

Annual Report **2021-2022**



British Columbia
Assembly of First Nations



Reclaiming Our Traditions
Honouring Our Ancestors



BC Assembly of First Nations

Annual Report 2021-2022

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Message from the Regional Chief

Hadih! Chiefs, Councillors, Hereditary Leaders, Knowledge Keepers and youth. I hope to find you in good health!

I am pleased to bring you the BCAFN Annual Report for the 2021 – 2022 period. BCAFN directors, representatives and staff and I have been working hard and together we have broken barriers and shared important successes; but there have been many tribulations as we experienced another difficult year facing historic traumas, the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and climate calamities.

It has brought me great comfort and pride to watch First Nations reclaim and celebrate each other and their traditions over the past year. The drums, songs, dance, regalia, ceremonies, art and languages all come together to bring joy and life to our communities and gatherings. Our people are coming back to ourselves after centuries of colonial violence, and it's vital for our children, and future generations, that we continue to build and gain strength from our traditional cultures.

In the Spring, BCAFN board member Kúkpí7 Rosanne Casimir and Youth representative Taylor Behn-Tsakoza were part of the AFN delegation to the Vatican. Thanks to this leadership, the Pope travelled to Canada, and made an apology for the Catholic Church's role in the genocide of First Nations people through residential schools. While I know that the wording of his apology was controversial for many, I believe the spirit of the apology allows us to move forward with healing, and gives First Nations further justification to pursue the funds owed to us by the Church as part of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. We also saw the



federal government put in place a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which recognizes the importance of decolonizing this country.

The BC Assembly of First Nations continues our important work in implementing the will of First Nations through resolutions passed at our assemblies. As you will read in this report, we are making steady progress across the gamut of our responsibilities.

I am proud of the work undertaken by the BCAFN in the many priority areas and I am confident that you will agree that this work is a valuable part of our continued struggle for recognition of our inherent rights, and the reclaiming of our heritage, in this place we now call British Columbia.

Mussi Cho, Regional Chief Terry Teegee

Terry Teegee, is the elected Regional Chief of the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations and proudly serving his second term in this position. Terry's ancestry is Dakelh, Gitksan and Sekani descent and is a member of Takla Nation. As a former Registered Professional Forester, responsible for looking after the forests, forest lands and forest resources, Terry is deeply involved in natural resources development. As Regional Chief, he was an instrumental voice in the development and historic passing of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Terry's strong leadership, both provincially and nationally, was vital on the following portfolios and issues:

- AFN Chair of Chiefs Committee include: Economic Development, Employment and Training, and Cannabis
- Co-Chair of the AFN National Fisheries Committee
- Co-Lead on the AFN Justice Portfolio
- Lead for Gaming Nationally and member of BC First Nation Gaming Commission
- Co-Chair of the Forestry Sub-Committee with Province of BC
- Co-Chair for the Champions Table with BC Business Council
- Political lead for First Nations Leadership Council for the co-developed Environmental Assessment Act (Bill 51)
- Tripartite Working Group member to implement Bill C-92, Indigenous Child Welfare Jurisdiction Bill to implement the Commitment Document Provincially
- AFN Representative on the UN Convention of Biodiversity.

Terry is known for his caring and collaborative leadership. He works to unify people and participates in initiatives that move Nations towards the recognition of their inherent rights.

Previous to becoming the Regional Chief, Terry was the elected Tribal Chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) from 2012-2017. Before his political aspirations, Terry held forestry and natural resources roles with the CSTC and Takla Nation. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Natural Resources Management (Forestry) and also a Natural Resources Technology Diploma.

Terry and his wife Rena Zatorski have been married for 20 years and have two children, Rylie and Rowan. They reside on Lheidli T'enneh Shelley Reserve, 22 kms up the Fraser River from Prince George.

Message from the Chief of Staff

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

It is once more an honor 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 Council/Youth 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 2021.

Since I last reported to you in 2021, BCAFN continued to evolve and adapt to our new reality as we moved towards a return to the normality we had prior to March 2020. Since the onset of COVID-19, our engagement strategies needed to be modified so that the work was able to continue. Throughout the past year, most of our engagements have occurred virtually and I am thankful that we are able to conduct our business in-person once more. The virtual platform ensured that Regional Chief Teegee and our team were able to connect with our BC First Nations leadership, but nothing can truly replace the positive aspects that in-person interactions afford.

We fully acknowledge and witness the unbelievably high demands of all leaders and wanted to find ways to support fuller



participation of leadership in the various initiatives undertaken by the BCAFN. To this end, a Special Chiefs Assembly occurred on July 6, 2022, during the AFN AGA which took place in Vancouver, in which a special resolution was passed to allow for hybrid assemblies. This resolution allows BCAFN to conduct our Annual General Meeting and Special Chiefs Assembly through both in-person and virtual attendance of our First Nation leaders. The 2022 Annual General Meeting will be the first time that the hybrid model will be utilized where Chiefs/Proxies joining online will have the same voting abilities as those attending in-person under the newly revised Governance Manual.

Focus over the past year has been to ensure effective communications with our 204 BC First Nations. BCAFN utilized media tools such as email distribution through Action Network and continued maintenance of the BCAFN website along with our events website. I look forward to continued engagement with our BCAFN membership as my staff and I explore innovative communication tools that will be utilized to enhance existing engagement strategies.

BCAFN continues to possess a robust staffing contingency of both administrative and policy staff, working from our Lheidli T'enneh Office, Vancouver Office, and remotely throughout the province. I would like to acknowledge their hard work and commitment to serving our BC First Nations leadership and communities.

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, BCAFN Chief of Staff

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. She currently lives in her community with her partner of ten years, Randy, and joined the BCAFN team in April 2018.

BCAFN Vision and Mission

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.

AFN National Chief

RoseAnne Archibald

AFN National Chief RoseAnne Archibald of Taykwa Tagamou Nation, is a strength-based and heart-centered leader, with 31 years of experiences in First Nations politics.

RoseAnne is a third-generation Chief in her family whose leadership has been ground breaking and historical for women and youth.

She was the first woman and youngest Chief elected for Taykwa Tagamou Nation (TTN) in 1990 at 23 years of age. She was also the first woman and youngest Deputy Grand Chief for Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) as well as the first female and youngest Grand Chief for Mushkegowuk Council. She served a second term as Chief of TTN, and a second term as NAN Deputy Grand Chief. For nine years, she ran a successful consulting business providing advice and guidance to First Nations leaders, and organizations, specializing in negotiations and facilitation. She returned to elected leadership in 2018 becoming the first woman Ontario Regional Chief leading the Chiefs of Ontario.

Education is a priority and essential to self-determination. RoseAnne holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree and was the first member of her community to complete a Master's Degree (Humanities). She was awarded the prestigious "Canada 125 medal" for having "made a significant contribution to Canada" through her leadership.

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







NATIONAL

Cannabis

Regional Chief Teegee is the Co-Chair of the Chiefs Committee on Cannabis, which has been mandated to advance First Nations jurisdiction with regard to cannabis at the federal level. The upcoming *Cannabis Act* review process is an opportune time for First Nations to reshape Canada's legislative frameworks when it comes to cannabis.

First Nations have continued to innovate at the leading edge of cannabis-related business and governance. The Government of BC also continues to develop and shape cannabis related legislation and policy, with varying levels of engagement with First Nations and the FNLC. Below is an overview of the landscape and recent initiatives:

- Cowichan Tribes and Snuneymexw enter into Section 119 agreements with BC, December 2021;
- BC Indigenous Cannabis Products Program launched, January 18, 2022;
- BC engagement on cannabis consumption spaces, Spring 2022;
- BC DRIPA Action Plan launched, March 30, 2022 with cannabis related action 4.47;
- Lhtako Dené Nation and BC entered into Section 119 agreement, April 20, 2022;
- Williams Lake First Nation Sugar Cane Cannabis farm-to-gate retail location opened, May 6, 2022,
- Kispiox First Nation and BC entered into Section 119 agreement, July 15, 2022;
- Launch of LDB Direct Delivery program August 15, 2022;
- Farm-Gate retail sales framework expected Fall 2022;
- BC drafts proposed amendments to refine the function and activities carried out by the Director and the CSU, August – Sept 2022 (First Nations can request briefings before September 9, 2022 from Dylan.Sherlock@gov.bc.ca).

At the BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly on March 9-10, 2022 the Chiefs-in-Assembly provided in-principle support for the BC First Nations Cannabis Strategy Framework. The Framework was also supported by Chiefs at meetings of the UBCIC and FNS. The mirrored resolution mandates the FNLC organizations to advocate for, and pursue effective collaboration and funding for the implementation of the Strategy. The priority areas include:

- Advance the recognition of First Nations inherent jurisdiction over cannabis;

- Advance First Nations taxation and revenue sharing jurisdiction;
- Support First Nations cannabis businesses and entrepreneurs through collaborative partnerships and ongoing economic development advocacy work;
- Prioritize community safety;
- Strengthen health and wellness advocacy work through First Nations institutions;
- Advance the development of the necessary infrastructure, institutions and other supportive resources that BC First Nations require to be successful in the cannabis market provincially, nationally, and internationally.

[The DRIPA Action Plan](#) also identified an action related to cannabis for the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General: Action 4.47 - *Advance a collaborative approach to cannabis-related governance and jurisdiction between First Nations and the Province that reflects common objectives to protect youth, prioritize public health and safety, strengthen First Nations governance capacity and secure economic benefits for First Nations.*

BCAFN is currently undertaking work in partnership with the UBCIC and FNS and the FNLC Cannabis Working Group to establish the appropriate structures and ensure capacity funding in order to move work under the BC First Nations Cannabis Strategy Framework and DRIPA Action Plan forward. Based on in-principle support of the Strategy Framework, BCAFN will also work to support finalization of the Strategy itself and will report back to the Chiefs-in-Assembly regularly.

The BCAFN also continues to seek updates from the Federal Government regarding the anticipated review of the *Cannabis Act*.

Finally, there is progress on the development of a Strategic Partnership Initiative on Cannabis, which will see First Nations and Indigenous entrepreneurs benefit from an equity fund and sector-specific expertise targeted toward cannabis-related community engagement and business initiatives. Work is also underway to leverage loan opportunities. Through cooperative work, funding commitments have been secured from BC and Canada, and it is anticipated that this funding program will be launched in fall 2022 through an Indigenous-led program administrator.

Economic Development

Regional Chief Teegee shifted his national portfolio this year, moving from the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCED) to utilizing his experience with DRIPA in the UNDRIPA portfolio. While he still held the portfolio, the CCED was working on several national actions, including a federal government procurement process for First Nations; this process will align with the government of Canada's mandatory target of 5% of awards going to Indigenous citizens and businesses. The current value of goods and services purchased by the government of Canada is approximately \$ 22 billion annually.

The CCED moved to accept the agriculture and agri-food strategic framework, drafted in 2021. This

framework is the first step in creating a national First Nations agriculture strategy. The federal system will identify best practices and opportunities for enhanced food security for First Nations with a cross-sectional lens that incorporates the unique challenges of First Nations communities.

National Chief Roseanne Archibald proposed a National First Nations Economic Growth, Prosperity, and Wealth Building Table in the Spring of 2022. The proposal was deferred to allow for additional information to clarify how a National Table will differ from the CCED and complement the existing national AFN portfolios.

Fisheries

At the last National Fisheries meeting on June 27, the Committee decided that the dialogue session for the AFN Annual General Assembly in July would focus on climate change. Eel River Bar Chief Sasha Labillois, Dene Nation Fisheries Director Sam Bullock, and Sumas Chief Dalton Silver gave the workshop, which was very well received. The Climate Change Conference hosted by the Environment Branch recently invited the Fisheries Sector to repeat this workshop at the upcoming AFN Climate Change Gathering on September 27 in Fredericton, NB.

Transport Canada currently supports and holds monthly bilateral sessions with the Fisheries Sector as AFN does not have a Transport sector devoted to marine emergency response, shipping, and navigation protection. The Sector supports the National Fisheries Committee and several working groups, including the

National Policy Analysis Group, National Aquaculture Working Group, Indigenous Knowledge in Fisheries, Inland Fisheries Working Group, Oceans Working Group (shared with Environment Branch), and the Oceans Protection Plan. The Sector usually works on several issues, such as a joint development process for a federal Aquaculture Act, the development of a framework for oceans governance and protected areas which would be inclusive of First Nations rights, jurisdictions, and knowledge systems, and protocols and guidelines for the application of First Nations Indigenous Knowledge in regulatory processes, as well as for First Nations to apply directly within their own jurisdictions. Further, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has invited the AFN to its September 9 meeting of the Committee on Fisheries.

Gaming

National

For years, First Nations have advocated for greater inclusion within the gaming economy, whether through increased opportunities and benefit-sharing from land-based gaming enterprises, single sports betting opportunities, or online gaming opportunities. Canada's current Criminal Code restricts First Nations from full participation in gaming unless that participation is under the authority of the provinces and territories of the Canadian state; the federal government must change its laws to be compliant with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and support inherent and Treaty rights in gaming jurisdiction. The Minister of Justice, David Lametti, has committed to seeing changes in gaming.

Provincial

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacted gaming revenues as casinos and other facilities closed or limited their operations. These closures created a loss in gaming revenues to be shared with First Nations under the Gaming Revenue Sharing Agreement. In April, the Province of BC announced a \$74-million grant to mitigate the loss of these revenues and ensure First Nations' commitments to investment in social services, education, infrastructure, cultural revitalization, and economic development can carry on. The BCAFN, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and First Nations Summit supported this measure because it created stability and predictability for First Nations government revenues. This also highlighted the need for improving phase two

negotiations with BC to discuss other gaming-related matters for First Nations jurisdiction in gaming. The First Nations Gaming Commission continues to provide expert support for these discussions, which will be updated to the Chiefs periodically.

The BCAFN also congratulates former elected Chief of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation Leah George-Wilson for her recent April appointment to the BC Lottery Corporation (BCLC). Leah George-Wilson is a practicing lawyer focusing on Indigenous Law. She holds several board positions in addition to BCLC, including the First Nations Summit and the Land Advisory Board. Ms. George-Wilson holds a Bachelor of Arts from Simon Fraser University and a Juris Doctor from the University of British Columbia; she was called to the bar in 2015. Ms. George-Wilson is currently working on a Master of Laws at the University of Victoria.

It is also noteworthy that the BC Lottery Corporation will be working with the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming

Authority (SIGA) to develop an online gaming portal for casino games and single-game sports betting. SIGA and the Province of Saskatchewan entered into an agreement to bring online gaming to Saskatchewan in September 2021. SIGA is controlled by the Chiefs in Saskatchewan and provides regulatory oversight of gaming. First Nations in BC could seek to create a similar model to secure full gaming jurisdiction. In BC, there are many challenges for gaming. In June, the Cullen Report (issued by the Province) found that billions of dollars were laundered each year between 2008 to 2018 in casinos throughout BC. Many senior BC ministers and former Premier Christy Clark were aware of issues in provincial gaming management. Across Canada and the US, there are many jurisdictions where First Nations and tribes regulate gaming safely, legally, and effectively. There is no reason why First Nations couldn't do better to regulate gaming in BC.

Indigenous Skills & Employment Training Strategy (ISETS)

On the ISETS file at the BCAFN provincially, we are working with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training. We provided input into the Future Ready: Skills for the Jobs of Tomorrow to help shape future policy and programs to best meet the needs of First Nations citizens in BC. On June 3rd, Regional Chief Teegee provided the opening remarks for the First Nations Engagement Session on the Future Ready: Skills for the Jobs of Tomorrow.

There is still vital work to be done on ISETS. First and foremost is lobbying the Province of BC to ensure that the micro-credential programs are helpful, accessible and leading to quality employment opportunities. The micro-

credential programs, which are funded by the province and go through an RFP process, have historically enjoyed mixed results in terms of employment.

At the national level, the AFN has transferred the ISET portfolio back to the Economic Development Sector to support ongoing advocacy. With the current economic climate of rising inflation, post-pandemic recovery, and growing urban First Nations populations, ISETs are a vehicle for employment for many. Due to scheduling conflicts and time commitments, the last Chiefs Committee on Human Resources Development (CCHRD) on February 28, 2022, did not achieve a quorum.

Justice & Policing

The landscape of First Nations Justice and Policing is changing rapidly, and this year saw dynamic developments in this area. Moving forward, First Nations are in a position to establish and maintain their own justice systems and reduce the negative effects of the colonial justice system. In reaching these goals, the BCAFN continues to uphold the importance of culture and the recognition of First Nations jurisdiction as a part of our advocacy efforts.

First established in March 2021, the FN Policing Taskforce continues to meet regularly. Composed of experts in First Nations Policing, regional representatives, and executive members of the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, the mandate of the FN Policing Taskforce is to provide support and guidance for the co-development of First Nations Policing Essential Services legislation.

Regional Chief Terry Teegee currently Co-Chairs the AFN Taskforce on Policing, along with Quebec Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, and actively advances BC First Nations' interests to establish policing as an essential service and the co-development of the *National Indigenous Justice Strategy* (IJS). Chief Jerry Jack and Chief Dean Nelson are the BC representatives on this Taskforce. The AFN is mandated, by Resolution 07/2021 - Creation and Implementation of Legislation for First Nations Policing as an Essential Service, to advocate for the equitable treatment of First Nations police services through the development of a First Nations policing legislative framework.

The First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) has been chronically underfunded for the last 30 years, resulting in inequities existing in First Nations policing when compared to non- First Nations police systems. In a recent case before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, Pekuakamiulnuatsh, the Tribunal found that the complainant was discriminated against through the provision of services via the FNPP. In 2020, the federal government expressed its intention to create a new First Nations policing legislative framework. Since then, AFN and the federal government has been discussing how best to include First Nations in all aspects of the development process. An AFN Forum on Policing and Restorative Justice was held virtually on April 6-7, 2022. A report will be forthcoming.

On May 25th and 26th, 2022, the BCAFN and BCFNJC held the [Policing as an Essential Service Forum](#) for First Nations chiefs, leadership, experts, technicians, and community members to discuss their vision for transformative change in First Nations policing and community safety and to inform federal and provincial legislative commitments for reforming existing policing

and justice systems. The results and recommendations of this forum were consolidated in the *What We Heard Report*. From this report, key challenges in the policing and justice sector were identified to included:

- chronic underfunding;
- systemic racism;
- a lack of responsiveness from all levels of government;
- both localized and province-wide issues with recruitment and retention;
- a lack of accountability from key stakeholders; and,
- the need to rebuild and reforge relationships with key partners.

With the anticipated support of soon-to-be-introduced resolutions, the BCAFN will look to prioritize the What We Heard report's findings and legislative recommendations in our discussions with provincial and federal governments as well as other key interest groups and stakeholders.

In realizing transformative change, we recognize that engagement and feedback from First Nations leadership and community members will be critical. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is currently supporting the regions to host additional engagement sessions to discuss and determine priorities ahead of the co-development of legislation in 2022-2023. Moving forward, legislation recognize First Nations policing as an essential service and provide a framework for stable funding and resources. BCAFN continues to advocate for this approach and supports First Nations to assert jurisdiction over their own community safety priorities.

The BC Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act delivered its [report](#) to the legislature by April 28, 2022. The FNLC and the BC First Nations Justice Council responded favourably to several bold recommendations made by the committee to transform policing. The recommendations were quite high level and will require engaged partnerships with First Nations to ensure that implementation is in alignment with the UN Declaration, and to ensure that the priorities of First Nations women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are included. This work will see additional influence and overlap with the findings of the *What We Heard Report*.

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

are ongoing in this area and additional meetings are forthcoming. BCAFN will also collaborate with the BC First Nations Justice Council on work to engage on, and inform, the National Indigenous Justice Strategy and the development of an Indigenous Women's Justice Strategy in alignment with Strategy 11 of the [BC First Nations Justice Strategy](#).

Moving forward, we have a critical opportunity to advance justice for First Nations people by leveraging the

initiatives, developments, and priorities of the past year. The BCAFN will continue to support the implementation of the *National Inquiry Calls for Justice* and *TRC Calls to Action* and looks forward to continuing to support, engage with, and amplify the voices of First Nations as they work for the rights, safety, and wellbeing of our communities.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In 2016, the Canadian government finally fully endorsed the UN Declaration. Five years later, the federal government passed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act ("UNDA"). Through section 5 of UNDA, Canada will align its laws with the principles of the UN Declaration. It is important to note that the project to align Canada's laws with the UN Declaration applies equally to all present, and future legislation. It is also key to remember that this legal consistency and the reporting requirements will be in perpetuity (or until the legislation is repealed).

As we have seen in British Columbia, passing an act is just the beginning of implementing the UN Declaration. The federal government has put a process in place to draft an UNDA action plan that includes two phases of engagement and intense policy development. The proposed timeframe will also require the creation of the UNDA action plan, through section 6 of UNDA, by July 2023.

- Spring/Fall 2022 – Phase I engagement: Indigenous priorities
- Summer 2022- First Annual Progress Report;
- Fall 2022 – Policy period and development of draft UNDA action plan;
- Fall 2022/Winter 2023 – Phase 2 engagement: Validation of draft UNDA action plan;
- June 2023 – Second Annual Report;
- June 2023 – UNDA action plan completed, then tabled in Parliament as soon as practicable and publicly released.

One of the key questions we, as First Nations, need to address through this process is how Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 relates to the UN Declaration. Canada has indicated that it views Section 35 rights as foundational to the relationship between the state and

Indigenous Peoples. We must be central in defining how these two pieces fit together.

Canada has begun early UNDA alignment work, one of these pieces of work being the inclusion of a non-derogation clause in the federal Interpretation Act . The FNLC recommends that Canada should adopt all of the recommendations in its [2007 Senate Report](#) where the current non-derogation clause work was drawn from. In the [UNDA Annual Report](#), Canada also noted that it has been developing internal interim guidance to its federal ministries on alignment work. The FNLC will be looking to review and provide opinion on that interim guidance to ensure that it is aligned with UNDRIIP. Outside of this early work, Canada is significantly behind on its work with the UNDA action plan and in its federal alignment of laws process.

Another key area that the BCAFN will be pushing for during the drafting of an UNDA action plan is creating a list of priority areas where alignment can begin immediately. While drafting the DRIPA action plan in BC, we brought our experts to bear on the issue and developed a priority list. As the action plan process rolls out, we will advocate for increased access to resources for engagement to ensure that our priorities are reflected in the plan. It remains to be determined whether the UNDA action plan will include a list of regional priorities or if priorities will be identified Canada-wide. BC AFN and the FNLC have advocated for a regional approach to the UNDA action plan to ensure our priorities are best captured. What we have observed in the reporting so far with the UNDA Annual Report is that Canada's perspective has been reflected far more than that of Indigenous Peoples; we will be working to change that as the UNDA action plan is developed.

PROVINCIAL

COVID-19 Emergency Response

The BCAFN has been supporting BC First Nations throughout the pandemic with a number of tools and communications. During the first two years, we put together an online hub for information and resources for First Nations governments, businesses, and individuals. This has now been phased out. We continue to distribute the latest information we received from partners at the FNHA, the Provincial Government, and Indigenous Services Canada to First Nations through a weekly bulletin.

One of the core issues we find is that First Nations people have a well-earned distrust of medical institutions. Our bad treatment at the hands of the medical establishment is well known. However, it's clear that

we need to be vaccinated to protect our communities, and in particular our elders. We have run two large communications campaigns featuring Regional Chief Teegee as well as knowledge keeper Dr. Gwen Pointe. These were aimed directly at increasing vaccination and booster rates among First Nations citizens in BC; we know that we have good rates of first vaccination, but for subsequent rounds – and especially booster doses (3rd and 4th inoculations) – First Nations are lagging behind the rest of the population. We are continuing this social leadership role in collaboration with the FNHA, and you will see more from us this fall.



Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* ("DRIPA") was passed in late 2019. Since its passing, the First Nations Leadership Council ("FNLC") has seen some progress in aligning BC laws with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* ("UN Declaration"). We now have a DRIPA action plan developed in collaboration with the province and there is a reporting structure in place to give clarity on progress. Perhaps most significantly, the *Interpretation Act* was amended to require that provincial laws be interpreted through Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the *UN Declaration*. There is also a secretariat being formed that will be responsible for embedding the *UN Declaration* in provincial obligations.

There has been progress on legislative alignment in the priority areas we initially brought forward. This includes forestry, children and families, the *Heritage Conservation Act*, and, among other legislation, the *Mineral Tenure Act*. The FNLC have also assisted in the creation of the new *Anti-Racism Data Act*.

But of course, there are also concerns that the BCAFN and the FNLC continue to raise with the province. Firstly, our organizations are not rights & title holders; the province needs to implement standard processes

for consultation with the First Nations of BC. We also continue to see legislation that does not adequately align with the *UN Declaration*. We continue to be concerned about the lack of metrics for evaluating whether legislation is aligning with the *UN Declaration*; there needs to be a clear set of standards that lawmakers can use when drafting new legislation or revising current legislation.

The FNLC has also assisted in the creation of the [Directives on Civil Litigation involving Indigenous Peoples](#). The Directives aim to transform the civil litigation process by ensuring that all civil litigation materials produced by provincial Crown counsel conform with the *UN Declaration*. While the Directives have been a positive step, significant problems remain with their application to current ongoing litigation.

Finally, while we have seen some progress, we are disappointed in the slow pace. While we know that governments work slowly, the reality is that Indigenous human rights should not be kept on the backburner. The FNLC will continue to bring our concerns forward and push for more timely advances in DRIPA implementation.

Economic Development

First Nations' economic self-determination and reconciliation is a guiding principle at the BCAFN. The work is vital to the economic well-being of First Nations in BC as we navigate rapidly shifting economic conditions. From inflation to soaring costs, the economic present new challenges and opportunities.

BCAFN's most prominent economic development initiative is the BC First Nations Centre for Excellence (CoE) in Economic Development. This venture will showcase the innovation and resiliency of BC's First Nations citizens, communities, and organizations and provide a suite of targeted services in a non-partisan environment. The CoE is expected to be funded by the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery, and Innovation for the first fiscal year, FY 22-23, with continuing support for two additional years while we create a sustainable business model to ensure long-term success.

The BCAFN's ongoing priorities include driving policy papers in the economic development sector, such as publications focused on Secure First Nations Food Systems, a baseline economic participation report for First Nations in BC, and a First Nations Trade backgrounder to establish opportunities in international trade for First Nations in BC in collaboration with the Province of BC.

The BCAFN Economic Development team hosted over 150 participants in Vancouver and virtually at our Economic Development Forum on May 16th and 17th, 2022. Participants across the province enjoyed two days of speakers, panels, and cultural performances. The BCAFN is hosting one economic development event this fall, this year's final Black Books session, on October 26th, 2022 in Vancouver.

Emergency Management and Wildfire & Flood Emergency Response

The past year has been a grave wake-up call to the climate emergency we are facing in BC, and around the world. Wildfires and floods set the tone for another difficult year of climate disasters and emergencies. As First Nations are disproportionately impacted by climate change, I have continued to call for adequate and immediate resources from the provincial and federal governments to support First Nations-led emergency management response systems and programs.

At the Disaster Recovery and Climate Resilience Committee, I expressed concerns regarding the chronic underfunding of emergency management and the needed support and reform to BC's emergency management, including preparedness, mitigation, and recovery efforts. Together with the FNLC, I pushed to prioritize changes to the Additions to Reserve process for First Nations that lost Indian Reserve lands due to flooding and raised the need for improved contracting and procurement for First Nations businesses to benefit from the recovery opportunities. We have also been engaging with Emergency Management BC on modernizing and co-developing the *Emergency Program Act*.

We have seen increased funding to the First Nations Emergency Service Society for purchasing equipment and increasing their capacity to support First Nations communities on the ground. Indigenous Services Canada has also been able to add funding for unqualified costs under Emergency Management BC rules, thereby decreasing the risk of economic hardship for First Nations impacted by emergencies.

At the most recent First Nations Summit and UBCIC meetings, the Chiefs supported negotiating a new Tripartite Emergency Services Agreement. Under the Memorandum of Understanding, we have made progress in improving jurisdiction and resource allocation for First Nations emergency management. I will continue to work toward the full implementation of First Nations jurisdiction for emergency management, which must include climate resilience. First Nations are at the forefront of the impacts of the climate crisis, and we must see billions invested now in management and preparation.

Environment - Carbon Rights, Carbon Offsets and Economic Development

As part of our work to support First Nations-led natural climate solutions projects that align with First Nations' interests to generate both financial return and conservation outcomes, BCAFN has been engaged in activities such as:

- preparing the discussion paper [First Nations Carbon](#) to facilitate information to First Nations in BC about opportunities and limitations to engaging in land-based carbon offset projects,
- hosting a [dialogue session](#) on First Nations Land-based Carbon Offsets on April 19, 2022, with representatives of communities and organizations.
- submitting comments to the [Draft B.C.'S Offset Protocol Policy in April 2022](#),
- advocating for First Nations' interests through participation in the federal First Nations Protocol Focus Group for the Improved Forest Management Protocol,
- building relationships with like-minded First Nations organizations to strengthen efforts to advocate for

recognition and respect of First Nations' rights to the carbon sequestered in their traditional territories and forest.

In addition, in collaboration with Ecotrust Canada, BCAFN has secured the support of the Metcalf Foundation to begin a project called "Enriching BC First Nations Capacity to Develop Forest Carbon Projects." Through this project, BCAFN and Ecotrust Canada want to support First Nations in BC to prepare for and engage in carbon offset projects, achieve conservation and economic goals and protect First Nations' ways of life while affirming inherent Title, Rights and Treaty Rights. The project has three goals:

- Build and deliver capacity tools for First Nations in BC to protect forests through conservation and carbon offsets development;
- Support First Nations to scale up old-growth conservation, assert First Nations' inherent rights, including culture and knowledge; and,

- Increase government and public awareness and support for conservation and carbon offset, including policy and regulation changes.

To achieve these goals, BCAFN and Ecotrust are in partnership to develop an Interactive Carbon Web Portal, which will include digital tools to enhance First Nations' capacity to engage in carbon offset projects and exercise their jurisdictional right over the carbon stored in their traditional territories. We will conduct engagement meetings and training workshops with First Nations interested in carbon offsets development.



Environment - Clean Energy and Mining Initiatives

BCAFN continues working with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and with the technical support of the First Nation Energy and Mining Council (FNEMC) to facilitate First Nations' efforts in relation to energy and mining as mandated by Chiefs-in-Assembly through Resolutions (Resolutions no. 13/22, 25/19 and 21d/19).

To advance our mandates, in September 2021, the FNLC and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (EMLI) signed the *Relationship Protocol* to establish and implement a collaborative and constructive relationship on issues and initiatives in the areas of energy, mines, and low carbon innovation in BC. Through the Relationship Protocol, the FNLC and the FNEMC met Minister Ralston (EMLI) in February 2022 and discussed concerns in matters that affect First Nations.

Topics discussed included: the efficiency of the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 to respond to First Nations priorities, the reform of the *Mineral Tenure Act* to align with the Declaration Act, the need to collectively define clean energy, and the lack of conditions and opportunities for First Nations to engage in clean energy projects, including distribution and transmission grids. Tables pertaining to the Mines Act Code Review and mine audits are also underway. A second meeting will be held in October 2022 to continue the discussion and assess the progress made by the Senior Management Group – which includes the Deputy Minister of EMLI and the CEO of the FNEMC. Engagement by the Province with the FNLC as contemplated by the Relationship Protocol does not in any way fulfill, replace, or displace the Province's obligations to consult and cooperate with First Nations title and rights holders.

Regarding clean energy, in October 2021, the FNLC, the FNEMC and EMLI finalized a draft Terms of Reference for the [Indigenous Clean Energy Opportunities \(ICEO\)](#) engagement (Resolution 25/19). The ICEO process is open to all First Nations governments and First Nations

organizations in BC and offers a venue to collectively discuss current opportunities and barriers to First Nations' participation in the clean energy sector. The purpose of the ICEO also includes engaging in discussion about legislation and policy reform to align BC's clean energy laws with the *Declaration Act*.

The ICEO delivered three workshops in November 2021 and March 2022 with First Nations rights-holders to gather input on how engagement and collaboration should occur and to identify priorities for the work going forward. As a result of the workshops, three working tables will be established this year, which are *Electricity*, *Hydrogen*, and *Legislative/Regulatory/Policy changes to clean energy*.

With respect to policy and legislation reform, as requested by the FNLC, the FNEMC reviewed and submitted comments to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Clean Energy) Regulation amendments (GGRR) (July 2022); the BC's Oil and Natural Gas Royalty Framework (Dec 2021), the Energy Affordability Discussion Paper (May 2022), and the Public Interest Bonding Strategy discussion paper. BCAFN and FNEMC also prepared a report on the BCUC Indigenous Utilities Regulation Inquiry.

Looking forward, there is lots of work underway and still needed with respect to clean energy and mining reform in the province. In particular, the BCAFN, FNLC and FNEMC continue to push for changes to one of the most antiquated and discriminatory provincial laws: the *Mineral Tenure Act* (MTA). As noted in the provincial Action Plan to implement the *Declaration Act*, reform of the MTA is critical for First Nations governments as it still allows for private and industry mining interests to have preference over First Nations' rights. The MTA must be repealed and replaced. The BCAFN and the FNLC will be supported by the FNEMC in seeking changes to mining and energy laws in BC that benefit to First Nations.

Environment - Climate Emergency

First Nations in BC continue experiencing dire impacts of human-induced global warming, known as climate change. The devastating floods and landslides last fall resulted from an unusual atmospheric river event that led to many First Nations being affected, with some still in the process of recovery and living in hotels or temporary homes. This extreme event, described as the costliest natural disaster in the province's history, destroyed critical infrastructure and affected rivers, water courses and wildlife and fish such as salmon, a vital source of culture and food security for First Nations.

The effects of climate change, both the slow onset events and extreme weather events, will intensify, resulting in more loss and damage for First Nations. During this 2021-2022 period, Regional Chief Teegee and BCAFN continued to carry out our mandates (Resolutions 30/2016, 31/2016, 04/2019, 05/2021 and 06/2022) and support First Nation Title and Right holders in their efforts to fight climate change.

Climate Change Portfolio Highlights Support First Nations community-led climate leadership:

BCAFN continues fostering discussion on climate-related topics and facilitating technical information sharing with First Nations governments and community members through organizing and facilitating [climate action webinars and workshops](#), sharing information using the BCAFN Climate Change Distribution List and the monthly [Climate Change & Water Newsletter](#). We hosted two workshops in December 2021 and June 2022 on climate data and a [dialogue session on land-based carbon offsets](#) in April 2022. Looking ahead to this year, we are currently planning our first webinar, which will address what 1.5oC of global warming would mean for First Nations in BC and their territories.

As part of supporting community climate leadership, we are also strongly advocating BC and Canada increase direct funding support to First Nations governments to strengthen climate capacity and Nation building using different venues. A meeting between Minister George Heyman (BC ENV) and RC Teegee was held in October 2022 for this specific purpose. Building capacity was also a central topic during meetings of the Committee of British Columbia and Federal Ministers on Disaster Response and Climate Resilience (DRCR).

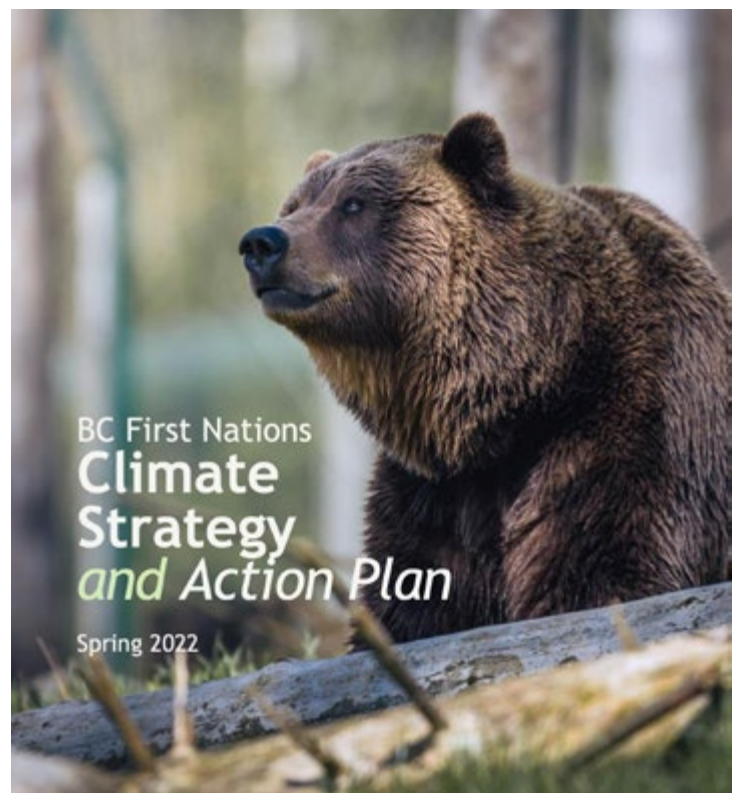
To stabilize global warming to below 1.5oC, steep reductions are needed in fossil fuel emissions. In October 2021, after the release of the Roadmap to 2030, the BCAFN and the FNLC sent an [open letter](#) to BC Premier Horgan and Minister George Heyman, BC Minister of Environment and Climate Change, demanding an overhaul of CleanBC to reflect the climate emergency.

Develop and implement the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan

The final draft of the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan (the Strategy) was endorsed by Chiefs-in-Assembly earlier this year. First Nations leadership also mandated BCAFN to work with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) to implement the Strategy and host a climate action session to discuss priority actions. (Resolution No. 06/2022). The FNLC held an All-Chiefs Meeting on September 13th, and the meeting outcomes will be shared with First Nations in a *What We Heard Report*. A second All-Chiefs meeting on priority actions to reduce GHG emissions and establish a just and clean economy will be planned for early 2023.

To advance the Strategy's implementation, we are preparing a project proposal, presenting the Strategy to different audiences and building partnerships with like-minded organizations.

The Strategy is also being recognized by others, with the FNLC receiving a "Special Recognition" award as part of the 2022 Climate & Energy Action Award at the Union of BC Municipalities in September 2022. This award recognizes not only our efforts to develop the Strategy but also the importance of First Nations' leadership in addressing climate change. Such leadership means responding to climate change impacts using holistic solutions grounded in our laws, values, worldviews, knowledge and priorities while also affirming First Nations' inherent Title, Rights and Treaty Rights and while responding to the impacts of colonization. This approach is reflected in our Strategy.



Engagement with British Columbia and Canada

We are engaging the BC and Canadian governments through the BC-FNLC Technical Working Group on Climate Change (TWG) and the Joint Committee on Climate Action (JCCA), respectively. At these tables, BCAFN raised concerns, provided recommendations, and discussed matters that affect First Nations in BC. We advocate for the full and effective participation of First Nations right-holders in federal climate plans and programs, the unacceptably low levels of funding support for First Nations communities, and changes in Crown governments' approaches to delivering climate programs which recognize and include Indigenous ecological knowledge, and which fully implement the *UN Declaration*.

Some of the plans and processes we have reviewed in BC are the circular economy, the Carbon Pricing Tax, the Clean Transportation Action Plan, the Indigenous Clean Energy Opportunities, reforms to the Low Carbon Fuels Act, and the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS). Federally, we have reviewed the federal 2030 Reduction Plan and Budget 2022, the National Adaptation Strategy development process, the federal First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda and other programs.

As part of the TWG, we also identified, analyzed and discussed intersections between the First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and provincial plans such as the CleanBC, the Roadmap to 2030 and the CPAS, and found important gaps, particularly those related to the affirmation of First Nations rights in climate action.

The JCCA is also developing communication tools to improve transparency, accountability, and engagement throughout JCCA activities. More information on priority areas of the JCCA can be found in its [third annual report](#).

Moving forward, BCAFN will continue advocating for and working to shift the current federal and provincial consultation approach in climate adaptation and mitigation planning to a consent-based decision-making approach grounded in a genuine G2G relationships between Crown governments and empowered and self-determined communities. It must always be clear that none of the activities of the TWG or the JCCA can or should replace or limit the obligation of the provincial and federal governments to consult and engage directly with First Nations rights-holders.

International engagement

Resolution 05/2021 directs BCAFN to pursue advocacy opportunities regarding climate change and sovereignty at multiple scales, including the UN's Framework

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and building relationships to enable mutual learning with Indigenous Peoples outside Canada. As part of the work to achieve our mandate, BCAFN has been participating more actively in the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, submitted a proposal to present at the Canada Pavilion COP27 in Egypt and submitted an application to obtain "Observer Status" and accreditation to participate in future Conference of the Parties. If Observer Status is granted, BCAFN could provide accreditation to rights-holders interested in attending the international climate change summit in the coming years.

Liaise with AFN's Environment Sector and other Regions

We are continuing to liaise with other Regions and the AFN National Office, through the Regional Climate Change Coordinators Network and the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACE). The current BC political representatives to the ACE are Chief Byron Louis (Okanagan Indian Band), Kúkpi7 Judy Wilson (Neskonlith Indian Band and Secretary-Treasurer of UBCIC) and former Chief Leah George-Wilson (Tsleil-Waututh First Nation), and the BCAFN Regional Climate Change Coordinator acts as the technical representative. The ACE is currently focused on the development of the First Nations National Climate Strategy. Other areas of work include Species at Risk, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Pathway to Canada Target 1, IPCAs and Marine IPCAs, Environmental Health, Caribou and Bill S-5 (An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999) - Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act.

Looking ahead, we'll strengthen our Environment and Climate Change Portfolio by hiring a new Policy Analyst. This addition to our team will give us the space to deepen our work in important areas and better support First Nations communities.



Environment - Water

National Portfolio

BCAFN Water Dialogue Sessions: Canada Water Agency

In December 2019, Canada committed to developing a Canada Water Agency (CWA) to improve collaborative freshwater management across Canada. In the 2021 Budget, Canada committed \$17.4 million to “support work with the provinces, territories, Indigenous peoples, and key stakeholders on the scope of the agency’s mandate”. A [resolution](#) was passed at the BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly in March 2021 which supports BCAFN to facilitate a dialogue with First Nations in BC to discuss potential opportunities and gaps in the proposed Canada Water Agency. Through this funding, BCAFN hosted a five-part virtual Water Dialogue Series in March 2022 to provide space for First Nations in BC to discuss the potential impacts of the CWA and provide considerations for its development and implementation. Over 275 participants attended throughout the BCAFN Water Dialogue Series, including First Nations Chiefs, leadership, Knowledge Keepers, youth, women, 2SLGBTQIA+, tribal council representatives, technical experts, and community members. BCAFN produced a What We Heard Report for the Water Dialogue Series which can be found on the BCAFN [website](#).

Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act

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

On June 23, 2022, Canada formally repealed the SDWFNA. As part of the National Class Action Safe Drinking Water Settlement, Canada has committed to replacing the legislation “in consultation with First Nations” by December 2022. As of July 2022, the AFN is currently implementing a Joint Working Group (JWG) to support the co-development process of the legislative reform. As part of the co-development process, the AFN will be leading targeted discussions and information sharing sessions with First Nations throughout the Fall including:

- Virtual AFN Youth Water Summit – September 21, 2022,
- Virtual Legislative Summit and Legal Think Tank - October 12-13, 2022,
- Virtual AFN Water Summit- October 27, 2022,
- BC Chiefs Water Summit (Date TBA).

Information gathered from engagement discussions will be brought forward to the JWG to inform their proposed legislative frameworks that are intended to replace the repealed act. Further engagements will take place in early 2023 to discuss a draft framework and offer opportunities

for First Nations to provide feedback. More information will be available on the AFN [website](#).

National Class Action Litigation Settlement

On December 22, 2021, the Federal Court and the Court of the Queen’s Bench of Manitoba issued a joint statement approving a (minimum) \$8 billion settlement regarding the National Safe Drinking Water Advisories Settlement. The settlement outlines Canada’s commitment to contributing a minimum of \$6 billion over nine years to support reliable access to safe drinking water on-reserve.

Additional terms of the settlement include:

- \$1.5 billion in compensation for First Nations impacted by Water Quality Advisories,
- The creation of a \$400 million First Nations Economic and Cultural Restoration Fund,
- A renewed commitment to Canada’s Action Plan for the lifting of all long-term drinking water advisories,
- The creation of a First Nations Advisory Committee on Safe Drinking Water,
- Support for First Nations to develop their own safe drinking water by-laws and initiatives,
- The planned modernization of the SDWFNA including the repeal of SDWFNA and replacement of the act by December 2022.

Regional Portfolio

FNLC First Nations Water Rights Strategy

In 2021 BCAFN alongside the First Nations Summit (FNS) and Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) together as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) renewed their commitment to advancing First Nations water rights in BC. The Chiefs in Assembly and Chief’s Council mandated that the FNLC First Nations Water Rights Strategy be amended to reflect modern priorities towards water security, sustainability, governance, and jurisdiction in BC through BCAFN Resolution 06/2021, FNS Resolution 0621.12 and UBCIC Resolution 2021-43.

In April 2022, the FNLC hosted a virtual Pre-Engagement Session to inform preliminary considerations for the Strategy amendments. First Nations Chiefs, leadership, experts, technicians, and community members from across the province were invited to the session to offer input on the 2013 Strategy and share insights on how a revised strategy could best represent First Nations’ water-related interests, concerns, and priorities in BC. The FNLC is pleased to share a [Summary Report](#) of the session. The insights of this report will inform future water-related engagements with First Nations in BC on the amendments of the 2013 First Nations Water Rights Strategy. Further Strategy engagements will be

scheduled for 2022/23. The FNLC will keep Chiefs and leadership updated on the Strategy development and apprised of future meeting dates.

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

Canada's First Nations Child and Family Services Program has been exercising discriminatory funding practices for decades, leading to high levels of First Nations children being removed from their families and placed into care. In 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) issued its landmark ruling acknowledging said discriminatory practices, and in 2021 the Federal Court of Canada upheld the CHRT ruling. As a result, Canada committed to negotiating a settlement. Through this process, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and other parties have been negotiating toward a final settlement. The parties reached a final settlement agreement on compensation for First Nations individuals and their caregivers impacted by the discriminatory practices. In September 2022, the AFN will go before the CHRT and the Federal Court to seek approval of the Agreement.

The general terms of this nearly \$40 billion agreement - the largest settlement agreement in Canada's history - includes a significant commitment to compensating victims and long-term reforms of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program. These Agreements in Principle and the commitments from Canada have taken decades of litigation. We are nearing the final agreement stage and looking for strong provisions to support and compensate First Nations families and children.

Here in British Columbia, First Nations have advocated for the resumption of jurisdiction and reform of child welfare for more than 40 years. The BCAFN hosted an information session with the AFN on April 28 and August 16 to discuss long-term reform. A report is forthcoming. We have been working diligently toward a full compensation package in a final settlement agreement that will commit Canada to ensuring the discriminatory aspects of these programs do not reoccur in the future. This will include region-specific work by the AFN and all parties to the final settlement agreement.

Further, the Tripartite Working Group continues to address necessary changes related to the Child and Family Services Act as required by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). This provincial legislation holds that BC must take all measures necessary in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to ensure BC laws are consistent with the UN Declaration. On November 24, the First Nations Leadership Council will host an All Chiefs Meeting to provide opportunities for discussion and advancement of the implementation of An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth, and families. This includes national standards, amendments to policy and practice in BC, and strategies for First Nations' resumption of jurisdiction over child and family services.





First Nations Languages

First Nations have been diligent in their work to revitalize our languages. Despite these efforts, due to extremely limited resources, many First Nations languages remain threatened. 2022 marks the start of the [United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages](#), which is meant to amplify and mobilize efforts in service of Indigenous languages.

BCAFN has been working with the UBCIC, FNS, and the First Nations Education Steering Committee to better understand the patchwork of languages funding and initiatives and inform future work under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan.

The [DRIPA Action Plan](#) includes several actions focused on language revitalization, such as:

- 4.29: Establish an Indigenous-led working group to develop a strategy for the revitalization of Indigenous languages in B.C., including potential legislative supports. (Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Education and Child Care, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)
- 4.30: Support Indigenous language revitalization through sustainable funding. (Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training)
- 4.31: Develop full-course offerings in First Nation languages and implement the educational Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the K-12 education system. (Ministry of Education and Child Care)
- 4.32: Co-develop a K-12 First Nations Language Policy and associated implementation plan for the public education system with the First Nations

Education Steering Committee, including ensuring that the language and culture of the local First Nation(s) on whose territory(ies) a board of education operates schools are the ones primarily reflected in any First Nations language and culture programs and services of the board. (Ministry of Education and Child Care)

The BC region also has representation on the AFN Chiefs Committee on Languages – Kukpi7 Fred Robbins, Esk'etemc, and the alternate is Chairperson Khelsilem. The BC technical representative on the AFN Technical Committee on Languages is Tracey Herbert, CEO, First Peoples Cultural Council (FPCC), supported by Suzanne Gessner, Research and Development Linguist, FPCC.

The AFN, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, and the Department of Canadian Heritage (Heritage Canada), are currently working toward the full implementation of the Indigenous Languages Act at the Joint Implementation Steering Committee (JISC). National level work is underway to develop a National Indigenous Languages Strategy and National Indigenous Languages Funding Model (ILFM). The AFN Language and Culture Sector has been leading work related to the First Nations component, in collaboration with the Chiefs Committee on Languages (CCOL) and Technical Committee on Languages (TCOL).

The AFN undertook a series of engagements to develop and received feedback on a First Nations vision for the ILFM, including regional engagements in January and February 2022 and a national Languages Forum on March 2-3, 2022. The AFN has developed a Position Paper, which sets out First Nations expectations for the First Nations component of the Indigenous Languages Funding Model. This Position Paper was shared during the AFN AGA and a resolution was put forward seeking ratification, but was not addressed due to time constraints.

Food Security

Food insecurity in First Nations communities is the result of over a hundred (100) years of colonialist policies designed to shift the balance of power away from First Nations communities and into the hands of settlers. While First Nations are consistently moving the marker towards resiliency and robust Indigenous food systems, there needs to be increased investment into dismantling the effects of colonialism.

At the BCAFN, we will publish our report, Secure Indigenous Food Systems (SIFS), in October, paired with a webinar for an interactive launch. This report highlights the best practices in BC, Canada, and globally. It also identifies the gaps in our current systems, highlighting the discrepancies in food security between First Nations and non-First Nations communities. These discrepancies are fuelled by unequal investments in infrastructure, remoteness, and the extant income gap and opportunities.

At the AFN, the Chief Committee on Economic Development (CCED) supported the draft of the AFN Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategic Framework for 2020-2021. The recommendations will support the recommendations the AFN will make to Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada's next policy framework. Currently, there is no funding in place to support the AFN's work. The AFN will be pursuing potential opportunities for funding the next iteration of the policy framework, set to commence on April 1, 2023.



Homelessness and Housing Security

Given rising housing costs, increasing inflation, and the ongoing opioid crisis, housing insecurity continues to be a prevailing issue for many First Nations in BC. Indigenous peoples continue to represent a majority of the de-housed population in municipalities across Canada. The de-housed face significant barriers in finding adequate and affordable homes and accessing the proper medical and mental health care they need. Many of these challenges are directly influenced by a lack of housing available on reserve and access to affordable housing off reserve. Wrap around supports that can address the multi-faceted reality of housing insecurity and homelessness are currently lacking. These issues remain a key point of advocacy for BCAFN.

This year saw the integration of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

(UNDRIP) into legislation at the provincial and federal levels. Given this shift in how First Nations and other Indigenous governments will engage with provincial and federal governments, there are growing calls for municipalities to heed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #43 which calls on all levels of government to fully adopt and implement UNDRIP. Looking forward, the potential implementation of UNDRIP into municipal government practices would play an important role in furthering reconciliation efforts and positively impact the treatment and support of de-housed populations in BC.

In 2022, municipal governments across BC continued to take retributive action against the de-housed through aggressive decampment strategies. Early in the year, notable instances of conflict between municipalities and

Provincial Activity Update

the de-housed were seen at Crab Park on x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) traditional territories (Vancouver) and the Lower Patricia Encampments on the traditional territories of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation (Prince George). Meetings between the First Nations Leadership Council and the Minister Responsible for Housing, the Honourable David Eby, have prioritized calls for immediate intervention in decampment issues and have highlighted the inadequate municipal responses to these issues throughout the province.

Important work has been done to situate and prioritize localized housing and homelessness issues within the mandate of BCAFN. In early 2022, BCAFN commissioned two reports that detailed how a recent "Safe Streets" bylaw in Prince George has been unreasonably enforced by the City of Prince George and how this enforcement enables a systemic lack of accountability and transparency. The first report, entitled "Experiences with Bylaw in Prince George" surveyed the lived experiences of 13 de-housed and precariously housed residents in Prince George's downtown population. The report findings concluded that overall, the City of Prince George Safe Streets Bylaw causes Prince George's streets, sidewalks, and alleys to be less safe for de-housed and precariously housed citizens and threatens their well-being and survival.

Additional legislative changes at the provincial level have shifted the ways in which housing and homelessness are being engaged with as court decisions passed in

2022 have indicated a redefinition of suitable housing. In January 2022, the BC Supreme Court rejected the Vancouver Park Board's (VPB) injunction request to remove CRAB Park encampment residents for both overnight and daytime occupation in the park. Justice Kirchner indicated that VPB failed to prove that there were suitable shelter alternatives available to the de-housed residents. Similar court decisions were reached in Prince George in late 2021 and in February 2022 where Justice Coval dismissed the City of Prince George's second attempt at obtaining an injunction to remove the Lower Patricia Encampments.

Mandated by BCAFN Resolution 08/2020, BCAFN continues to work on developing a Homelessness Strategy to address the ongoing homelessness crisis in BC. BCAFN staff are continuing to explore ways to identify adequate funding to fulfill this mandate commitment and will keep Chiefs and leadership apprised of updates and future engagement opportunities. In concert with the FNLC, BCAFN will continue to advocate for the provincial government to act on ensuring there is sufficient and culturally appropriate housing available for BC's de-housed populations. BCAFN staff are currently exploring ways to identify adequate funding to gather the appropriate distinctions-based data that is needed to inform the strategy development and are working closely with Indigenous service providers and First Nations in BC to develop a comprehensive advocacy plan for 2023.



Indian Residential Schools and Papal Visit

Addressing the past, present, and ongoing challenges presented by the legacy of Indian Residential Schools and the systemic discrimination and abuses of First Nations peoples promoted under the guise of education and religion remains a key priority for the BCAFN. Matters of restitution, reparations, and recognition form the cornerstone of BCAFN's mandate in this area. Resolution 30/2021 "Demanding Justice and Accountability for the Missing and Unidentified Children of Residential Schools" represents the core priorities of BCAFN's mandate and includes work areas related to: funding for communities in the process of uncovering gravesites, calls for recognition of international human rights law, the release of IRS records, recognition of First Nations jurisdiction, the appointment of a Special Prosecutor in British Columbia to determine criminality in the cases of uncovered mass graves, the prospect of an apology from the Catholic Church, and recognition of genocide by the Canadian Government and relevant religious institutions. The BCAFN continues to stand in solidarity with all survivors of the residential school system, their families, and the families of the children that did not survive. Advocacy on this issue at all levels of government will remain an important part of our mandate moving forward. This year has seen significant new developments. We would like to offer special recognition and thanks for the good work done by the BC region's various organizations, communities, and the countless individuals – including our survivors and their families – for their ongoing advocacy and support on this issue.

On June 8th, 2022, Kimberly R. Murray, a Mohawk woman from Kanehsatà:ke, was appointed by the Federal Government as Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools. As interlocutor, Murray will be responsible for working directly with Indigenous communities to draft recommendations to strengthen federal laws and practices regarding unmarked burial sites. This will involve the recommendation of a new federal legal framework and the identification of those responsible for maintaining the unmarked burial sites. The facilitation of dialogue with provinces, territories, and key institutions is anticipated to be an important part of this process and will be overseen by the Special Interlocutor. During the Assembly of First Nations' Annual General Assembly in July 2022, Murray briefly met with the BCAFN caucus to discuss her role and to provide an opportunity for the Chiefs and proxies gathered to voice their concerns. At this time, there are concerns that the current mandate for the Special Interlocutor is short-sighted and limited in scope. The mandate is not built upon a human rights framework and does not incorporate the standards of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

or international protocols concerning missing persons or genocide. The BCAFN and FNLC have recommended that investigations into the unmarked graves require international oversight as the Canadian government cannot be relied upon to investigate itself for crimes in which it is implicated. Given that the totality of this issue is not being addressed as a criminal matter, additional recommendations from BCAFN and First Nations leadership have included the appointment of a Special Prosecutor in British Columbia to gather pertinent documents, consider criminal responsibility, and influence the release of evidence and documentation being withheld by key institutions. BCAFN will continue to promote the interests of our communities with follow-up meetings with the Special Interlocutor.

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. Ongoing investigations on the sites of former Residential schools are being conducted or have been completed by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, Williams Lake First Nation, Ahousaht First Nation, Tseshaht First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, 'Namgis First Nation, shíshálh Nation, Squamish Nation, Stó:lō Nation, and Ktunaxa Nation. While the work of finding Indigenous children's graves at residential school sites is just beginning, it is an important part of ensuring and advancing the pathway to truth and justice. However, the physical, emotional and spiritual impacts to survivors and their families who are experiencing inter-generational trauma are profound and significant. It is imperative that their health and well-being be supported immediately and for the long-term. Moving forward, the BCAFN will look to pursue additional funding arrangements for affected communities.

On December 20, 2021, 13 First Nation delegates from across Canada were sent to meet with Pope Francis at the Vatican to seek an apology and reparations for the survivors and families of the Indian Residential



Schools system. The BCAFN's board member Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir of Tk'emlups te Secwepemc and youth representative Taylor Behn-Tsakoza were both part of this historic mission to the Vatican along with several other attendees from the BC region. At this meeting, an apology was offered by the Pope on behalf of the Catholic Church for the role that they played in the abuses suffered at Residential School. There was an opportunity for dialogue between the Pope and the delegation and plans were made for the Pope to visit Canada and offer this apology in person.

Pope Francis's arrival in Canada on July 27th, 2022 marked a monumental development in the relations between First Nations and the Catholic Church. In supporting the coordination of the visit, the BCAFN was involved in distributing tickets to attendees at the Maskwacis, Commonwealth Stadium, and Lac Ste Anne events attended by the Pope. Additionally, important work was done to assist survivors and other coordinating organizations with path finding and logistics leading up to and during the events. These supports included a web-based information session on logistics, an in-person drop-in session in Edmonton, and staff available and on-site at each event. Reception of the events was mixed and it is important to note the challenges associated with the Papal Visits. We heard first-hand from many attendees, and would-be attendees, of the poor coordination of the ticketing and access to funding around the events. Given the importance of the Papal visit, this was exceptionally disheartening. There were significant barriers for survivors and their families – this should not have happened.

After the events of the Papal Visit, BCAFN and Regional Chief Terry Teegee continued to advocate for significant changes and actions by the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB). While the apology and cooperation of both the CCCC and the Vatican were acknowledged by leadership, next steps outlining areas that require substantive action were expressed. These steps include:

1. Full acknowledgement and responsibility for the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations children in Catholic-run residential schools (The papal apology failed to specifically acknowledge the truth of sexual abuse);
2. The public and official rescission/revocation of the Papal Bulls giving justification and effect to the Doctrine of Discovery;
3. A credible records review and the release of residential school records;
4. Repatriation of First Nation cultural objects, records, and human remains in accordance with proper protocols;
5. The decolonization of the Church and Holy See by way of reforming Catholic teachings and practices



1. That interfere with and infringe upon Indigenous Peoples' rights and dignity;
2. The promotion of Indigenous rights globally;
3. Reformation of the Catholic Church to protect all children and other vulnerable persons against abuse and to hold both perpetrators and their enablers accountable whilst providing reparations and supports to victims;
4. Ensure that the Catholic Church (not parishioners) provides just reparations for residential school survivors and the estates of children who died;
5. A review of injustices committed by the Catholic Church globally to determine where apologies accompanied by meaningful justice should take place. Rather than an ad hoc approach, justice and reconciliation must be a foundational framework for the Catholic Church.

There is significant work to be done in the area of Indian Residential Schools and follow up after the Papal Visit. These key points and important recommendations not only framed the action that must be taken by the Catholic Church but identified key areas of concern and advocacy for the BCAFN moving forward. Action on these issues is vital. Our next steps will involve subsequent conversations with government, religious organizations, and other key actors to discuss the legacy of Indian Residential Schools, the ongoing search for Unmarked Gravesites, the expectation of accountability from key institutions, and additional supports that can

be provided for survivors, intergenerational survivors, and communities grappling with these issues. Ultimately, the BCAFN will look to advocate for timely and comprehensive action that respects the agency and priorities of First Nations peoples.



Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit

First Nations are pressing for action to implement the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+ Calls for Justice. Family members, advocates, grassroots organizers, front-line workers and First Nations governments continue to bring awareness to this issue and are doing incredible work with limited support. BCAFN works to bring systemic change through transforming law and policy, and ensuring appropriate support for those doing the important work of preventing and addressing violence, and supporting those who have lost family members.

On the third anniversary of the release of the [National Inquiry's Final Report](#) and Calls for Justice, the FNLC [stated](#) that we are deeply troubled by the lack of progress to implement the Calls for Justice. Despite the finding of [genocide](#) made by the National Inquiry, and the horrific experiences of systemic discrimination and violence that were brought to light, the Canadian and British Columbian governments' work on this issue has been marked by a lack of committed resources, poor communication and coordination, and inadequate partnership with First Nations people.

[Federal budget 2021](#) provided for \$2.2 billion over 5 years and \$160.9 million per year on-going to respond to the Calls for Justice; however, we have yet to see changes on the ground that point toward transformative change and there is not transparency regarding how these funds are being allocated. While there were broad commitments to address gender-based violence in Budget 2022, there were no additional funds specifically earmarked to address the disproportionate violence against Indigenous women and girls.

One of the province's key commitments within the [Path Forward](#) was the establishment of a \$4.55 million community fund to support the need for safe spaces and safety plans, and Indigenous community-led solutions. The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres was selected to manage the fund, and will be engaging communities on collaborative next steps, including the establishment of an advisory committee. While the fund is a positive development that will hopefully support family and grassroots-led efforts, increased multi-year funding commitments and initiatives that target systemic shifts are required.

Provincial Activity Update

In 2021 the [National Action Plan](#) on MMIWG2S+ was released. It identified several immediate next steps, however failed to set forth an implementation plan with measurable actions and timelines, and grapple with the systemic transformation required to end genocide.

The immediate next steps were:

1. Immediate support services for survivors and family members.
2. Continued involvement of survivors and family members in the implementation of the National Action Plan,
3. Create an oversight body,
4. Public awareness and training,
5. Immediate development of an implementation plan
6. Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls federal-provincial/territorial table
7. Create accountability mechanisms for the reporting of the 231 Calls for Justice and the 62 Calls for Miskotahā.

In 2022 the [National Action Plan Progress Report](#) was released. It provided many anecdotal accounts of important work being carried out at the community level. However, it found that progress on the identified priorities was limited. The federal government failed in its responsibility to coordinate and lead the establishment of foundational oversight, accountability,

and implementation measures in partnership with Indigenous Peoples. The Progress Report made several recommendations aimed at re-establishing a proper foundation for this work, including repeating the immediate priorities set out in the original 2021 Action Plan.

In response to the National Action Plan's call for the establishment of an independent oversight mechanism for the implementation of the Calls for Justice, on August 5, 2022 the federal government announced a pre-engagement process regarding oversight of the National Action Plan and released a discussion paper. Pre-engagement was scheduled to conclude in mid-September, and set the stage for subsequent discussions. Questions may be directed to [Maria Derks-Normandin](#).

The recommendations received from BCAFN's 2021 engagement on the implementation of the Calls for Justice continue to inform BCAFN's advocacy in matters such as policing and justice reform, and the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The regional report was also received by the AFN Women's Council for integration into [national-level advocacy](#).



Shared Territories and Overlaps

On November 24-25, the FNLC hosted a virtual dialogue to discuss strategies for addressing shared territories and overlaps situations. This dialogue built upon discussions from the previous forum in March 2020, which was interrupted due to COVID-19.

In preparation for this forum the FNLC convened two focus groups on July 29 and August 5, 2021 to seek guidance and input on the agenda and content for the November forum. These focus groups involved a small, but diverse sample of First Nations leadership and subject matter experts.

The 2021 Forum was open to First Nations Chiefs, hereditary/traditional leadership, and technicians/

experts. The dialogue revolved around:

- Incorporating Indigenous laws and protocols within a shared territories and overlaps context
- Resolving disputes and shared decision making,
- Strategies for supporting capacity, including consideration the potential role for a First Nations institution to support First Nations with regard to this work,
- Exploring pathways forward.

A summary of the proceedings is available and a final report is nearing completion, and will be shared with BC Chiefs. For more information contact BCAFN Senior Policy Analyst, [Sarah Froese](#).

Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People

Dialogue Sessions

On April 26-27, and June 23, BCAFN hosted the annual [Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Dialogue Sessions](#).

On Day 1, we explored the theme, *Stories Connect Us: Storytelling, Inter-connection, and Reclamation*. This session held space for First Nations women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in BC to come together, share our experiences, and gain strength, inspiration, and insight. BCAFN also provided an update on the [strategic action plan](#) to implement the Indigenous Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Declaration. On Day 2, we explored the theme, *Everyone Has a Sacred Role: Allyship*. This session cultivated space for First Nations men who are not part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community to join the discussion regarding the priorities of First Nations women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Together, we discussed how men can be allies, and how we can work together to end and address violence.

On Day 3, we explored the theme, *Listen and Take Action*. At this session, we presented the draft 2022 Dialogue Session report and discussed key take-aways and recommendations from the Session. In doing so, we hoped to foster an understanding of -and action on- First Nations women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ experiences and priorities.

The final report is available online and was circulated to Dialogue Session participants and BC Chiefs and Leadership.

AFN Women's Council

The AFN Women's Council supported the mother of Chantel Moore to collaboratively make a press release



and bring awareness to the issue of MMIWG2S+ during the AFN AGA in July 2022. The AFN Women's Council also held a retreat in July 2022 to update their Terms of Reference and Strategic Plan, elect the Chair and Vice-Chair, and conduct forward planning regarding advocacy. Chief Constance Big Eagle (SK Representative) will continue on as Chairperson from 2022-2025. Doris Anderson (YT Representative) will serve as Vice-Chair from 2022-2025.

AFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council

The AFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council was established in 2021, after the Special Chiefs' Assembly approved Resolution 15/2021 mandating the creation of its first 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council.

The 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council was created because First Nations 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members are unique and require their own space, place and voice within larger decision-making structures and processes at the AFN. It is set to play a similar role to the Youth and Elder Councils that currently exist within the AFN's leadership structure.

The BCAFN is currently seeking applicants for one new member to join the AFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council. As a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council member, you will:

- Take part in council meetings up to 4 times per year with additional meetings taking place via tele/videoconference on a monthly basis;
- Be assigned two advisory positions that best align with your skills and interests, based on the availability of positions;
- Serve a term of 3 years and sign a code of conduct.

Although this is a volunteer position, council members will be remunerated with an honourarium when attending Chiefs meetings. Honouraria for other meetings are paid at the discretion of the department requesting 2SLGBTQQIA+ representation and on levels budgets will allow. All travel and associated costs for travel on behalf of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council are covered by the AFN and the AFN will handle all travel arrangement for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council members.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the AFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council, please follow these steps to apply:

1. **Fill out this form:** <https://forms.office.com/r/YOPPYN6AL> (double-click link)
2. **Prepare a letter of interest.**

In your letter please include the following:

- Your name
- Your Date of Birth
- Your occupation (if applicable)

- How do you identify?
- What region will you be representing?
- Level of education you have completed?
- How you are active in your community?
- What skills, gifts, or talents can you offer to the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council?
- What do you hope to learn/gain by participating on the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council?
- What are some of the issues you hope to address if you are selected to be a member of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council?

3. **Ask A Community member or leader for a letter of support.** Your letter of support can be from a respected community can be from a respected community member; a leader, an Elder, a Teacher (past or current)' a Minister, a NAPS Officer, or band Office staff member. This letter can include information about how they know you and why they think you would be a good candidate for 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council.
4. **Submit your application.** Submit your application via the forms link and submit your letter of interest and resume directly to [Sarah Froese](#).

Strategic Action Plan on the Indigenous Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Declaration

At the 2022 Dialogue Sessions BCAFN invited feedback on the principles, vision, and process for the Strategic Action Plan to Implement the Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Declaration. Thank you to everyone who provided the time to provide your insight and perspective. A snapshot of this feedback is included in the Dialogue Session report will be integrated as a foundation to the [Strategic Action Plan](#).

Governance Review to support a safe, inclusive, and representative organization

BCAFN has been engaged in work to support the BCAFN in being a safe, inclusive, and representative organization. The Governance Committee has been working to carry forward an analysis of BCAFN's Governance Manual, By-laws and Constitution that would support these objectives.

As the Governance Committee shared during the 2021 AGM and 2022 SCA, this work, along with other governance considerations, are being dealt with in two phases. At the BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly on March 9-10, 2022 the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed resolution 03/2022 Amendments to the Governance Manual Recommended by the Governance Committee, which supported the following changes to BCAFN's Governance Manual as part of the phase 1 work:

- i. provide for the election of a 2SLGBTQQIA+ representative to serve on the recently established AFN 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council;
- ii. align with recent amendments to the AFN Charter that renamed the AFN Knowledge Keepers Council

- i. (formerly the Elders Council) and call on each region to appoint three Knowledge Keepers, inclusive of male, female and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples;
- ii. replace gendered pronouns with gender inclusive pronouns;
- iii. expand the Principles to Combat Bullying and Harassment to cover online harassment, physical violence and discrimination; and
- iv. add consistent nomination requirements for elected representatives (Women's Rep, Youth Reps and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Rep);
- v. make minor adjustments to election provisions to align with current BCAFN practices, such as making the appointment of scrutineers optional.

These changes to the Governance Manual support 2SLGBTQQIA+ representation, the use of gender-inclusive language, and greater protections against bullying, harassment, violence and discrimination. We look forward to engaging further as this work evolves.

First Nations Approaches to Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)

At the BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly on March 9-10, 2022 the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed resolution 01/2022 Intersectional Advocacy and Capacity Building Grounding in First Nations Knowledges. It acknowledged that, "First Nations people and communities are diverse, and this diversity holds and reflects a multitude of dimensions such as age and life stage, sexual orientation, gender, sex, ability, cultural identity, spirituality, connection to family, community, and land, socio-economic experiences regarding employment, education, housing, and mental wellness, the impact of colonialism such as inter-generational trauma and violence, geography and location, among other identity factors; Care for, and inclusion of people that reflect all dimensions of diversity are central to many First Nations worldviews. First Nations recognize that everything is connected and that holistic approaches are crucial;"

The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly also affirmed that, "First Nations governments and organizations have responsibilities and interests in supporting the wellbeing of all First Nations people, in all their diversity, and acknowledge that this requires intersectional, inclusive, equity and justice-seeking approaches to legislative mechanisms, advocacy, policy, and programs;"

This resolution mandated the BCAFN to support and advance dialogue and the development of tools to support First Nations approaches to GBA+, including the development of a toolkit and pilot initiative. BCAFN is in the process of contracting an experienced facilitator and leading practitioner regarding Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis Plus to support this work.







Board of Directors

Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir

Tk'emlups te Secwepe'mc

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.

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 Harvey McLeod

Upper Nicola Band

As a residential school survivor, Chief McLeod has taken steps to improve his wellness and throughout his healing journey has built up the confidence to take on any challenge and face any demons. Understanding that forgiveness and knowing life is more fulfilling gives Chief McLeod the strength to assist his family and community and to step forward in a good way.

Chief Councillor Elaine Moore

Gitwinksihlkw

Chief Councillor Moore holds a bookkeeping certificate and this professional journey provided 36 plus years in different sectors of finance. She loves supporting the local Gitwinksihlkw Salvation Army, as a volunteer Secretary Treasurer, along with volunteering at the Gitwinksihlkw Salvation Army Food Share, which supports the Nisga'a Nation communities.

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

Board of Directors Update

Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, Youth, First Nation members and honored guests, The BCAFN Board of Directors are pleased to present the Annual Report for 2021/2022 to the 19th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the Chiefs-in-Assembly who will be joining in-person and virtually. The Board of Directors continue 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.

The Board is pleased that we are able to meet once again, in-person, as it has been a long two years since we have been able to gather safely. As we have collectively dealt with COVID-19 and the impacts to our communities, the Board would like to acknowledge the losses experienced by our communities due to COVID-19 since the onset of the global pandemic. We are seeing a return to normal practices and ways of engaging for BCAFN – this will continue to be done through a lens of caution to ensure the safety of all our participants.

The past year has been one of many challenges for our BC First Nations. Last year as we were still recovering from the wildfires that affected so many communities, this was further complicated by weather anomalies that led to severe flooding in many regions that decimated travel corridors and left many of our communities facing issues around loss of homes, access to resources, and emergency management. The Board would like to acknowledge all those affected by the wildfires and flooding.

As with any society, our governance structure is continually changing and evolving. As per our governance requirements, the Nomination Notice was distributed in July 2022, and there were two (2) Director positions available along with positions for the Male Youth Representative and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative.

As of the deadline date of August 8, 2022, two completed nomination packages were accepted for the Director positions, and applicants were acclaimed into their positions. The Board would like to welcome the newly acclaimed Board Directors for 2022 – Chief Jerry Jack from Mowachaht/Muchlaht First Nation and Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling from the Liard (Daylu Dena/Lower Post) First Nation. The Board would also like to thank outgoing Board Director, Chief Councillor Elaine Moore for all her hard work and commitment to BCAFN.

The Board would also like to wish the best of luck to the two Male Youth Representative candidates – Zachary Astakeesic from the Upper Nicola Indian Band and Justen Peters from the Okanagan Indian Band. Putting forth one's name can be a daunting endeavor but a worthwhile one and this position can help guide our future leaders.

A Nomination notice had been distributed for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Representative but unfortunately BCAFN did not receive any Nomination submissions. The Board of Directors have opted to putting out a Request for an Expression of Interest to fill this position in the interim until the 2023 AGM.

Since we last reported in September 2021, several opportunities have arisen along with history-making events. The Board would like to acknowledge the delegation that travelled to Rome to present to Pope Francis. Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir represented the BC region along with Taylor Behn-Tsakoza, BCAFN Female Youth Representative, as part of this delegation and collectively along with other delegates expressed the need for Pope Francis to travel to Canada to offer an apology to the many Residential School Survivors. This led to the visit by Pope Francis in July 2022 to Alberta and Quebec. Although there were mixed reactions to both the delegation and subsequent visit, the Board hopes that these small steps will lead to greater healing by those affected by the Residential School experience.

This past July, BCAFN was honoured to host the AFN AGA in Vancouver and provide a number of social and cultural events for all delegates. Although the AFN AGA included many difficult conversations, the Board supports BCAFN and Regional Chief Teegee in moving forward in a healthy manner for the betterment of all of our BC First Nations. Our communities are depending on us to continue to advocate on their behalf regarding important issues such as First Nations Children and Families and Jordan's Principle AIPs and long term reform, emergency management, climate change, fisheries, effective implementation of UNDRIPA and DRIPA, homelessness/housing insecurity, opioid crisis, MMIWG2S along with many other issues. The enormity of these issues cannot be lost and must remain at the forefront of all of our efforts.

We as First Nations have faced obstacles in the past and our strength and resiliency will lead us forward in a positive direction for our communities and BCAFN. Thank you to the Chiefs-in-Assembly for providing us the opportunity to work on your behalf with Regional Chief Teegee and the staff at the BCAFN as we continue to uphold our Aboriginal Title, Rights, and Treaty Rights through collective advocacy and strategic efforts.



BCAFN Representatives Knowledge Keepers

Dr. Gwendolyn Point

Stó:lō

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.

Dr. Point is a well-respected and well-recognized Stó:lō leader, mentor, and cultural advisor. She has contributed her deep cultural knowledge and experience to numerous books, conferences, workshops and communities, often as an invited keynote contributor. Her ceremonial experience as BC's Chatelaine for five years will serve her well in this role.

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.

As one of the last few speakers of the Kwakwaka'wakw language, Chief Joseph is an eloquent and inspiring Ceremonial House Speaker. He shares his knowledge and wisdom in the Big House and as a Language Speaker with the University of British Columbia, an internationally recognized art curator and as co-author of "Down from the Shimmering Sky: Masks of the Northwest Coast".

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

Knowledge Keepers' Update

Dear Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Hereditary Chiefs, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, Youth and honored guests,
The past year has been marked by many events. As we were all dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 and the aftermath of the wildfires, we then had to deal with the flooding that occurred last fall. So many of our people were affected by the fire and rains that happened and we are still recovering. For all of those that were affected, our hearts, thoughts, and prayers are with all of you.

We continue to see the legacy of the 215 children found at the Kamloops Residential School. The uncovering of this dark history, although difficult and heartbreaking, renewed efforts for continued healing for Residential School Survivors and their descendants. This also led to the delegation of leaders, Knowledge Keepers and youth travelling to Rome to meet with Pope Francis at the Vatican and the visit of Pope Francis to Canada. It is our hope that healing can continue through reconciling our past.

As the BCAFN Knowledge Keepers, we attend the monthly Board of Directors Meetings to provide spiritual support and guidance to the Regional Chief, Board of Directors, Representatives, and staff.

We commit to our role as Knowledge Keepers, both for BCAFN and through the national Assembly of First Nations office. Moving forward, we know that there will be more obstacles and challenges for our First Nations and their communities. We also know that we are strong and resilient people and our First Nations will endure and move forward. Our strength may be challenged but will never be diminished.

Dr. Gwendolyn Point and Chief Robert Joseph





BCAFN Representatives 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 Chief's 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.

Louisa continues to be extensively involved in supporting women and families within her community. Her goal is to build wellness so that women are honoured and empowered in a sustained way. Some initiatives include facilitating the creation of a Hāítzaqv women's declaration, organizing her community to participate in the National Inquiry, teaching of cultural practices, and working directly with people and non-profits to meet a range of needs. She is raising daughters and a granddaughter who know their amazing worth, and a son and grandson who honour and respect women and matriarchs.

Women's Update

Greetings! My name is Louisa Housty-Jones. I come from the Heiltsuk Nation where I also serve as a Councillor. I am passionate about the wellness and leadership of women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and I am honoured to continue working for safety, justice, and equity for First Nations women. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the new BC 2SLGBTQQIA+ representative who will be elected during BCAFNs 2022 AGM, and I look forward to collaboration.

At this AGM I'm pleased to present the report of the 2022 Dialogue Sessions. BCAFN received important direction on how we can better support the priorities of First Nations women and gender diverse people, including on:

- safety,
- preventing and addressing violence,
- representation in leadership,
- and ensuring the legislative and systemic reforms include the voice of First Nations women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People. This is critical as we look to implement the *Declaration Act on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and *Police Act* reform.

I also continue to lead advocacy and work related to the implementation of the National Inquiry Calls for Justice, developing tools for First Nations approaches to Gender-Based Analysis Plus, and the development of the Strategic Action Plan for the Indigenous Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Strategy.

I also participate on the AFN Women's Council. We met recently to clarify our strategic areas of focus and ensure we can advance the implementation of the Calls for Justice, support families and cases of MMIWG2S+, and increase the leadership and representation of women. Our recent support of Chantel Moore's mother at the AFN AGA brought heightened attention to this issue and the injustices experienced by First Nations women. Since then I've participated in a number of media interviews to raise awareness and advocate for increased accountability and action.

You can find more in-depth updates on all of these activities under specific sections in this newsletter. As always, please feel free to connect with me at any time. I believe we are stronger when we work together and that the support of our political leadership on these issues is critical.





BCAFN Representatives Youth

TAYLOR BEHN-TSAKOZA

Fort Nelson First 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.

JUSTEN PETERS

Okanagan Indian Band

Being raised closely by his stemtima (maternal grandmother) and other elders in his community, Justen has built a strong foundation for himself rooted in the traditional teachings, culture, and resilience of his ancestors. Spirituality is very important to Justen, as well as practicing gratitude and showing appreciation for the beauty of natural world. Justen has a great respect for nature, as well as a creative mind and love for learning.

In 2018, Justen attended the very first CANDO Economic Development Youth Summit in Enoch First Nations, where he was awarded with the "mover and shaker" award, and whose team came in third place overall.

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

Youth Update

Justen and Taylor continue to attend regular AFN National Youth Council (NYC) in addition to the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective (UAYC) meetings which promotes relationship-building between the Province of BC and Indigenous youth in BC. Taylor and Justen continue to work with the BC Coalition to end Youth Homelessness which is leading a Youth Homelessness Action Plan (Action Plan) as mandated by [BCAFN Resolution 17/2020](#). Justen and Taylor both attended the AFN Annual General Assembly in Vancouver BC in July 2022. Over the summer, Taylor and Justen, alongside BCAFN staff prepared a capacity funding proposal with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) to continue engaging with First Nations youth across BC throughout 2022/23. Justen and Taylor's primary goal is to host an in-person forum to allow First Nations youth to gather in person in early 2023. More information will be made available at BCAFN Youth [website](#).

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Funding - 2021/22

As part of funding received from the MIRR, Justen and Taylor worked with BCAFN staff and consultants to successfully plan and host the 2022 BCAFN Youth Gathering and Forum which was held on March 19 - 20th, 2022. This two-day event offered a range of activities for youth to gather virtually and connect through icebreakers and games. Over the two days, approximately 60 youth attended. Both Justen and Taylor cohosted the events with a facilitation team at Alder and Co Creations. BCAFN was honoured to host Kendra Jessie, Andre Bear, and Drezus as keynote speakers as well as musical guests DJ Kookum and Saltwater Hank.

Justen and Taylor also initiated a short BCAFN Youth Podcast series that featured emerging youth leaders to talk about a range of topics including mental health, youth homelessness, and language revitalization. The Youth Podcast Series is available to view on the Podcast page at the BCAFN Youth [website](#). As part of the 2022/23 funding from MIRR, Taylor and Justen will continue the BCAFN Youth Podcast as part of their project activities.

The BCAFN Youth Representatives created a handbook for future BCAFN Youth Representatives to support them into their new roles with a goal of providing a 'how-to' manual and applicable resources that assists the new representatives in their leadership. Justen and Taylor engaged with BCAFN staff and the AFN NYC Representatives to inform the contents of this handbook.

BCAFN Economic Resiliency Forum

Justen and Taylor supported BCAFN staff in planning, co-hosting, and facilitating the virtual Economic Resiliency Forum on February 9th, 2022. The forum hosted speakers and panelists that discussed building economic resilience with business sector outlooks for the construction, forestry, technology, and tourism industries.

BCAFN Water Dialogue Series

Taylor and Justen assisted BCAFN staff with coordinating and facilitating a component of the BCAFN Water Dialogue Series which were hosted virtually in March 2022. Justen and Taylor co-hosted a dedicated session which invited Knowledge Keepers and Youth to connect and engage on water. The session was well attended and hosted Dr. Leroy Little Bear, an esteemed Blackfoot scholar and elder to discuss Indigenous water rights, stewardship and storytelling.



BCAFN 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 Gitksan-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.

Melanie Lyons

Finance Manager

Melanie is a Certified Professional Accountant (CPA, CA) and a member of Katzie First Nation in Pitt Meadows, BC but grew up on Katzie IR#2 in Langley, BC. She has worked with Alberta First Nations in an audit role and as a Financial Controller. Melanie has also worked with many First Nations throughout B.C. and across Canada in her previous role with the First Nations Financial Management Board.



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.

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).

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.



Sophia Iliopulos

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). Her interest in water conservation grew when she was selected to be part of a youth capacity-building mentorship program with the Fraser Basin Council as part of the Fraser Salmon and Watersheds Program.

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.

Taylor Arnt

Policy Analyst

Taylor Arnt (she/they) is of mixed Anishinaabe and European heritage, from Treaty 1 territory (Winnipeg, Manitoba). She is a member of Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve. Taylor holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Affairs and Policy Management and has five years of work experience throughout the federal public service, nonprofit, and Indigenous governance sectors. As a Policy Analyst for BCAFN, they advocate for First Nations across British Columbia in the areas of Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ rights, Hunting and Wildlife, and Social Development.

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.

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



Financial Report Breakdown

Financial Statements of the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations

And Independent Auditors' Report thereon

Year ended March 31, 2022

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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.

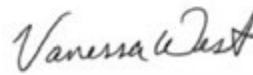
The BCAFN's management maintains a system of internal controls designed to provide reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are properly authorized and recorded in compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements, and reliable financial information is available on a timely 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 Auditors' 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 AUDITORS' 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, 2022
- 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, 2022 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 "***Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***" section of our auditors' 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.

KPMG LLP, an Ontario limited liability partnership and member firm of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. KPMG Canada provides services to KPMG LLP.



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.

Auditors' 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 auditors' 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.



Page 3

- 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 auditors' 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 auditors' 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'KPMG LLP' in a cursive, stylized font. A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature.

Chartered Professional Accountants

Prince George, Canada

September 15, 2022

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2022, with comparative information for 2021

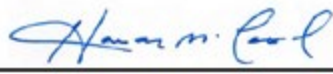
	2022	2021
Financial assets:		
Cash	\$ 1,695,472	\$ 2,493,789
Accounts receivable (note 2)	1,121,328	258,341
	<u>2,816,800</u>	<u>2,752,130</u>
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	476,554	467,938
Deferred revenue (note 3)	2,212,221	2,136,803
Long-term debt (note 4)	83,399	122,679
	<u>2,772,174</u>	<u>2,727,420</u>
Net financial assets	44,626	24,710
Non-financial assets:		
Tangible capital assets (note 5)	238,430	280,825
Prepaid expenses and deposits	13,824	17,303
	<u>252,254</u>	<u>298,128</u>
Accumulated surplus (note 6)	\$ 296,880	\$ 322,838

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, 2022, with comparative information for 2021

	Budget	2022	2021
Revenue (note 7):			
Indigenous Services Canada ("ISC")	\$ 1,529,116	\$ 1,128,114	\$ 1,467,189
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation ("MIRR")	3,403,909	1,768,104	1,342,604
Assembly of First Nations ("AFN")	1,072,264	885,047	866,500
Ministry of Public Safety	-	98,563	9,542
Other income	79,574	32,203	13,650
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs ("UBCIC")	-	14,500	69,450
Environment and Climate Change Canada ("ECCC")	93,775	93,775	-
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development ("MFLNRORD")	83,333	32,693	-
Women and Gender Equality Canada ("WAGE")	-	28,488	-
Total revenue	6,261,971	4,081,487	3,768,935
Expenses (note 7):			
Administration	1,753,884	1,542,338	1,364,555
Cultural events	305,661	211,984	281,606
Legislation	1,962,651	797,557	735,450
Policy development	2,261,548	1,555,566	1,403,131
Total expenses	6,283,744	4,107,445	3,784,742
Annual deficit	\$ (21,773)	\$ (25,958)	\$ (15,807)
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	322,838	322,838	338,645
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$ 301,065	\$ 296,880	\$ 322,838

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Statement of Change in Net Financial Assets

Year ended March 31, 2022, with comparative information for 2021

	Budget	2022	2021
Annual deficit	\$ (21,773)	\$ (25,958)	\$ (15,807)
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	-	(8,052)	(10,681)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	-	50,447	61,703
	-	42,395	51,022
Use of prepaid expenses and deposits	-	3,479	1,766
	-	3,479	1,766
Change in net financial assets	(21,773)	19,916	36,981
Net financial assets (debt), beginning of year	24,710	24,710	(12,271)
Net financial assets, end of year	\$ 2,937	\$ 44,626	\$ 24,710

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2022, with comparative information for 2021

	2022	2021
Cash provided by (used in):		
Operating activities:		
Annual deficit	\$ (25,958)	\$ (15,807)
Items not involving cash:		
Amortization	50,447	61,703
	24,489	45,896
Change in non-cash operating assets and liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	(862,987)	427,757
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	8,616	(149,873)
Deferred revenue	75,418	33,805
Prepaid expenses and deposits	3,479	1,766
	(750,985)	359,351
Capital activities:		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(8,052)	(10,681)
	(8,052)	(10,681)
Financing activities:		
Repayment of long-term debt	(39,280)	(35,214)
(Decrease) increase in cash	(798,317)	313,456
Cash, beginning of year	2,493,789	2,180,333
Cash, end of year	\$ 1,695,472	\$ 2,493,789

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2022

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.

The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. This resulted in the Canadian and Provincial governments enacting emergency measures to combat the spread of the virus. The situation continues to be dynamic and the ultimate duration and magnitude of the impact on the economy and the financial effect on BCAFN is not known at this time. The current challenging economic climate may lead to adverse changes in cash flows and working capital levels, which may also potentially have a direct impact on the operating results and financial position of BCAFN in the future.

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, 2022

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, 2022

2. Accounts receivable:

Accounts receivable by funding source is summarized as follows:

	2022	2021
AFN	\$ 328,350	\$ 82,250
ISC	243,013	-
ECCC	93,775	-
MFLNRORD	83,333	-
MIRR	-	6,000
Province of British Columbia	227,000	-
UBCIC	14,500	69,450
GST rebate receivable	127,738	96,589
Other	3,619	3,943
Due from employees	-	109
	\$ 1,121,328	\$ 258,341

3. Deferred revenue:

Deferred revenue consists of the following:

	2022	2021
ISC	\$ 401,002	\$ 119,543
MIRR	1,309,986	1,876,802
Ministry of Public Safety	141,895	140,458
AFN	272,577	-
MFLNRORD	50,640	-
Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon	12,035	-
WAGE	24,086	-
	\$ 2,212,221	\$ 2,136,803

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2022

4. Long-term debt:

	2022	2021
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 2022.	\$ 83,399	\$ 122,679
	\$ 83,399	\$ 122,679

In the event that the bank renews the term of the loan upon maturity, principal repayments over the next 3 years are approximately as follows:

2023	\$ 39,900
2024	39,900
2025	3,599
	\$ 83,399

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2022

5. Tangible capital assets:

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
2021					
	Leasehold improvements	Furniture & equipment	Computer equipment	Building	Total
Cost:					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 70,546	\$ 59,624	\$ 206,813	\$ 191,251	\$ 528,234
Additions	-	5,732	4,949	-	10,681
Balance, end of year	70,546	65,356	211,762	191,251	538,915
Accumulated amortization:					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 17,085	\$ 28,365	\$ 122,747	\$ 28,190	\$ 196,387
Amortization	10,692	6,408	28,297	16,306	61,703
Balance, end of year	27,777	34,773	151,044	44,496	258,090
Net book value	\$ 42,769	\$ 30,583	\$ 60,718	\$ 146,755	\$ 280,825

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2022

6. Accumulated surplus:

	2022	2021
Unrestricted surplus	\$ 58,450	\$ 42,013
Invested in tangible capital assets	238,430	280,825
	<u>\$ 296,880</u>	<u>\$ 322,838</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, 2022

7. Segmented information (continued):

2022	Administration	Cultural events	Legislation	Policy development	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
Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural 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, 2022

7. Segmented Information (continued):

2021	Administration	Cultural Events	Legislation	Policy Development	Total
Revenues:					
MIRR	\$ 64,408	\$ -	\$ 301,943	\$ 976,253	\$ 1,342,604
ISC	988,947	132,000	166,242	180,000	1,467,189
AFN	516,500	250,000	-	100,000	866,500
Ministry of Public Safety	-	-	9,542	-	9,542
UBCIC	-	-	69,450	-	69,450
Other income	300	-	-	13,350	13,650
Total revenues	1,570,155	382,000	547,177	1,269,603	3,768,935
Expenses:					
Salaries, benefits and consultants	706,988	140,776	233,031	582,148	1,662,943
Advisory, technical and professional	167,255	118,868	468,285	446,892	1,201,300
Office	211,191	-	-	322,034	533,225
Travel	-	-	-	11,870	11,870
Amortization	61,703	-	-	-	61,703
Meetings and assemblies	217,418	21,962	34,134	40,187	313,701
Total expenses	1,364,555	281,606	735,450	1,403,131	3,784,742
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$ 205,600	\$ 100,394	\$ (188,273)	\$ (133,528)	\$ (15,807)

BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2022

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 \$67,821 (2021 - \$66,208).

9. Employee remuneration:

For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022, BCAFN paid total remuneration including taxable benefits of \$1,044,593 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, 2022.

11. Comparative information:

Certain 2021 comparative figures have been reclassified to conform with the financial statement presentation adopted for the current year. These changes do not affect prior year deficit.







**British Columbia
Assembly of First Nations**

bcafn.ca

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