and houses all statements, documents, and other materials gathered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

In memory of the lives lost at Indian residential schools, a blackened column carved with children's faces was created by acclaimed Kwakwuitl carver Stanley Hunt. The memorial pole travelled through several Vancouver Island communities on its way to being installed in Vancouver on Indigenous Peoples Day, June 2021. In each community, the memorial pole was welcomed with ceremonies honouring the children that did not return home.

The Interim Report from the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools, titled "Sacred Responsibility: Searching for the Missing Children and Unmarked Burials," was released on June 16th. This Report identifies the common concerns that Survivors, Indigenous families, and communities have identified as they search and recover the missing children and unmarked burials. The Report also details the Independent Special Interlocutor's 48 Findings based on these common concerns. A written submission for the Final Report (June 2024) was submitted by the BCAFN to support the work of the Special Interlocutor's Office.

Special supports and funding are currently being provided to those communities doing investigative work on the sites of former Residential Schools. However, BCAFN continues to raise concerns over limited funding in this area in meetings with the federal and provincial governments. A list of communities leading or coordinating investigations on the sites of Indian Residential Schools that have shared their plans with the public or have made announcements of their initial findings are as follows:

- Williams Lake First Nation released their preliminary findings of 28 graves at the site of the former St. Joseph's Mission in January 2022. Findings of the second phase of the investigation were released on January 25th, 2023 and indicate 66 more potential burial sites
- Tseshaht First Nation announced on February 21st, 2023, that its preliminary investigation on the grounds of the former Alberni residential school detected 17 suspected unmarked graves

- Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc released their findings at the site of the former Kamloops Residential School in May 2021
- Ahousaht First Nation has communicated publicly their intention to investigate the site of the former Ahousaht Residential School and Christie Residential School
- Penelakut Tribe has communicated publicly that they completed an initial GPR survey on the site of the former Kuper Island Industrial School and indicated that work is ongoing
- 'Namgis First Nation has communicated publicly their intention to investigate the site of the former St. Michael's Residential School
- shishálh Nation has communicated publicly that they are currently conducting a search of the site of the former Sechelt Residential School
- Squamish Nation has communicated publicly their intention to investigate the site of the former St. Paul's Residential School
- Stó:lō Nation has communicated publicly their intention to investigate the site of the former Coqualeetza Residential School and Indian Hospital as well as St. Mary's Residential School
- Ktunaxa Nation has communicated that they completed an initial GPR survey revealing 182 unmarked graves at the cemetery associated with the former St. Eugene's Residential School.

The physical, emotional, and spiritual impacts on survivors and their families who are experiencing inter-generational trauma are profound and significant. Moving forward, it is imperative that their health and well-being be supported in the present and for the long-term. In the new year, the BCAFN will look to pursue additional funding arrangements for affected communities, actively engage in the work of the Special Interlocutor's Office, and will continue to promote advocacy and provide any available supports to survivors, their communities, and their families.

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT+

BCAFN continues to implement Resolution 02/2023 Call for Federal MMIWG2S+ Legislation alongside a working group of like-minded organizations, including the UBCIC. Through this work BCAFN has had the opportunity to work with creators of a grassroots MMIWG2S+ database, Midnight Order. Preliminary work began with meetings to gain support and recommendations for this work. A legal memo and environmental scan will help support further analysis exploring legislative mechanisms that could add more accountability to the federal government's responsibilities and support coordination and standards among jurisdictions.

The BCAFN continues to advocate for accountability and coordination regarding the implementation of the Calls for Justice through regular contact with federal and provincial officials. In June, the province released their 2023 progress [report](#). The federal government released an update on their "[federal pathway](#)", but did

not support a progress report on the National Action Plan. Following the AFN National MMIWG2S+ Gathering in February 2023 in Vancouver, the AFN also released an [update](#) in June 2023, titled "Connecting Hearts and Making Change". BCAFN has also provided guidance to the province regarding engagement on the BC Gender-Based Violence Action Plan.

2023 also saw the first federal-provincial-territorial-Indigenous roundtable on MMIWG2S+. While there was limited progress at this roundtable, a second roundtable is set for fall 2023. It is anticipated that advancing discussions on the federal commitment to create a Red Dress Alert (similar to the concept of an Amber Alert) will be a key focus. BCAFN is currently exploring mechanisms to formalize accountability and support collaborative action with BC First Nations.

WOMEN, GIRLS AND 2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLE

In May 2023, BCAFN hosted the annual Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Dialogue Sessions in Prince George. This gathering included a keynote address from Hillstis Pauline Waterfall sharing cultural teachings and experiences from her work with the Heiltsuk Nation. Federal and provincial officials also provided updates on their work in response to the Calls for Justice, and roundtable discussions featured work and questions related to implementing the Calls for Justice in a number of sectors. BCAFN also presented the 1st draft of the Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Strategic Action Plan to seek feedback on the proposed actions. A post-event report will be made available shortly.

On August 30th, BCAFN provided more in-depth update on the draft Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Strategic Action Plan at a virtual session. This extensive update invited First Nations and First Nations organizations (FNOs) to review the draft plan and identify initiatives that should be uplifted. BCAFN has also reached out to FNOs to seek feedback directly. Further engagement on the Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Strategic Action Plan will continue at the BCAFN Women Chiefs Caucus on October 31, 2023 in Vancouver, and the final draft plan will be brought to

the BCAFN SCA in 2024 for consideration via resolution.

Following engagement in Spring, BCAFN is in the final stages of preparing a first draft of a Toolkit that will centre First Nations approaches to Gender-Based Analysis Plus (FN GBA+), in collaboration with Chastity Davis-Alphonse and Dr. Natalie Clark. As a result of a Call for Expressions of Interest this Spring, we are also excited to announce that BCAFN is working with Tsilhqot'in Women's Council to pilot the FNGBA+ Toolkit. A finalized Toolkit will be shared in Spring 2024.

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) will be engaging First Nations on the issues of the Second-Generation Cut-Off and Section 10 Voting Thresholds in Fall 2023. ISC has established an advisory process to help support this engagement, and Chief Lynda Price, Ulkatcho First Nation, has been appointed by the BCAFN Board to serve as a representative in this process. This is in alignment with resolution 01/2023 Ending Sex-Based Discrimination in the Indian Act in Alignment with the UN Declaration, which affirms the need to end sex-based discrimination in the Indian Act, and do so in a way that aligns with First Nations self-determination.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir

Tk'emlups te Secwepemc

Kukpi7 Casimir has extensive political experience at the community, municipality, provincial and the federal level to advance community driven initiatives. She act as ambassadors to promote awareness within every level of government through better communication, building on shared values, and creating and establishing better relationships.

Brian Assu Sr.

We Wai Kai Nation

Brian Assu Sr. previously served as an elected board member of the BC Assembly of First Nations. He served as an elected Chief of the We Wai Kai Nation for 5 years and as an elected Councillor for 30 years. During his time as Chief of the We Wai Kai Nation, the Nation grew and became fully integrated into regional economy and progressively brought law making authority and governance home to the Nation's membership.



Chief Jerry Jack

Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation

Chief Jerry Jack is Klakwagiila and comes from the House of Tsee-sah-aht. He is a Hereditary Chief from Mowachaht/Muchlaht First Nation (MMFN). Chief Jack has over 40 years of experiences in working on First Nations issues including justice, policing, governance, fisheries and environmental management.

Chief Maureen Luggi

Wet'suwet'en First Nation

Maureen Luggi is from the Bear Clan (Gitdemden) of the House of Spoax. She is of Gitxsan, Wet'suwet'en & Stelat'en ancestry & was born and raised in Burns Lake, BC. She is a Mother of 3 Adult Children and 4 Grandchildren. She is a member of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation & was the elected Chief of her community from 1987-2007 before being elected back into office in 2019. Chief Luggi was re-elected again in May 2022 as Chief of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation based on a three-year term.



Chief Councillor Lynda Price

Ulkatcho First Nation

Chief Price has a BA degree in First Nation studies with a minor in Political Science from UNBC. She also received her Juris Doctor of Law Degree from TRU in 2015. She has many years of experience serving on board for multiple organizations.



Read more details about the BCAFN board of directors at bcafn.ca

Update Board of Directors

Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, Youth, First Nation members and honoured guests,

The BCAFN Board of Directors is pleased to present the Annual Report for 2022/2023 to the 20th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the Chiefs-in-Assembly, who will join in-person and virtually.

The Board of Directors continues to ensure that the resolutions and mandates provided by our membership from our previous AGM and latest Special Chiefs Assemblies are carried out in alignment with the Regional Chief's mandate and the vision, mission and values of our society.

As with most societies, our governance structure is continually changing and evolving. Per our governance requirements, the Nomination Notice was distributed in July 2023 for the election of the Regional Chief and three (3) Directors, along with the positions for the Female and Male Youth Representatives.

As of the deadline date of August 6, 2023, there was only one completed nomination package for the position of Regional Chief. The Board would like to congratulate Regional Chief Terry Teegee for his unprecedented acclamation for a third term. The Board of Directors looks forward to the continued leadership of Regional Chief Teegee and working in collaboration in the oversight of BCAFN and moving initiatives forward for the benefit of our membership.

Three completed nomination packages were received for the positions of Director. The Board would like to acknowledge and welcome the acclamation of the following for three-year terms:

- * Brian Assu - We Wai Kai
- * Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir - Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc
- * Chief Maureen Luggi - Wet'suwet'en

The Board would also like to thank outgoing Board Directors, Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling and Harvey McLeod for all their hard work and commitment to BCAFN.

The Board would like to wish the best of luck to the two Male Youth Representative candidates - Kyle Alec from the Penticton Indian Band and Zachary Astakeesic from the Upper Nicola Indian Band - and the three Female Youth Representative candidates - Brooklyn Rhayne Haizimsque from the Wet'suwet'en First Nation, Crystal

Starr Lewis from the Squamish Nation, and Taylor Behn-Tsakoza from the Fort Nelson First Nation. Putting forth one's name can be a daunting endeavor but a worthwhile one, and these positions can help guide our future leaders.

Since we last met at the Special Chiefs Assembly in March 2023, much has taken place. The issues arising at the National Assembly of First Nations were addressed in June and July of this year through a Special Chiefs Assembly and then again at the AGA in Halifax. Difficult discussions took place, and hard decisions were made, but we are all committed to forging a path forward. We thank Interim National Chief Joanna Bernard for stepping in to fill this role until the National Chief Election in December 2023.

We also heard much debate around the UNDA National Action Plan from different regions, both for and against. BC is in a unique position as we have the provincial Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Through the developmental and implementation phases of DRIPA, we have the advantage of lessons learned that can be used on the national stage.

We are at a unique time in our history. From living through a worldwide pandemic that has not left our communities completely, we are now faced with a multitude of issues affecting our community members. The Opioid Crisis is still taking the lives of our people. Housing insecurity is at an all-time high in all urban centres, and we are seeing the blatant disregard for human rights as people are being further displaced from encampments. Inflation has placed so many people at risk with little relief in sight. The devastation of climate change is being felt once more as wildfires and droughts affect all regions of the province.

BCAFN continues to work with our provincial partners, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, to spotlight these issues to government officials and demand change. Our communities are facing devastation from a number of directions, and this has to stop.

Thank you to the Chiefs-in-Assembly for providing us with the opportunity to work on your behalf with Regional Chief Teegee and the staff at the BCAFN. We remain committed to addressing the difficult issues facing our communities and will work to ensure issues are brought to the forefront.

REPRESENTATIVES KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS



Sempulyan Stewart Gonzales

Squamish Nation

2SLGBTQQIA+ representative

Sempulyan is an Indian Day School and Residential School survivor. He is a father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He has lived a clean and sober life since April 3rd, 2007, attending a treatment centre on Vancouver Island and Choices Seminars in July 2005, Givers 1 & Giver 2. This was the start of his healing journey, and has have coached at Choices and now Break Free Seminars.

Dr. Gwendolyn Point

Sto:lo Nation

Dr. Gwendolyn Point holds a BEd from UBC, an MEd from the University of Portland, a Doctorate in Education from SFU, and an honorary doctorate from UVic. Dr. Point has also held a number of provincial government and regional posts supporting education, child and family services, and First Nations communities.



Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, O.B.C.

Gwawaenuk First Nation

Chief Joseph has dedicated his life to bridging the differences brought about by intolerance, lack of understanding and racism at home and abroad. His insights into the destructive impacts these forces can have on peoples' lives, families and cultures were shaped by his experience with the Canadian Indian Residential School system.

Update

Knowledge Keepers

Dear Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, Youth and honored guests:

We are honoured to support BCAFN as Knowledge Keepers. This year, we are grateful that Sempulyan Stewart Gonzales from the Squamish Nation has joined us at the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Knowledge Keeper. We take the sacred duty bestowed upon us to guide the organization very serious and are committed to supporting Regional Chief Teegee, the Board of Directors, staff and our First Nations in working through the many issues impacting our communities.

This year is the first year that Knowledge Keepers developed campaign guidelines for all candidates. This was to ensure that campaigns were conducted in a good way, based upon the teachings and values we hold as Indigenous people:

- Respect
- Non-Violence
- Honesty
- Civility
- Positivity
- Accountability
- Professionalism
- Courageous
- Humility
- Responsible
- Peaceful transfer of authority

Our messaging to all candidates included the following statement:

...upon completion of the election, it is important to reflect that we will all still be here, and we must keep in mind our continued work and collective journey. We must continue to do our work in a good way and be mindful of others.

This has been a difficult year for our people. Many of our communities that are still recovering from COVID-19, are then impacted by wildfires, flooding and drought. All of our BC First Nations have been impacted by the Opioid Crisis and we have witnessed the loss our First Nations have experienced by those struggling with addictions. We have been in a crisis state and the continued grief that many are living under is profound. Our hearts, thoughts, and prayers are with all of you.

This year, the AFN Resolution 13 Report was released at the AFN AGA in Halifax. This work was done to ensure that everyone feels safe when attending events and working within our offices. We are at a time when those who did not have a voice before are encouraged and are being heard. It was difficult for many to hear the stories shared by people from across the country on their experiences, but these words will guide BCAFN to strengthen further the way in which the work is done so that everyone feels heard and safe.



REPRESENTATIVE WOMEN



Louisa Housty Jones

Heiltsuk Nation

In 2018 Louisa Housty-Jones, a member and Councillor for the Heiltsuk Nation, was first elected by the BC Chiefs in Assembly as BCAFN's Women's Representative and is now serving her second term. Louisa plays a key role in supporting BCAFN's mandate with regard to women and in pursuing new avenues of involvement. She also represents BC on the AFN's Council of Women.

Update Women

As the BCAFN Women's Representative I am honored to uplift the perspectives of First Nations women in BC through being involved in the AFN Women's Council and involved in BCAFN's regional advocacy.

Earlier this year, I was grateful to attend the AFN National MMIWG2S+ Gathering and the 32nd Annual February 14 Women's Memorial March. The gathering included updates from the AFN and federal government and sessions for family members and survivors to discuss the National Action Plan and the First Nations Action Plan

to implement the Calls for Justice. I would also like to extend my thanks to Melissa Moses, UBCIC Women's Representative, for her support and collaboration and for participating in the 2023 Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Dialogue Sessions and the 2023 AFN AGA in my stead. I look forward to advancing our collective work to end and respond to violence against women, the finalization of the Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Strategic Action Plan, and our innovative work on FN GBA+.

REPRESENTATIVE 2SLGBTQQIA+



Orene Askew

Squamish Nation

Orene Askew, also known around North America as DJ O Show, comes from a very diverse background. She is Afro-Indigenous, a proud member of the Squamish Nation, and is 2 Spirit. Feeling as though she stood out in a unique way, she embraced both her cultural backgrounds and incorporates the teachings she has learned into everything she does.

Update 2SLGBTQQIA+

I am honoured to be the BCAFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative. During my tenure I have worked hard to make positive change for 2SLGBTQQIA+ First Nation peoples in BC and build relationships with regional 2SLGBTQQIA+ organizations. At the national level, I continue to be a representative for the BC region within the AFN National 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council and partner with the Women's Council on initiatives related to MMIWG2S+. This role ensures that challenges impacting 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples in BC are being voiced at a national table.

Most recently, I supported the engagement session on the 2nd draft of the BCAFN Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Strategic Action Plan. I expressed the importance of proactively taking advantage of opportunities to

create systemic change that intentionally impacts First Nations women, Two Spirit, trans, non-binary, and gender and sexually diverse people, and championing existing initiatives and successes. I am also supporting work to implement recommendations coming from previous BCAFN Dialogue Sessions, such as exploring opportunities to collaborate on the innovative and impactful work of like-minded organizations working alongside 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to make a positive impact. We are also continuing our initiative to develop a BCAFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ flag. We gathered initial ideas and feedback during the 2023 Dialogue Session, and will be reaching out to further develop this concept in the near future. I look forward to continued work and advocacy in this area.

REPRESENTATIVES YOUTH



Taylor Behn-Tsakoza

Fort Nelson Nation

Taylor Behn-Tsakoza is of Eh Cho Dene and Dunne Zaa ancestry. Her Nations are signatories to Treaty 8 and their traditional territories cover modern day Northeast BC. Growing up in the North, Taylor experienced and witnessed the obstacles that people in rural and remote communities face and she has worked to bring those stories and experiences to leaders at all levels. Culture, education and sports has kept Taylor focused on breaking harmful intergenerational cycles and she is passionate about creating a future that First Nations youth want and deserve.

Kyle Alec

Syilx (Okanagan) Nation

Kyle is from the Syilx (Okanagan) Nation and Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation and is a member of the Penticton Indian Band in Southern British Columbia. Kyle also served for a short time on council for the Penticton Indian Band, Kyle grew up in the Indigenous planning world and specializes in facilitating enowkinwixw process for decision-making and planning. He has experience working through strategy sessions in governance and community planning, facilitation and co-facilitation of workshops dealing with multigenerational trauma, healing, goal-setting and visioning, and event coordination.



Update Youth

BCAFN Hosted its annual Forum in February 2023 on unceded Musqueam Territory in Richmond, BC. Over 70 First Nations youth attended the forum in-person. BCAFN's Youth Representatives engaged with youth to determine their priorities for 2023/24, which included pre-engagement in creating a BCAFN Youth Council. The event was well-received and supported the BCAFN Youth Representatives to continue to advocate for First Nations youth in BC. With the guidance and direction received, the BCAFN Youth Representatives Taylor and Kyle have worked with BCAFN staff over the summer to draft a resolution to seek a mandate from the Chiefs-in-Assembly to advance the work of establishing a permanent BCAFN Youth Council.

In March 2023, BCAFN welcomed its newly appointed Interim Male Youth Representative, Kyle Alec. Kyle is from the Syilx (Okanagan) Nation and Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nation and is a member of the Penticton Indian Band in Southern British Columbia. Kyle also served for a short time as a Council member for Penticton Indian Band and served a three-year term as the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Youth Representative, where he focused on elder abuse

advocacy. Kyle has since been appointed to the BC First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda Steering Committee and continues to work with Taylor as BCAFN's Youth Representative at the AFN National Youth Council. Both Kyle and Taylor attended the AFN AGA in Halifax while representing the BC Region on the AFN National Youth Council. Throughout the week, Kyle and Taylor engaged with their peers in addition to Chiefs and leaders from across Turtle Island.

Taylor Behn-Tsakoza is wrapping up her first term as an elected Youth Representative for BCAFN. Over the past three years, Taylor made history as the first elected all-female Co-Chair of the AFN National Youth Council, attended the Vatican as a delegate for the papal apology and attended COP27 in 2022. Over Taylor's term, she connected with many First Nations youth from across BC and advocated for their priorities and concerns at the regional, national and international levels. BCAFN thanks Taylor for her continued advocacy for youth and First Nations rights, title, and interests.

Read more details about the BCAFN representatives on the BCAFN [website](#)



STAFF



Jaime Sanchez

Special Advisor to the Regional Chief

Jaime is a Registered Professional Planner (RPP), and Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), having graduated from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in 2005 with a degree in Environmental Planning, with a focus on First Nations Community Planning. As a first-generation Canadian living with his two sons in Snuneymuxw territory (Nanaimo), Jaime is passionate and dedicated to being part the reconciliation needed in Canada.



Maureen Buchan

Senior Policy Director

An Anishinaabe from Bearskin Lake First Nation in Northern Ontario, Maureen has over 15 years of experience working for First Nations Political Organizations. She has a Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria as well as an Advanced Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Government from the University of Manitoba.



Victoria Austen

Executive Assistant to the Regional Chief

Victoria is Gitxsan-Wet'suwet'en from the Hagwilget Village Council. She has resided in the Prince George area for the past 24 years and has worked for Urban Aboriginal Organizations for the past 22 years. Victoria has enjoyed her time with the BCAFN becoming familiar with the processes of the AFN and the regional offices and seeing first hand developments of many projects that benefit our first nation people.



Sarah Froese

Senior Policy Analyst

Sarah completed her Masters in Public Policy and Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia where she developed skills in policy analysis and interdisciplinary technical knowledge, focusing on issues of jurisdiction, governance, and community engagement in the context of the climate crisis, environmental impact assessments, and renewable energy. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology from the University of Manitoba.



Sarah Behn

Economic Development Policy Analyst

Sarah is a band member of Fort Nelson First Nation located in Northeastern British Columbia. She has a Bachelor of Commerce in Entrepreneurial Management from Royal Roads University. Prior to joining the BCAFN, she worked as an independent consultant, focusing on grant writing and project management for First Nations in BC. She is passionate about economic equity and reconciliation within economic development.



Joanna Prince

Administrative Project Support

Joanna is a member of Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation and has worked with Indigenous groups and people for the last 27 years in a variety of roles that include: administrative positions, an intake worker for family support, resource social work, aboriginal group home support worker, aboriginal child in care liaison, office management, and event coordinator.



Annette Schroeter

Communications Officer

Annette (she/her) was born to Anishinaabe and German parents in Prince George, BC and is a member of the Muskrat Dam First Nation located in northwestern Ontario. Annette has a Master's degree in First Nations Studies and Bachelor's Degree in History and Anthropology from the University of Northern British Columbia. She also holds a Bachelor's of Design from Emily Carr University of Art & Design.

Governance



Patricia Rojas

Regional Climate Change Coordinator

Patricia has worked for over 15 years with Indigenous peoples in Peru, providing technical and strategic support, including policy analysis and political advocacy on mining, water, climate change and environmental issues as they relate to the protection of collective rights, social and environmental justice, and self-determination. She received a Master's Degree in Sustainability with a specialty in Policy Analysis (Spain), a Master's Degree in Social Management and a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering (Peru).



Sophia Iliopoulos

Regional Water Coordinator

Sophia was introduced to the multi-faceted aspects of First Nations governance including researching and writing policy, engagement and facilitation as well as negotiations and relationship building with government and industry in her work with the McLeod Lake Indian Band as the Chief's Executive Assistant. She holds a double major in International Studies and Political Science with Honours from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC).



Landon Wagner

Policy Analyst

Landon is a proud descendant of the historic Métis Nation, and he currently resides on Treaty 6 territory in Saskatoon, SK, the traditional territory of Cree peoples and the homeland of the Métis. He completed his master's degree in Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan in 2021 with a focus on the intersections of identity, indigeneity, and land conflict. His research has centred on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the intricacies of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in both Central African and Canadian contexts.



Marc Storms

FNLCC Cannabis Policy Analyst

Marc has worked extensively in the Indigenous Cannabis Industry, having met and collaborated with business and Provincial, Federal, Municipal and First Nation governments, across BC and Canada. Co-founder of an Indigenous Cannabis Cultivation company in 2015, Marc as CEO and CMO, was responsible for developing the model that ensured all decisions were made through an Indigenous lens and were consistent with advancing Indigenous Reconciliation.



Matthew Norris

Senior Policy Analyst

Matthew Norris (he/him) is Nehithaw (Cree) and a proud member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band in northern Saskatchewan (Treaty 6) and lives on the unceded and traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-waututh Nations. Matthew is President of the Urban Native Youth Association in Vancouver, BC and has nearly a decade of experience advocating for Indigenous rights across a wide-array of policy and governance areas, as a policy professional, community leader, and academic. He is a PhD student in UBC's Department of Political Science's International Relations Program with a focus on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

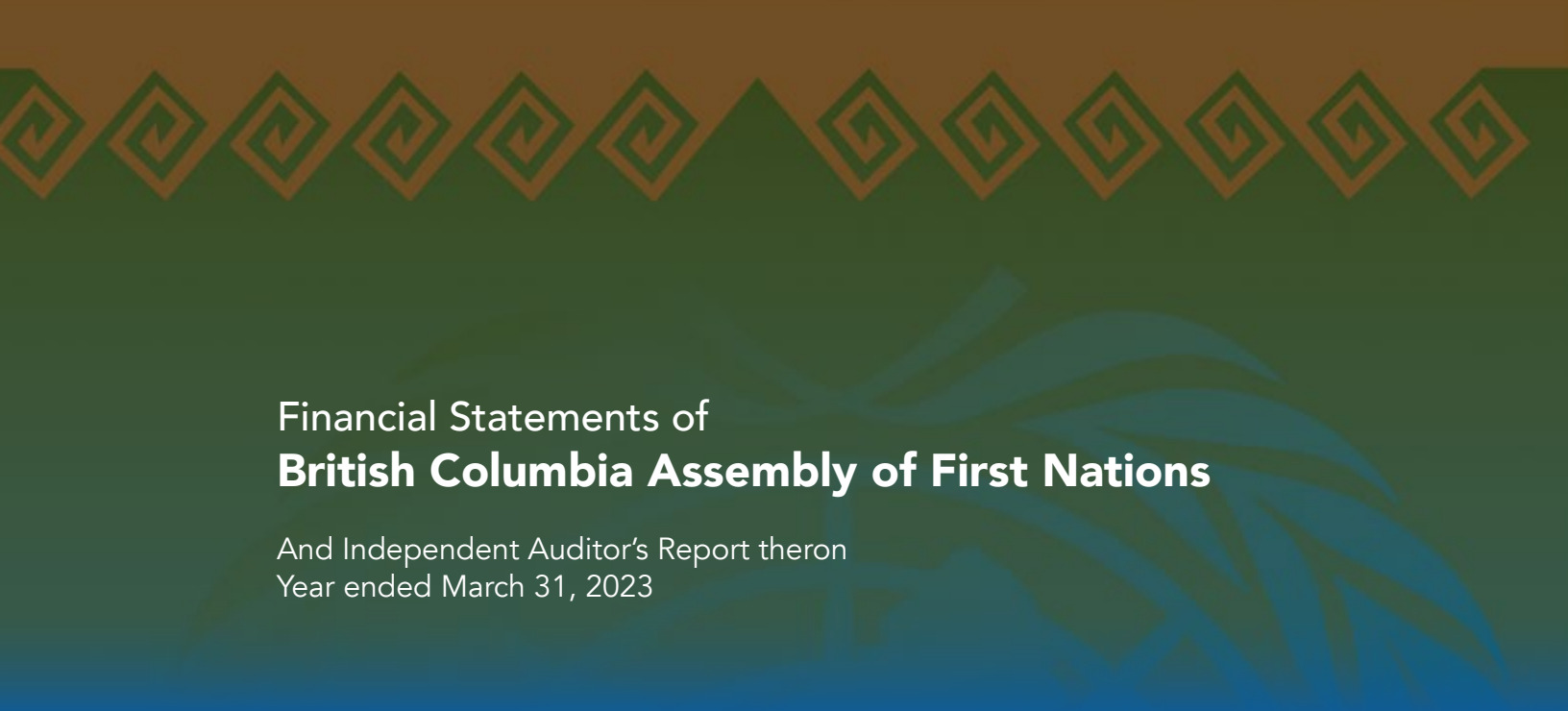


Kristi Denby

Environmental Policy Analyst

Kristi (she/her) is a researcher and sustainability professional whose diverse career has led her to work on water and land reform policy research in South Africa, sustainable and regenerative tourism training and development across Canada, environmental assessments with a focus on Indigenous community impacts in Northeast BC and Alberta, and sustainable value chain projects in the high Amazon region of Peru.





Financial Statements of **British Columbia Assembly of First Nations**

And Independent Auditor's Report thereon
Year ended March 31, 2023

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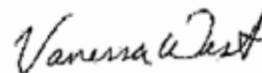
MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The accompanying financial statements of the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations ("BCAFN") are the responsibility of management and have been prepared in compliance with legislation, and in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for local governments established by the Public Sector Accounting Board of The Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada. A summary of the significant accounting policies are described in Note 1 to the financial statements. The preparation of financial statements necessarily involves the use of estimates based on management's judgment, particularly when transactions affecting the current accounting period cannot be finalized with certainty until future periods.

The BCAFN's management maintains a system of internal controls designed to provide reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are properly authorized and recorded in compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements, and reliable financial information is available on a timely basis for preparation of the financial statements. These systems are monitored and evaluated by management.

The BC Regional Chief and Board members meet with management and the external auditors to review the financial statements and discuss any significant financial reporting or internal control matters prior to their approval of the financial statements.

The financial statements have been audited by KPMG LLP, independent external auditors appointed by the BCAFN. The accompanying Auditor's Report outlines their responsibilities, the scope of their examination and their opinion on the BCAFN's financial statements.


B.C. Regional Chief
Chief of Staff



KPMG LLP
177 Victoria Street, Suite 400
Prince George BC V2L 5R8
Canada
Telephone 250-563-7151
Fax 250-563-5693

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of British Columbia Assembly of First Nations

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of British Columbia Assembly of First Nations ("BCAFN"), which comprise:

- the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023
- the statement of operations and accumulated surplus for the year then ended
- the statement of changes in net financial assets for the year then ended
- the statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies

(Hereinafter referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the BCAFN as at March 31, 2023 and its results of operations, its changes in net financial assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the "***Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***" section of our auditor's report.

We are independent of the BCAFN in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada and we have fulfilled our other responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the BCAFN's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the BCAFN or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the BCAFN's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the BCAFN's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the BCAFN's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the BCAFN's to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Report on Other legal and Regulatory Requirements

As required by the Societies Act (British Columbia), we report that, in our opinion, the accounting policies applied in preparing and presenting financial statements in accordance with the Canadian public sector accounting standards have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding period.



Chartered Professional Accountants

Prince George, Canada

November 27, 2023

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

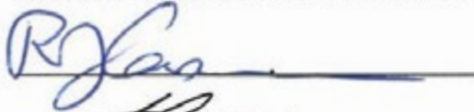
Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
Financial assets:		
Cash	\$ 2,765,811	\$ 1,695,472
Accounts receivable (note 2)	2,575,455	1,121,328
	5,341,266	2,816,800
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	724,092	476,554
Deferred revenue (note 3)	4,424,383	2,212,221
Long-term debt (note 4)	43,496	83,399
	5,191,971	2,772,174
Net financial assets	149,295	44,626
Non-financial assets:		
Tangible capital assets (note 5)	216,954	238,430
Prepaid expenses and deposits	15,101	13,824
	232,055	252,254
Accumulated surplus (note 6)	\$ 381,350	\$ 296,880

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

On behalf of the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations:



Director



Director

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus

Year ended March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	Budget	2023	2022
Revenue (note 7):			
Indigenous Services Canada ("ISC")	\$ 2,896,485	\$ 1,765,230	\$ 1,128,114
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation ("MIRR")	2,331,967	1,969,941	1,768,104
Assembly of First Nations ("AFN")	1,690,143	1,122,610	885,047
Ministry of Public Safety	420,112	203,967	98,563
Other income	394,910	606,925	32,203
Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation ("MJEDI")	1,231,000	138,639	-
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs ("UBCIC")	-	-	14,500
Environment and Climate Change Canada ("ECCC")	50,000	-	93,775
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development ("MFLNRORD")	50,640	50,640	32,693
Women and Gender Equality Canada ("WAGE")	192,720	93,315	28,488
Total revenue	9,257,977	5,951,267	4,081,487
Expenses (note 7):			
Administration	1,680,645	1,696,637	1,542,338
Cultural events	341,684	531,105	211,984
Legislation	2,799,712	1,498,058	797,557
Policy development	4,458,436	2,140,997	1,555,566
Total expenses	9,280,477	5,866,797	4,107,445
Annual (deficit) surplus	\$ (22,500)	\$ 84,470	\$ (25,958)
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	296,880	296,880	322,838
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$ 274,380	\$ 381,350	\$ 296,880

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Statement of Change in Net Financial Assets

Year ended March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	Budget	2023	2022
Annual (deficit) surplus	\$ (22,500)	\$ 84,470	\$ (25,958)
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	-	(22,739)	(8,052)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	-	44,215	50,447
	-	21,476	42,395
Purchase (use) of prepaid expenses and deposits	-	(1,277)	3,479
	-	(1,277)	3,479
Change in net financial assets	(22,500)	104,669	19,916
Net financial assets, beginning of year	44,626	44,626	24,710
Net financial assets, end of year	\$ 22,126	\$ 149,295	\$ 44,626

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
Cash provided by (used in):		
Operating activities:		
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$ 84,470	\$ (25,958)
Items not involving cash:		
Amortization	44,215	50,447
	128,685	24,489
Change in non-cash operating assets and liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	(1,454,127)	(862,987)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	247,538	8,616
Deferred revenue	2,212,162	75,418
Prepaid expenses and deposits	(1,277)	3,479
	1,132,981	(750,985)
Capital activities:		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(22,739)	(8,052)
	(22,739)	(8,052)
Financing activities:		
Repayment of long-term debt	(39,903)	(39,280)
Increase (decrease) in cash	1,070,339	(798,317)
Cash, beginning of year	1,695,472	2,493,789
Cash, end of year	\$ 2,765,811	\$ 1,695,472

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2023

British Columbia Assembly of First Nations ("BCAFN") was incorporated as a non-reporting society under the Society Act (British Columbia) on April 2, 2003 and is a Political Territorial Organization that represents the 203 First Nations in British Columbia.

1. Basis of presentation and significant accounting policies:

These financial statements include the assets, liabilities and results of operations of BCAFN. The financial statements of the BCAFN are prepared by management in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for governments as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board ("PSAB") of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada, which encompasses the following principles:

(a) Revenue recognition:

Revenue is recognized as it becomes receivable under the terms of applicable funding agreements and contracts. Funding received under the funding arrangements which relates to a subsequent fiscal period is reflected as deferred revenue in the year of receipt and classified as such on the summary statement of financial position.

Government transfers are recognized as revenues in the period in which events giving rise to the transfers occur, providing the transfers are authorized, any eligibility criteria is met, and reasonable estimates of the amounts can be made. If the transfer contains stipulations that create a liability, the transfer is recognized as revenue in the period in which the liability is extinguished.

Donations and other revenue are recognized when the cash is received.

(b) Deferred revenue:

Deferred revenue represents grants and other fees which have been collected, but for which the related expenses or services have yet to be incurred or performed. These amounts will be recognized as revenues in the fiscal year the services are performed or related expenses incurred.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

1. Basis of presentation and significant accounting policies (continued):

(c) Tangible capital assets:

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost which includes amounts that are directly attributable to acquisition, construction, development or betterment of the asset. Contributed tangible capital assets are recorded at fair value at the time of the donation with a corresponding amount recorded as revenue. Expenses for repairs and maintenance that do not materially add to the useful life or service potential of the asset are not capitalized, but expensed as incurred. The cost, less residual value, of the tangible capital assets, excluding land, are amortized over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Asset	Basis	Rate
Building	Straight-line	10 years
Furniture and equipment	Straight-line	5 years
Computer equipment	Straight-line	3 years
Leasehold improvements	Straight-line	5 years

Additions during the year have been amortized using the above annual rates prorated for the month of purchase. Assets under construction are not amortized until the asset is available for productive use. When a tangible capital asset no longer contributes to BCAFN's ability to provide services, its carrying amount is written down to its residual value.

(d) Use of estimates:

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period.

Items subject to such estimates include the carrying amount of accounts receivable, tangible capital assets, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

(e) Pension plan:

BCAFN contributes to a private defined contribution pension plan. Contributions are expensed as incurred.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

1. Basis of presentation and significant accounting policies (continued):

(f) Asset retirement obligation:

An asset retirement obligation is recognized when, as at the financial reporting date, all of the following criteria are met:

- There is a legal obligation to incur retirement costs in relation to a tangible capital asset;
- The past transaction or event giving rise to the liability has occurred;
- It is expected that future economic benefits will be given up; and
- A reasonable estimate of the amount can be made.

On April 1, 2021, BCAFN adopted Public Accounting Standard PS 3280 - Asset Retirement Obligations. The new accounting standard addresses the reporting of legal obligations associated with the retirement of certain tangible capital assets, such as asbestos removal in retired buildings by public sector entities. Following the adoption of the standard, BCAFN did not identify any legal obligations giving rise to a liability.

2. Accounts receivable:

Accounts receivable by funding source is summarized as follows:

	2023	2022
AFN	\$ 711,830	\$ 328,350
ISC	445,000	243,013
ECCC	50,000	93,775
MFLNRORD	-	83,333
MIRR	113,500	-
Province of British Columbia	963,327	227,000
UBCIC	-	14,500
Takla Lake First Nation	68,000	-
GST rebate receivable	182,889	127,738
Other	40,553	3,619
Due from employees	356	-
	\$ 2,575,455	\$ 1,121,328

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

3. Deferred revenue:

Deferred revenue consists of the following:

	2023	2022
ISC	\$ 1,153,755	\$ 401,002
MIRR	549,129	1,309,986
Ministry of Public Safety	58,213	141,895
AFN	584,956	272,577
MFLNRORD	-	50,640
Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon	640,914	12,035
WAGE	99,405	24,086
MJEDI	1,190,361	-
ECCC	50,000	-
Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness	75,000	-
Other	22,650	-
	\$ 4,424,383	\$ 2,212,221

4. Long-term debt:

	2023	2022
Royal Bank of Canada term loan, repayable in blended monthly payments of \$3,325 plus interest at prime rate + 0.50% per annum, maturing May 2023.	\$ 43,496	\$ 83,399
	\$ 43,496	\$ 83,399

In the event that the bank renews the term of the loan upon maturity, principal repayments over the next 2 years are approximately as follows:

2024	\$ 39,900
2025	3,596
	\$ 43,496

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

5. Tangible capital assets:

2023	Leasehold improvements	Furniture & equipment	Computer equipment	Building	Total
Cost:					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 70,546	\$ 66,122	\$ 219,048	\$ 191,251	\$ 564,967
Additions	-	1,004	21,735	-	22,739
Balance, end of year	70,546	67,126	240,783	191,251	587,706
Accumulated amortization:					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 36,331	\$ 40,982	\$ 172,053	\$ 59,171	\$ 308,537
Amortization	6,843	5,258	18,906	13,208	44,215
Balance, end of year	43,174	46,240	190,959	72,379	352,752
Net book value	\$ 27,372	\$ 20,886	\$ 49,824	\$ 118,872	\$ 216,954

2022	Leasehold improvements	Furniture & equipment	Computer equipment	Building	Total
Cost:					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 70,546	\$ 65,356	\$ 211,762	\$ 191,251	\$ 538,915
Additions	-	766	7,286	-	8,052
Balance, end of year	70,546	66,122	219,048	191,251	546,967
Accumulated amortization:					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 27,777	\$ 34,773	\$ 151,044	\$ 44,496	\$ 258,090
Amortization	8,554	6,209	21,009	14,675	50,447
Balance, end of year	36,331	40,982	172,053	59,171	308,537
Net book value	\$ 34,215	\$ 25,140	\$ 46,995	\$ 132,080	\$ 238,430

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

6. Accumulated surplus:

	2023	2022
Unrestricted surplus	\$ 164,396	\$ 58,450
Invested in tangible capital assets	216,954	238,430
	<u>\$ 381,350</u>	<u>\$ 296,880</u>

7. Segmented information:

Segmented information has been identified based upon lines of service provided by the BCAFN. BCAFN services are provided by departments and their activities are reported by functional area in the body of the financial statements. Certain lines of service that have been separately disclosed in the segmented information, along with the services they provide, are as follows:

(i) Administration:

Administration provides the functions of corporate administration, finance, human resources, legislative services, and any other functions not categorized to a specific department that are required for carrying out the BCAFN's mandate and supports our adherence to the BC Societies Act.

(ii) Cultural Events:

Cultural focuses on the integration of funding initiatives that incorporate Indigenous knowledge and its role in the support of legislative and policy development. This takes a reconciliatory approach in melding Indigenous concepts into present-day systems for the betterment of all parties.

(iii) Legislation:

Legislation is responsible for policy analysis, advice, engagement and development of required information tools to inform the BC First Nations Leadership of pending and current legislation relating to specified policy such as: Children and Families, Cannabis, Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

(iv) Policy Development:

Policy is responsible for policy analysis, advice, engagement and development of required information tools to inform the BC First Nations Leadership on issues currently facing BC First Nations requiring the revision or advancement of regional, provincial or federal policy. This has included policy review relating to: Housing, Economic Development, Climate Change, Governance, and Youth.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

7. Segmented information (continued):

2023	Administration	Cultural events	Legislation	Policy development	Total
Revenues:					
MIRR	\$ 242,842	\$ 44,968	\$ 416,410	\$ 1,265,721	\$ 1,969,941
ISC	1,054,336	167,180	358,321	185,393	1,765,230
AFN	350,000	17,250	365,311	390,049	1,122,610
Ministry of Public Safety	-	-	152,181	51,786	203,967
Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development	-	-	50,640	-	50,640
WAGE	-	-	-	93,315	93,315
Other income	10,000	402,095	160,888	33,942	606,925
Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation	-	-	-	138,639	138,639
Total revenues	1,657,178	631,493	1,503,751	2,158,845	5,951,267
Expenses:					
Salaries, benefits and consultants	576,303	28,350	330,500	905,033	1,840,186
Advisory, technical and professional	183,518	50,133	1,026,272	372,096	1,632,019
Office	188,115	108	8,194	244,561	440,978
Travel	208,147	5,182	34,962	165,669	413,960
Amortization	44,215	-	-	-	44,215
Meetings and assemblies	496,339	447,332	98,130	453,638	1,495,439
Total expenses	1,696,637	531,105	1,498,058	2,140,997	5,866,797
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$ (39,459)	\$ 100,388	\$ 5,693	\$ 17,848	\$ 84,470

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

7. Segmented information (continued):

2022	Administration	Cultural Events	Legislation	Development	Policy	Total
Revenues:						
MIRR	\$ 169,233	\$ 60,000	\$ 496,185	\$ 1,042,686		\$ 1,768,104
ISC	991,865	129,142	-	7,107		1,128,114
AFN	372,264	-	62,783	450,000		885,047
Ministry of Public Safety	-	-	98,563	-		98,563
ECCC	-	-	93,775	-		93,775
Development	-	-	32,693	-		32,693
UBCIC	-	-	14,500	-		14,500
WAGE	-	-	-	28,488		28,488
Other income	-	-	2,965	29,238		32,203
Total revenues	1,533,362	189,142	801,464	1,557,519		4,081,487
Expenses:						
Salaries, benefits and consultants	765,450	66,599	226,147	675,981		1,734,177
Advisory, technical and professional	154,420	72,618	531,121	448,865		1,207,024
Office	240,748	20,000	14,445	285,172		560,365
Travel	65,670	-	1,675	31,374		98,719
Amortization	50,447	-	-	-		50,447
Meetings and assemblies	265,603	52,767	24,169	114,174		456,713
Total expenses	1,542,338	211,984	797,557	1,555,566		4,107,445
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$ (8,976)	\$ (22,842)	\$ 3,907	\$ 1,953		\$ (25,958)

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2023

8. Pension:

BCAFN provides a defined contribution plan for eligible members of its staff. Members are required to contribute 6% of their basic salary. BCAFN contributes 6% and the contributions are directed to the member's contribution account. During the year, BCAFN contributed \$78,396 (2022 - \$67,821).

9. Employee remuneration:

For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, BCAFN paid total remuneration including taxable benefits of \$975,888 to 9 employees, each of whom received total annual remuneration including taxable benefits of \$75,000 or greater.

10. Credit facility:

Under its credit facility agreement with the Royal Bank of Canada dated February 2, 2016, BCAFN has an authorized revolving demand facility in the amount of \$25,000. The revolving demand facility is due on demand and bears interest at the bank's commercial prime lending rate plus 2.0%. The credit facility was not utilized as at March 31, 2023.

Upcoming Events

BCAFN EVENTS

Women Chiefs/Leadership Caucus Meeting

January 19, 2024, 8:30 AM - 4:30 P

Coast Coal Harbour Hotel, Vancouver, BC

BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly | SAVE the DATE!

March 7 & 8, 2024

Location: TBD

Other Events

BC First Nations Emergency Management Forum

Tentatively schedule for early 2024

Our Gathering 2024

April 22 - 24, 2024

JW Marriott Park, Vancouver

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Annual General Assembly

July 9 - 11, 2024

Montreal, QC

