

# Annual Report

2019 - 2020

*honouring our ancestors*

B.C.  
Assembly of  
**First  
Nations**











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**B.C.**  
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# Message from the National Chief

*Chiefs, Councillors, friends, relatives, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, I hope that you are safe, in good spirits and surrounded by loved ones.*

I am honoured to address the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the staff in the creation of this annual report. I lift you up in your efforts, advocacy, and commitment to the First Nations of British Columbia.

This year has presented First Nations peoples with no shortage of difficulty. From the mob violence aimed at Mi'kmaq fishers in Nova Scotia to the backlash against Algonquin efforts to protect moose populations to the spotlight on systemic violence in the Canadian policing, justice, and healthcare systems, the trials that Indigenous Peoples have been tasked with are arduous and cumbersome. On top of this, our nations have been working to ensure their members are safe and healthy during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Though times may seem dark, I urge you to see the successes and achievements we have made this year despite the challenges and setbacks.

The AFN works every day to fight discrimination in all aspects of society, especially in our justice system, and will continue to press for the First Nations policing as an essential service, restorative justice initiatives and other reforms to the justice system. This work will be tough, and change cannot happen overnight, but I believe that we are making progress and will continue to do so in such a way that our people and our rights are respected and honoured.

On top of reiterating important commitments made in 2019, Canada's Speech from the Throne in September offered additional commitments on infrastructure, housing, mental health supports, and several other items. The AFN has expressed First Nations support for action on the climate crisis, new legislation ensuring the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and narrowing the gap in the quality of life between our people and the rest of Canada, and we will work to ensure these commitments are reflected in the mandate letters from the Prime Minister to his ministers, and are included in budget plans.

It is critical that we uphold this momentum and ensure that First Nations priorities are continually included in any and all discussions of Canada's goal of building back better.

I commend the ongoing efforts of the BCAFN in ensuring the implementation and adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the BC



government. This legislation is a step in the right direction on the path towards reconciliation. Public education on the UN Declaration and the bill to adopt it is an important effort that will ensure all First Nations Chiefs and Leaders are supported when explaining and advancing the importance of the UN Declaration at the local and community level, with partners, other governments, business and civil society organizations. Your work in this regard is exceptional.

In addition to this success, the BCAFN is also one of the leaders in the First Nations efforts to combat the climate crisis. The advocacy efforts put forth by the BCAFN are working to guarantee the true partnership between First Nations in BC and the Provincial and Federal Governments in combatting the climate emergency. This approach is consistent with the UN Declaration and is respectful of First Nations' inherent Aboriginal Title and Rights, and Treaty Rights. Continued efforts such as those of the BCAFN



## Introduction

are vital and will help to showcase the important *and* intrinsic knowledge of First Nations when it comes to the environment.

Together, our efforts have been successful in having First Nations' priorities become Canada's priorities. We have reached new heights and worked towards a better future for all and will continue to do so in the months and years to come.

In spite of the hardships that we are all up against, there is still much to be celebrated. I am encouraged by the warmth and generosity of our brothers and sisters, as well as by their ingenuity. First Nations people are showing up for each other in many ways that showcase the resilience and strong spirit of our people. And though I dearly wish to visit with you and your communities in person, I suspect it will be some time before we can safely do so. In the meantime, I welcome the opportunity to discuss not only the issues before you, but the solutions that you see. COVID-19 has forced us into thinking of new ways to serve our people. I am hopeful and confident that we will make it through this trial and will emerge stronger for the journey.

I look forward to the day when we can gather our Nations together once more. Until then, stay safe.

Kinanāskomitin,

**National Chief Perry Bellegarde**

*Perry Bellegarde, re-elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations in 2018, holds a wealth of leadership experience. He's spent the past thirty years putting into practice his strong beliefs on the laws and traditions instilled in him by the many Chiefs and Elders he has known over the years. Passionate and unrelenting in creating real, measurable progress on the priorities that matter most to First Nations, National Chief Bellegarde is a strong advocate for honouring and implementing Inherent and Treaty rights, title and jurisdiction.*

*Originally from Little Black Bear First Nation in Treaty 4 Territory, he has served as Tribal Council Representative for the Touchwood-File Hills-Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Saskatchewan Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations, as well as Chief and Councillor for the Little Black Bear First Nation. He has experience and expertise in leadership at all levels of First Nations governance. In 2014, the Chiefs-in-Assembly first elected Perry as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. He was re-elected to the position in July 2018.*

*As Assembly of First Nations National Chief, Perry Bellegarde remains committed to building on the momentum created in his first term. His national platform and agenda, Closing the Gap, remains a top priority and has directly influenced the federal government's planning and priorities.*

*National Chief Bellegarde has been recognized numerous times as a First Nations leader. He has been awarded the Confederation Medal, the Saskatchewan Medal, and the Queen's Jubilee Medal on two separate occasions. This year, the Province of Saskatchewan recognized Perry with the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.*

*National Chief Bellegarde remains grateful for the strength and vision he has gained from the Elders. He vows to always place great importance on respecting their teachings. Their guidance has made him a man of foresight and a leader for generations.*

Go to the AFN [website](https://www.afn.ca) to learn more.



## Message from the Regional Chief



*Chiefs, Councillors, Hereditary Leaders, Elders, Youths, and Knowledge Keepers, I hope to find you in good health.*

I write to you from the beautiful unceded territory of the Lheidli T'enneh people near Prince George, BC. I hold my hands up to you during these challenging times, but I know we will get through this together as our ancestors have showed us ways and we are resilient.

We have experienced extreme challenges over the past year, blossoming opportunities, and historic victories. We have confronted a pandemic with strength. We have called police and the justice system to account for systemic racism and violence against our people. And in BC, we have seen historic legislation (Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, 2019) passed recognizing and affirming our human rights and legal orders. The work First Nations leaders continue to do in this province is innovative and cutting edge as we change our relationship with settler governments, and our non-Indigenous neighbours.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has now been with us for nearly a year. And while we have seen tragic losses in our communities, we have also seen resilience and strength. The BCAFN have been doing everything we can to support First Nations communities in BC and across Canada.

We worked with the First Nations Summit and UBCIC in the development of an online tool to help individuals, communities, and business owners find resources to fight the spread of the virus and access vital resources. We have also been pressuring the provincial government to release relevant data on COVID-19 cases to help keep our communities safe. And we helped notify the public about community closures during the summer holiday season. The BCAFN will continue to support First Nations in BC as we enter the winter season – First Nations populations are still vulnerable and we continue to ask that First Nations jurisdiction to restrict access to their lands and properties be respected by the Crown, industry and all Canadians.

It may seem like a lifetime ago, but it was just before the end of 2019 that we secured a historic victory with the passing of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, 2019. We can all claim this as a victory but cannot stop pressing for First Nations rights to be respected, implemented and affirmed. While there is much work yet to do to change laws in BC, we are prioritizing changes to child welfare, forestry, environmental assessment, justice, fisheries, policing and more.

This year we also witnessed a series of tragic injustices committed against First Nations people in Canada,



including murders by police and fresh evidence that medical personnel continue to mistreat us. In response, I have also been working closely with Quebec and Labrador Regional Chief Ghislain Picard to hold police forces to account and press the federal government to support a First Nations-led National First Nations Justice and Policing Strategy and Action Plan.

This work follows the BCAFN Chiefs in Assembly endorsement of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy at our meeting in March. We support the First Nations Justice Council in building an action plan based on this strategy to improve the justice system for First Nations people in BC. We did see some progress this year as several Indigenous Justice Centres were opened. And we fully support the work of Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond in determining the extent of racism in our medial system. I have been active in advocating for national and provincial changes to justice and policing including having presented to the BC Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act, and the federal Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

I have the honour of being Chair of the national AFN Chief's Committee on Economic Development, and through that role I have prioritized supporting First Nations economic development, which has been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our home-grown economic development toolkit, the Black Books, continues to be rolled out through workshop sessions led by BCAFN policy staff. We have been advocating for targeted, proportional, and accessible supports so that we can have a just and inclusive recovery.

This last year we also continued to press for recognition of jurisdiction and economic supports for First Nations cannabis businesses. These, along with revenue sharing and taxation remain key priorities, both in BC and across the country. Recently, some important progress has been made in BC in the use Section 119 of the BC Cannabis Control and Licensing Act. The BCAFN's policy team will also be rolling out a cannabis toolkit and webinars in the winter of 2021.

Our team has been doing important work to put First Nations at the forefront of fighting climate change. We've been assisting the Tsilhqot'in National Government and Lheidli T'enneh Nation with their forest carbon projects that combine climate change action with economic development. We will also be releasing a First Nations Forest Carbon Standard in the winter, to support First Nations forest carbon projects. And climate change engagement will continue through this winter.

The changing climate is one of several factors impacting our salmon, and other aquatic species; however, we maintain that the main reason we continue to see terrible returns is the mismanagement of our fish by the federal Department of

Fisheries and Oceans. First Nations communities are doing everything we can to rebuild stocks, but we need more action from the federal government including in providing priority access to First Nations fishers, after conservation considerations.

This year we pushed hard to see the federal government to act on the Cohen Commission's recommendations from 2012. We also support new investments in First Nations-owned, responsible aquaculture to ensure a safe, equitable and quick transition from open-net to closed containment fish farms.

We continue to do this work so that our children can carry on in our traditional ways and cultures. For us to succeed, we need reform to the child welfare system in BC. We seek a political appointment at the Joint National Working Group related to the Indigenous Services Canada Protocol. We have also been working to secure prevention and respite services for children and families in need, particularly children and youth with special needs.

At the same time as we are working to help families, we continue to demand action for those families who have lost loved ones. We still have not seen a National Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2 Spirited People, and we are pressing hard to see movement from the federal government.

We held engagement sessions on the National Action Plan in BC, with the leadership of BCAFN Women's Representative, Louisa Housty Jones. We are confident that the outcome report will be a valuable contribution to the Plan, and that our communities will be empowered to take action.

I would like to thank all of the support from the Chiefs in BC as we work together through these challenging times. I am honoured and humbled to serve First Nations in BC and will continue to celebrate everything we've achieved together.

Mussi Cho. Thank you.

**Regional Chief Terry Teegee, BCAFN**

*Terry Teegee, is of 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. Before his election as BC Regional Chief, Terry was the elected Tribal Chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC) from 2012-2017. Previous to 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.*





**BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS**

## BCAFN Vision & Mission

### VISION

The BC Assembly of First Nations is unified towards self-sufficiency and vibrancy while never forgetting who we are. We envision a future where our inherent laws, lands, and traditions are recognized and respected by governments, industry and the general public.

### MISSION

We are proud, progressive and innovative BC First Nations advocating for and implementing our Aboriginal Title, Rights and Treaty Rights through exercising our inherent laws and jurisdiction.

### MANDATE

THE BCAFN works to:

- Advance the rights and interests of First Nations people in British Columbia;
- Restore and enhance the relationship among First Nations people in British Columbia, the Crown and people of Canada;
- Develop and promote policies and resources for the benefit of First Nations people in British Columbia including but not limited to economic, social, education, health and cultural matters; and
- Collaborate with other organizations that advance the rights and interests of Indigenous People.

## About 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 next AFN National Chief election will be held in July 2021.

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](https://www.afn.ca) to learn more.







## NATIONAL PORTFOLIO

### Economic Development

As Chair for the Chief's Committee on Economic Development (CCED), I am pleased to report that the CCED continues to provide leadership and guidance to the AFN on strategic economic development matters including focusing on the economic challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery. The CCED have been involved in providing recommendations and strategic advice related to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery, procurement, agriculture, trade, and natural resources and the economy.

Over the past few months, some of the CCED activities have included:

- Maintaining communications and advocating to the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) on the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for the inclusion of First Nations in the design of economic stimulus programs and economic recovery planning, the far-reaching First Nations business impacts on the economy, and on the investments needed in a First Nations economic strategy.
- Ongoing work on the development of research on First Nations economic recovery and priorities including longer term needs for new economic program investments and a national strategy.
- Continue to advance the recommendations put forth by the CCED on increased First Nations procurement opportunities and benefits, monitoring the federal government changes to the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB) and considering implementation options for the federal commitment to a 5% federal government Indigenous procurement target.
- Development of a gap analysis on the agriculture agri-foods sector, identifying existing gaps and barriers that First Nations face within the sector to continue to build a First Nations Agriculture Strategy.
- Continue to provide advice on working with Natural Resources Canada to track progress on building relationships, capacity development and improvements on engagement in and with the natural resource economy.
- Advocate for participation of First Nations in international trade. The CCED continues to consider how to address the gap for trade services, programs

and incentives needed for First Nations businesses. The CCED has advocated for an Indigenous Peoples and Trade Chapter in the Canada United States Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) and other international trade agreements.

In addition to the role that the Regional Chief holds at the national level, BCAFN has been advancing a number of economic development initiatives at the provincial level that stem from the Economic Development and Fiscal Relations Strategy that started in the 2016-2017 fiscal year. The 2019-2020 work on this portfolio is highlighted by:

#### **Centre of Excellence for First Nations Economic Development**

A First Nations Centre of Excellence for First Nations Economic Development discussion paper has been internally drafted and reviewed by the economic development policy team. The essential function of the Centre would be to serve as a First Nations Economic Development thinktank, filling the gap needed for First Nations-led policy supports and research with the potential to lead into additional areas where gaps may exist. Input received from engagement sessions and feedback from other economic development deliverables helped to shape the structure of the Centre.

Following review from advisors, the concept paper will be further developed with the assistance of a number of partners, with a more detailed concept, budget and structure to be presented in the coming fiscal year in order to create and operate the Centre. The paper will be brought forward to the Chiefs in early 2021 for further review and discussion.

#### **First Nations Economic Impact and Indicators Study**

There exists a gap in understanding the economic impact of First Nations in BC, and indicators of First Nations wellness that are culturally tailored to BC First Nations ways of life. BCAFN is working with the Province on a discussion paper to better understand both of these concepts. The paper focuses on rejecting GDP as the pinnacle of measuring economic health of a demographic or region. Instead, the paper will recommend indicators that incorporate various components of First Nations values and ways of being, including language transmission, time spent on

the land, wealth distribution mechanisms, traditional food consumption, among others.

Given the global shift away from GDP as an appropriate measurement of wealth, the BCAFN paper will draw on various example of alternative wellness indexes, including one from the Maori whose uses their language to express social determinants of health and what composes “the good life.” BCAFN will attempt to mirror this method of expression by using words and colloquialisms from First Nations languages in BC. The final paper will be released in Fall 2020.

### Black Books

Three of the eight Blacks Books Dissemination and Feedback sessions (one each in Prince George, Vancouver and Kamloops) were held in-person prior to pandemic restrictions being imposed. The initial plan, prior to COVID-19, was to host sessions in each of the province's regions. Once COVID-19 restrictions were activated, BCAFN economic development policy staff worked with a facilitator (Dan George of Four Directions Management Services) to bring a province-wide virtual session to complete this task and received feedback from those who use the Black Books to ensure the next iteration is reflective of community priorities and needs.

### Business Forums

BCAFN hosted two Business Forums: one on October 11, 2019 in Vancouver, and the other February 6, 2020 in Prince George. Our Vancouver forum was on the heels of the World Indigenous Business Forum, which took place October 8-10, with active participation of the BCAFN. BCAFN's Vancouver forum had 220 people registered, and included the following topics:

- Leadership ideas: how to capture the passion of communities by using the intelligence and skills of local people,
- Digital Opportunities in a Global Economy,
- The dichotomy between individual entrepreneurship and community collectivity,
- How good First Nation governance creates financial stability and confidence in the investment community,
- Indigenous trade – domestic and international,
- Ways to assist Indigenous business export abroad and examples of Indigenous to Indigenous Trade,
- Overview of the Cannabis Opportunities for First Nations,
- Overview of the BCAFN Black Books.

The February Business Forum held in Prince George explored the theme: *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous*

*Peoples Act: Providing Certainty for Business*. Over 130 attendees participated in panels and presentations focused on:

- How will legislation (Bill 41) on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affect business in BC?
- Youth Perspectives: Indigenous Entrepreneurship,
- Successful Models and Agreements,
- Capitalizing on the Opportunity – Tools for Business Success,
- Capacity building for First Nation Economic Development Officers,
- Indigenous Intern Leadership Program

Our First Nations Business Forums were broadcast live and recorded – please visit our [website](#) to access more information including links to the recorded sessions.

### Champions Table

The BCAFN continues to work with the BC Business Council to support the Champions Table, which is made up of 10 Chiefs and 10 industry leaders to discuss issues related to economic reconciliation. Pre-pandemic, the Champions Table had been meeting quarterly, focusing on supporting specific initiatives: the [Indigenous Intern Leadership Program](#), and work with Lheidli T'enneh and Tsilhqot'in on their carbon projects. The BCAFN will look to the Champions Table for further advice on our work regarding the First Nations Centre of Excellence concept and the Economic Impact and Indicators Study.

### Policy Papers

The BCAFN has been working on several policy papers to improve the understanding of policy, cultural and legal changes needed support First Nations economic development. Our keystone paper, *Free, Prior and Informed Consent in Business*, is available on our [website](#), with several other papers to be released by the end of March 2020 including:

- Indigenous Trade (A two-part paper)
- Tourism
- Cannabis
- Gaming
- Technology

The general structure to the papers is as follows:

- Introduction
- Background: How We Got Here
- Context: The Current State
- Discussion – The Analysis Section
- Recommendations – Actions/Timelines/Budgets



## NATIONAL PORTFOLIO

### Cannabis

Efforts of the national AFN Chiefs Committee on Cannabis to develop a federal First Nations jurisdiction framework were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the committee resumed meeting on October 6, 2020 with new momentum to see the required legislative changes through. The committee is seeking meetings with relevant federal ministers and will be considering legislative options shortly. The AFN is also seeking funding to support the concerted effort that will be required to develop and advance this strategy with the federal government.

Provincially, the BCAFN is part of the BC-FNLC Cannabis Working Group. BCAFN continued to press for recognition of jurisdiction and targeted economic supports for First Nations cannabis businesses. These, along with revenue sharing and taxation remain key priorities.

Working Group members have also been made aware of an uptick in compliance and enforcement activities against First Nations cannabis businesses that are not provincially or federally licensed, including those supported by First Nations governments. This is concerning as First Nations jurisdiction in the cannabis sector is not being properly acknowledged, recognized and implemented by the province, in spite of BC's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act, 2019.

Recently, some important progress has been made. The first cannabis government-to-government agreement between BC and the Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) was concluded recently. This agreement allows the WLFN

to own both a processing and retail facility, and conduct farm to gate sales, among other provisions. The BCAFN applauds WLFN and has heard from them and other First Nations that many changes still needed by the Crown to expand the role of First Nations in the cannabis industry – in both the regulatory sphere, and the business side.

BC also announced it will be changing its policies to allow for small farm to gate businesses, develop the option for direct delivery, and launch an Indigenous product shelf space program in partnership with Indigenous people.

The Working Group is also seeking federal support to help address gaps in access to resources, information, and capital for First Nations cannabis business in BC. If successful, this initiative could be launched in spring 2021.

The BCAFN policy and legal team is also developing a suite of governance and economic development information resources and templates that will be made available to help support First Nations advance their interests with respect to cannabis. The release of this toolkit this winter will be followed by interactive virtual webinars where participants can delve into the issues and materials and provide feedback on how BCAFN can best support First Nations rights and interests in the cannabis space.

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## NATIONAL PORTFOLIO

### Fisheries

Regional Chief Teegee co-chairs the AFN's National Committee on Fisheries with Regional Chief Roger Augustine. The last year has seen fisheries issues amplified in mainstream media, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and also slowed progress on some items that were previously identified as priorities. Overall, BCAFN continues to advocate for full implementation of inherent, treaty, constitutionally protected and Supreme Court affirmed rights to fish and aquatic resources.

COVID-19 caused downward pressure on seafood prices because of widespread decreased demand as a result of health restrictions imposed by governments both

internationally and domestically. BCAFN advocated for COVID-19 supports specifically for First Nations economic fishers because of their unique business environments, models and rights in comparison to non-Indigenous commercial fisheries. Subsequently, several meetings were held with Department of Fisheries and Oceans Minister Jordan to express First Nations needs and obstacles in regard to economic relief. As the pandemic persists, AFN and BCAFN will continue to analyze funding opportunities for First Nations fishers and advocate where necessary for more appropriate resources.

Provincially, 101 First Nations in BC have called for the

removal of open-net pen fish farms in the Discovery Islands because of the farms' harmful impact on wild salmon populations that migrate in close proximity to them, threatening already devastated salmon stocks. Demands for the aquaculture activities to be moved onto land come not only from First Nations' rights to fish but also from recommendation 19 of the Cohen Commission's Report. BCAFN participated in several press conferences over the course of summer 2020 to hold the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) accountable. Subsequently, DFO made the decision to "consult" with the 7 First Nations in the Discovery Islands in response to First Nations concerns. BCAFN will continue to work with Chiefs in BC, and supporters, to hold DFO accountable for the mismanagement of wild salmon stocks, which is an ongoing infringement of First Nations rights.

As Mi'kmaq fishers exercise their rights to fish, national attention has been placed on the Atlantic region because of violent and disturbing protests by non-Indigenous fishers. Several media statements and correspondence to the Ministers of DFO, Public Safety, Indigenous Services and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs have called for intervention to protect the safety of First Nations fishers and their right to fish for a moderate livelihood. As

this situation evolves, BCAFN and AFN will support First Nations fisheries where needed and denounce inactivity on the part of the Crown to uphold First Nations fishing rights and safety.

### Other Fisheries Items of Interest:

- The federal Aquaculture Act is currently being developed and AFN is involved in the co-drafting of this legislation.
- Development of a National Fisheries Strategy is still a priority. The National Fisheries Forum, which was to take place in the summer of 2020 in New Brunswick is now postponed until the spring of 2021 because of the ongoing pandemic.
- The Wild Salmon Steering Committee has initiated work to implement the recommendations from the 2018 Wild Salmon Summit. A terms-of-reference is currently in development and several meetings have taken place in attempt to devise a strategy and illicit resourcing.
- A new First Nations Fisheries Strategy and Action Plan is needed in the BC region, mandate from the Chiefs in BC will be sought to ensure a clear process and timeline is followed to develop a new strategy.



## NATIONAL PORTFOLIO

### Justice

2020 presented First Nations people in BC, and across Turtle Island, with extreme challenges, but we have also witnessed bright spots.

At the BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly, held last March, Chiefs in Assembly endorsed the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. This Strategy has resulted in the opening of First Nations Justice Centres across the province and marks a positive step in our relationship with the provincial government. Chiefs in Assembly also endorsed pursuing a Federal Justice Strategy.

In June, RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki refused to acknowledge the deeply insidious problem of systemic racism within the ranks of the RCMP while a number of deaths of First Nations people occurred after encounters with police rocked the country.

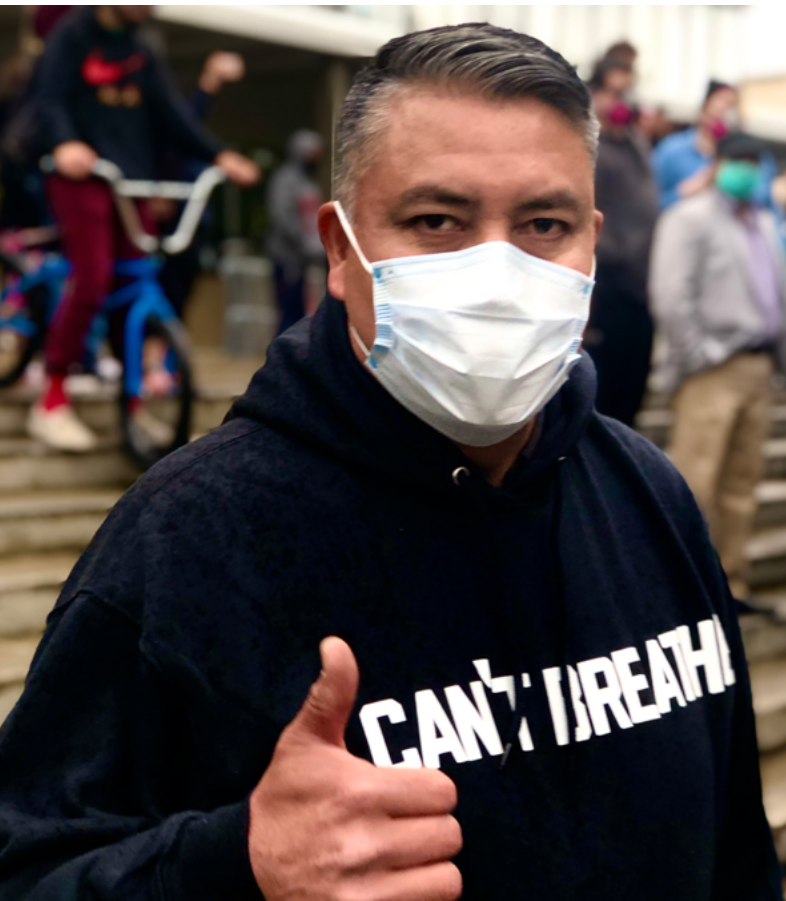
Regional Chief Ghislain Picard of the AFN Quebec and Labrador, Regional Chief Teegee both made submissions to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Defense's Study on racism in July. As

a result of this advocacy, a number of MPs and Ministers including Minister Marc Miller unequivocally acknowledged the existence of systemic racism within Canadian law enforcement agencies. After Commissioner Lucki finally promised to examine the systemic causes of violence, we have not seen adequate response or action from the RCMP. During the lobster fisheries dispute in Nova Scotia the RCMP stood passively on the sidelines as the dispute and violence instigated by commercial fishers built against the First Nations fishers. National Chief Perry Bellegarde has now called for Commissioner Lucki's removal.

Now more than ever, we believe that a federal First Nations Justice Strategy is essential to rehabilitate Indigenous peoples' relationships with the policing system across the country. We have also been demanding that the federal government recognize First Nations policing as an essential service, and for an increase in funding for the First Nations Policing Program.

Recently, Public Safety Minister Blair announced that he will introduce legislation classifying First Nations





Black Lives Matter Protest, Prince George

women and men, including Chantel Moore, Rodney Levi, Eishia Hudson, and Regis Korchenski-Paquet, show we urgently need a system that values Black and Indigenous lives.

In June 2020, the AFN expressed the need for concrete action to address racism and bigotry in Canada, in a way that shows solidarity with other groups facing the same problem. The AFN, alongside other racialized advocacy groups outlined four steps to effectively tackle racism. They include:

- Better collection and analysis of data based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic conditions;
- The implementation of a national policy to combat online hate speech;
- Equipping current police services with the tools necessary to counter hate crimes and support targeted communities; and,
- Ensuring police services better reflect the communities they serve.

The Assembly of First Nations is committed to addressing the problem of systemic racism.

Samantha Seymour at Black Lives Matter Protest, Prince George



policing as an essential service, which is a positive step. By designating First Nations policing as an essential service, new approaches to policing can be developed that include community-based, self-determining models grounded in First Nations principles, laws, and traditions. This needs to be accompanied by adequate funding for our police services. Many First Nations' policing services are severely underfunded and non-First Nations officers do not uphold the laws of our First Nations. The AFN has addressed this issue by advocating for \$500 million from Canada for Community Safety infrastructure and \$3 billion for enhancements to the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP). We know that when First Nations have control over their own policing services, all First Nations people are safer. For example, the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service, who in 26 years of operation, has never killed anyone and has never had to witness an officer die in the line of duty. We must continue to support First Nations self-determined solutions. The respect for First Nations jurisdiction to policing and upholding the laws of First Nations cannot wait. Every First Nations citizen, no matter where they reside, has a right to live in healthy and safe communities.

The AFN has also focused on solidarity work with other communities facing systemic racism. Incidents targeting Black and First Nations peoples, the deaths of young

## PRIORITY AREA

### Environment - Climate Emergency

The BCAFN Climate Emergency Portfolio is focused on accomplishing the mandate given by the Chiefs-in-Assembly through [Resolution no. 04/2019](#). In this regard, the BCAFN team has been working to:

1. Develop a First Nations Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. In partnership with the FNLC organizations, the BCAFN prepared two proposals submitted to the federal and provincial governments to develop a First Nations Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (FNCCSAP), including hosting two all-Chiefs meetings to plan and implement First Nation-led responses to climate change. A commitment from the provincial government has been secured to support this initiative and preparations to develop the FNCCSAP have already begun, including adapting our workplan to the new context created by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Engage with the provincial and federal government. BCAFN has been participating in ongoing federal and provincial engagements related to climate change and advocating for the full inclusion of First Nations in all climate policies, plans and investments, including consent-based decision-making. This engagement is primarily at two tables:
  - **BC-FNLC Technical Working Group in Climate change** - At the provincial level, the BCAFN has been actively participating with our partners at the First Nations Leadership Council (UBCIC and FNS) to advocate for early, direct and meaningful engagement with First Nations in all processes. Some of the draft strategies/plans that we have focused on include: the provincial Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy, the provincial Flood Risk Strategy, the BC Risk Assessment, BC's development of interim and sectoral greenhouse gas emissions targets, the BC Hydro Phase 2 Review, among others. We have also been reviewing and providing recommendations on these climate plans, reports and strategies.
  - **Joint Committee on Climate Action (JCCA)** - At the national level, the BCAFN Climate Change Coordinator is actively participating in the JCAA, which is a co-developed table between First Nations technical representatives led by the AFN and federal officials. The JCCA was established to provide technical advice and to position First Nations as leaders on climate action. At this table we are currently reviewing federal climate-related program implementation and renewals, and federal policy and mandate commitment
3. Support the development of renewable and alternative energy economies to combat climate change and to enable a just transition which creates a more equitable future for First Nations. BCAFN alongside the UBCIC and the FNS has repeatedly raised concerns about the continued lack of meaningful participation of First Nations in the BC Hydro Comprehensive Review and more broadly, the abandonment of the clean energy sector that is distributed throughout the province with First Nations-owned energy projects and facilities. To this end, Regional Chief Teegee has been advocating for a clean recovery plan that prioritizes clean investments while reducing the economic gap with First Nations.
4. Advocate for the reduction of GHG emissions in BC and Canada. According to the national and provincial inventories (2017-2018), human-made GHG emissions increased by 15 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO<sub>2</sub> eq) in Canada and by 2.2 MT CO<sub>2</sub> eq in BC. The upward trend suggests that BC and Canada are not on track to reach our climate targets and even further from being aligned with the IPCC recommendation of keeping global warming below 1.5oC. Climate impacts caused by the climate crisis demands a quick and collective response to reduce GHG emissions. In this regard, BCAFN is advocating that the Province ensure meaningful engagement with First Nations on the current process to establish the provincial sectoral emissions targets. BCAFN is also exploring ways to enable First Nations to count their GHG emissions and to plan how to offset or/and mitigate them.
5. Analyze and share climate information with First Nations and support First Nations climate leadership. BCAFN began sharing information and climate analysis through a Climate Change Distribution List (CCDL) composed of more than 150 participants from First Nations communities across BC. We have prepared and shared briefing notes on IPCC, international and domestic climate technical reports which provide summaries and analysis. We have also shared funding opportunities to support First Nations' climate initiatives. On request, BCAFN has also provided support to communities that have required urgent assistance related to climate change initiatives.

The BCAFN will continue to work with the national AFN through the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACE), the Regional Climate Change Coordinators Network and the JCCA. We will also continue to work with our partners at the FNLC and with First



Nations in BC to support community-based climate action in accordance with First Nations self-determination: your own laws, values, goals, and beliefs.

### PRIORITY AREA

#### Environment - Water

The BCAFN recognizes the imminent need to advance First Nations jurisdiction over our waters and to address the longstanding issue regarding safe drinking water on reserves. This year, BCAFN hired a new Regional Water Coordinator with the goal to help support these critical water issues in BC.

Water is our lifeblood and we must work diligently to protect it in order to sustain life on earth for ourselves and our future generations. Water security continues to be a growing concern for First Nations communities as the threats of climate change become more prevalent throughout our territories. Wildfires, flooding and drought significantly threaten our watersheds and our access to clean and safe drinking water. First Nations must be included in the development of policies and regulations in order to meaningfully participate in the protection and management of our most vital resource.

At the provincial level, BCAFN has supported the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) in advocating for the inclusion and co-development of the remaining regulations and policies yet to be rolled out of the Water Sustainability Act with a set of recommendations on how the Provincial government should include First Nations in water-related decision-making processes. BCAFN will continue to collaborate with FNFC to promote and advocate for these recommendations to be implemented by the Provincial government.

At the federal level, the national AFN and its regional offices, including BCAFN, are closely monitoring the development of the new Canada Water Agency and are continuously advocating for participation and engagement with First Nations in the early stages of development of the Agency. The AFN has also called on the Federal government to repeal and replace the highly contentious *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*. BCAFN will be hosting engagement sessions in the winter of 2020 to receive further input from First Nations communities across BC to give input on the co-development of a new federal act that will adequately address the gaps in existing legislation.

### PRIORITY AREA

#### Environment - Carbon

Under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, First Nations “have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands.” Because land-based carbon offsets generate revenue from protecting the physical properties of the land, they can be a tool to enable the re-establishment of traditional land stewardship and return social and ecological balance to communities. Recent projects led by Indigenous communities worldwide have been shown to support community objectives around revenue, land-use, and resilience.

Protecting, restoring and improving the management of land increases the overall stock of carbon pulled out, and kept out, of the atmosphere. Land-based carbon offsets generate revenue by maintaining and enhancing natural processes in a defined geographical area, and then turning this service into a tradable commodity to be exchanged.

This year the BCAFN Carbon Specialist supported two communities in exploring the feasibility of land-based carbon offset projects within their territories: the T̓silhqot’in National Government and the Lheidli T’enneh Nation. Protecting and restoring the land for carbon is a long-term commitment that must fit with a nation’s vision. Steps such as defining the project area, agreeing on a plan, and designing future land management are all critical decisions.

Carbon is an element that connects us to Mother Earth. It is found in our bodies, the atmosphere, the soil, and in the Earth’s crust. Forests, wetlands, grasslands and the ocean all absorb and store carbon in living and dead tissues through a process that has been occurring for millions of years. The Earth’s carbon balance was maintained by Indigenous peoples for millennia.

Industrialization, which began only a few hundred years ago, altered that carbon balance and drove climate change. The burning of fossil fuels transferred carbon from the Earth’s crust to the atmosphere, and the conversion of forests and grasslands into cities and farms altered the land’s ability to absorb and store carbon.

Reducing fossil fuel use is an essential first step towards restoring Earth’s carbon balance. However, returning lands to Indigenous management will support carbon storage and absorption, as traditional management is compatible with these functions. Indigenous Peoples are already stewarding nearly one-fifth of the total carbon held in tropical and subtropical forests worldwide.

## PRIORITY AREA

### Policy Review and IGBA+ Training

BCAFN recognizes that the work to create systemic change starts with each of us. That is why BCAFN is in the process of reviewing our governance documents with the goal of ensuring they promote an organization that is free from discrimination, gender-based violence, and lateral violence.

BCAFN is also in the process of implementing an Indigenous Gender Based Analysis Framework for the organization. IGBA+ is “an analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives.” Early approaches focused specifically on gender. Now, “the “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA+ goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. We all have multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are”, and GBA+ considers these too.

BCAFN's activities have the potential to impact First Nations, who naturally have many other identity factors that should be taken into consideration if BCAFN's advocacy is to be intersectional, relevant, effective, and equity-seeking.

The first step in implementing this framework involves IGBA+ training for BCAFN staff, elected representatives, and Board members, to ensure that the staff in each sectoral area are equipped with the skills to integrate this perspective into their work.

Future steps will include developing a vision statement for IGBA+, and selecting a “pilot” initiative among BCAFN's activities in which to focus on building IGBA+ capacity.

## PRIORITY AREA

### Shared Territories and Overlaps

In March the First Nations Leadership Council brought delegates from across BC together to discuss productive ways to address the issue of shared territory and overlaps. While this forum was cut short due to COVID-19, we look forward to reporting on the March forum and holding future virtual sessions to continue this crucial dialogue.

## PRIORITY AREA

### First Nations Children and Families

BCAFN has been working steadily with our partners to advance and advocate for substantive and transformative change to the child welfare system. Through the Tripartite Working group on children and families we have been working to address the full implementation of Bill C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children. We work with our Federal and Provincial counterparts to support the development of a tripartite working group on Jordan's Principle which would include relevant partners from health, education and early learning. As has been noted, the COVID-19 pandemic has made our work collectively challenging. Specific issues regarding COVID-19 where advocacy has remained active include:

- Access to prevention and respite services for children and families in need, particularly children and youth with special needs;
- Youth and young adults who are currently in care, or who have recently aged out of care, and high-risk youth;
- Access between children in care and their families during the pandemic;
- Extensions of service changes within the Ministry of Children and Family Development; and
- Education restart and supports available to families and communities for the 2020-21 academic year.

As we continue to work on the implementation of Bill C-92, engagement with First Nations communities, Chiefs, leaders and experts is a significant component of this work. Although, we have not been able to meet in person we have adapted to our new reality and on September 15th the First Nations Leadership Council hosted our first children and families quarterly townhall session in partnership ISC and the Province. This was in response to a request from First Nations to have a venue to engage directly with the Province and Canada on this topic. The next session is planned for December. On the same date we also hosted a “reorientation” to the Federal Act, recognizing that there needs to be ongoing information and resources shared on implementation of the Act. As a follow-up, we are planning several focus groups and information sessions throughout the winter of 2020 and the spring of 2021, based upon priorities identified by First Nations.



## PRIORITY AREA

### COVID-19 Emergency Report

In March 2020 the world as we knew it changed. COVID-19 changed the way we could do business, the way we came together as communities. It fundamentally changed our lives. We all knew we had to adapt to the new way of living and working. The Assembly of First Nations National Office and Regional Chiefs developed the Emergency work plan. Each Region had the opportunity to develop a work plan to deal with COVID-19 and emergencies in their region.

The BCAFN has been working with UBCIC and the First Nations Summit to ensure leadership have the most updated information about the response to the pandemic. Between March and September, the FNLC had been holding almost weekly meetings with provincial and federal officials to share information about the impacts from the virus on our members, and how the Crown has been supporting our people.

The FNLC created a website of information for First Nations in BC regarding COVID-19 issues (none-medical); the First Nations Health Authority maintains medical related information related to the pandemic. The site ([www.fnlc.ca](http://www.fnlc.ca)) provides a centralized place for all COVID-related information that might be useful for First Nations communities, individuals, and business owners in BC. The site provided essential information to over 7,500 users and continues to be an important portal for communities and their members to easily navigate COVID-related resources and programs. We also ensured that an accurate list of communities closed to visitors is maintained there, and during the summer months used advertising and other networks to keep tourists informed of communities closed to visitors.

To meet our goals of providing relevant and timely information to our constituents, we opted to use in-house personnel, asking Andreas Krebs to fill the role of Emergency Communication Coordinator and Victoria Austin to be Emergency Administrative Coordinator. A lot of the outgoing communication was coordinated by Annette Schroeter, Communications Officer, including: a weekly bulletin updating nations on COVID19 news, infection data, and information on other emergencies.

Through outreach with partners the BCAFN discussed approaches to emergency management during COVID with:

- Canadian Red Cross,
- Emergency Management BC,
- Indigenous Services Canada,
- Nuuchah Nulth Tribal Council, Emergency

Coordinator,

- Tripartite (FNLC/BC/Canada) Emergency Management Working Group,
- AFN COVID19 Pandemic Plan Working Group,
- AFN Bi-weekly Regional Staff Group,
- AFN COVID19 Re-opening Working Group

Fortunately, 2020 saw few fires and minimal floods. The decision of many First Nations governments to close communities to visitors also kept COVID-19 case numbers low in many First Nations communities.

The pandemic is not over, so we ask that you remain vigilant in maintaining safe practices, including hand washing/sanitizing, wearing a mask where physical distancing is a concern, practicing physical distancing, keeping social bubbles small and self-isolating and getting tested if you have any symptoms.

If you would like more information on the work the BCAFN is undertaking on emergency communications, or would like to report emergencies in your community, please contact us at [emergency@bcfn.ca](mailto:emergency@bcfn.ca)

## Priority Area

### Gaming

The BCAFN has continued to advocate for further revenue for BC First Nations from gaming and the right to run gaming operations within their own communities. In September a 23 year agreement with the Province of BC was secured that will transfer \$3 billion in gaming revenue to First Nations. This continues the initial two year interim agreement for revenue sharing. Nearly all First Nations in BC have joined the First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership to access these funds. Revenue began flowing in September 2019 under the interim two-year agreement. The completion of the long-term agreement guarantees their share of gaming revenue for the subsequent 23 years. The agreement is innovative as it incorporated principles from the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (BC).

## PRIORITY AREA

### Indigenous Languages

The BCAFN, along with First Nations Leadership Council and First Nations organization partners, is developing a proposal to call on the Government of BC to partner on, and fund, the co-development and implementation of legislation to support the revitalization and protection of Indigenous languages in BC as part of the three year Action Plan under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. The first step outlined in this proposal is the establishment of a multi-stakeholder working group to identify and assess options for provincial legislation.

Our vision is for every Indigenous person to have the opportunity to learn and become fluent in their Indigenous language, and for children to have the opportunity to be educated in their own Indigenous language. Indigenous languages are the essential fabric of our identity, and embody our values, worldviews, and histories. They are a cornerstone of governance and nation-building, and an integral piece of reconciliation. They enable our cultures, governance systems, and knowledge to pass from generation to generation.

The urgency of language revitalization work is well-known. Generations of successive colonial laws, policies, and practice disrupted fluency in Indigenous languages across BC and Canada. This is now recognized as genocide. The First People Cultural Council's (FPCC) 2018 Language Report found that only three per cent of Indigenous people in BC (fewer than 4,200 people) identified themselves as being fluent in their mother tongue language, a decrease since the 2014 report. The current decline in the number of fluent speakers is mainly attributable to the loss of elder fluent speakers. Nevertheless, the report also found an increase in language learners - a promising sign.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted existing social, economic, and health-related vulnerabilities borne by First Nations in BC. As BC plans for economic recovery it is important to recognize the acute impact this pandemic has had and continues to have on the wellbeing and mental health of all British Columbians, and specifically First Nations peoples. Connection with culture, including Indigenous languages, is a determinant of First Nations health and wellness. Bolstering Indigenous languages revitalization initiatives are a key way to support First Nations in promoting wellbeing. Increased access to information and services in Indigenous languages can also help remove barriers for First Nations individuals seeking supports for their personal and community wellbeing, or in support of a business.

Support for renaming places according to their Indigenous names, and the support for cultural integrity that could be championed through legislation would also bolster tourism and economic development opportunities, in addition to further key objectives of public education and awareness.

The fact that elders are at heightened risk from this pandemic adds another layer of urgency as they hold deep knowledge of languages, culture, and laws. This pandemic is a reminder that the future is uncertain and that we cannot count on future opportunities to act. Through this pandemic, governments, communities, and individuals have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to coordinated action for our common wellbeing. This provides hope that through partnership, planning, and action we have the agency to address the urgent work need to revitalize Indigenous languages.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL 2019), dedicated to raising awareness of Indigenous languages as a topic of global interest and mobilizing coordinated action around the world. A decade of Indigenous Languages was also established, beginning in 2022. Key goals of this initiative are to preserve, support and promote Indigenous languages at the national, regional and international levels in continuation of the legacy initiated in 2019.

In June 2019 the federal government passed Bill C-91 An Act respecting Indigenous languages. Between September and the end of November, 2020 the federal government is engaging Indigenous peoples on the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages and Directors and the Indigenous Languages Funding Model through virtual sessions and an online questionnaire. For further information about the process, a discussion guide, and engagement summaries visit the department of Canadian Heritage [webpage](#). The AFN Languages and Culture Sector has also provided an update on this initiative, which was circulated to leadership in BC.



## PRIORITY AREA

### UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' Implementation

On November 28, 2019 the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act was passed and received Royal Assent in the Provincial legislature. The Act requires the Province, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples to:

- Ensure new and existing laws are consistent with the UN Declaration;
- Develop and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration;
- Monitor progress through public annual reporting.

The BCAFN, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs (together as the First Nations Leadership Council), have been working with the Province of B.C. to advance implementation of the Declaration Act, including the commitment to align provincial law with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to develop an action plan to achieve the objectives of the Declaration. The Action plan is not intended to limit, but rather supplement, reconciliation work that is ongoing at the Nation-level. We have engaged with First Nations, First Nations organizations and experts to solicit input into the action plan. A number of areas to be considered within the Action plan are:

- Ending racism and discrimination;
- Recognition, promotion, implementation, and protection of rights and freedoms;
- Self-determination and sovereignty;
- Land and territory;

- Economy and fiscal relations;
- Culture and language;
- Children and family well-being.

This provincial level work is ongoing and we continue to seek feedback and work with partners to ensure the full recognition and full implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Of most importance to First Nations is the need to see the Crown change its current laws, policies and mandates so that they move from denial and oppressive approaches to affirming First Nations rights and title. There have been instances throughout BC where First Nations governments continue to find BC (and Canada) in entrenched positions regarding issues of jurisdiction related to (but limited to) cannabis, fisheries, forestry, child welfare and taxation.

At the national level, BCAFN through the national AFN continues to advocate for similar legislation at the federal level. Former Private Members Bill 262 did not succeed in receiving Royal Assent, and BCAFN continues to maintain a position that any federal legislation must be built cooperatively and collaboratively and must not undermine the work we have done at that Provincial level. The Federal government has committed to introduce legislation by the end of 2020 and are currently engaging First Nations and Indigenous organizations across the country to fulfill this commitment.



## PRIORITY AREA

### Homelessness

BCAFN received a mandate to develop a BC First Nations Homelessness Strategy in March 2020. COVID-19 subsequently brought homelessness in BC into mainstream media attention, particularly in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver and in Victoria where homeless encampments were disassembled by provincial and municipal governments.

First Nations people in BC account for roughly 40% of the homeless population yet comprise just 6% of the total population. Some people experiencing homelessness also experience higher rates of mental health issues and substance abuse. COVID-19 restrictions, including supply chain shocks to illicit drugs as a result of border closures, social distancing and isolation led to the highest rates of overdose deaths ever recorded in the province. BCAFN took action by demanding from Ministries including Health, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Mental Health and Advanced Education and Skills Training:

- Increased culturally appropriate housing for First Nations homeless people;
- Housing supports for women and families;
- Wrap-around services for those evicted from encampments;
- More supervised consumption sites;
- Federal safe supply of “illicit” drugs;
- Better communication regarding COVID-19 for transient populations in urban settings;
- Increased access to harm reduction products such as needles and naloxone.

BCAFN will continue to advocate for the needs of homeless First Nations people across the province that are culturally sound, physically safe and involve wrap-around supports. Engagement with relevant organizations is anticipated in the next year to begin development of a BC First Nations Homeless Strategy.

## PRIORITY AREA

### Food Security

Congruent with the Homelessness activities, BCAFN was given a mandate in March 2020 to engage regionally, nationally and internationally on food security and sovereignty issues as they relate to wellness and economic development. The food system is an incredibly complex and interdisciplinary network, affecting not only physical health but also economic development, social development, cultural continuity, environmental integrity, resource management and mental health. This mandate was quite timely considering advocacy needed in regard to food insecurity exacerbated by COVID-19 and Canada’s first National Food Policy coming into play in 2019.

BCAFN and food systems activists have known for decades that the charity model of emergency food provision as a response to food insecurity is an extremely undignified and ineffective method to ensure that people have access to food. The federal response to food insecurity, in the form of a fund from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada did not include First Nations in a fulsome manner, especially rural and remote First Nations. BCAFN demanded at that time and will continue to advocate for funding specifically for First Nations and resourced and income-based solutions for food security rather than food-based solutions. BCAFN will leverage the articles in the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to advocate for better food security and sovereignty supports from colonial governments, including full realization of the rights to harvest fish and wildlife.

BCAFN is currently in the process of requesting that a technical staff person gain observer status to the provincial Minister of Agriculture’s Indigenous Advisory Committee. Additionally, BCAFN sits in on the North American Civil Society Mechanism meetings, which is a body that advises the World Committee on Food Security from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization; work is being undertaken to explore how participation in this mechanism may bring First Nations into the international arena of food policy.



### PRIORITY AREA

#### Communications

Over the past year BCAFN made a great deal of progress in communications efforts. A new communications strategy was developed and implemented with recent positive feedback.

##### Surveys of Chiefs

Beginning with the 2019 AGM the communications team began surveying Chiefs to gauge the satisfaction with the BCAFN's work and how the communications team can better serve our constituents. We also used surveys to ensure that the process for the 2020 AGM follows Chiefs direction during this difficult time. These surveys demonstrated high levels of satisfaction with the Regional Chief's performance, with an 87% approval rating in the Spring of 2020. Chiefs also gave our approach to communications high marks, with an average rating of 3.6 out of 5.

##### New Websites

During the last year, the BCAFN also undertook a website redesign, which meant bringing all of the information from the previous site over to a new platform. This was a massive undertaking led by Communications Officer, Annette Schroeter. The result is a beautiful and user-friendly place for the BCAFN's information to live. And the Chiefs surveyed about the new site last spring agree, giving it an average of 3.7 out of 5 stars. The BCAFN also developed a new events site, which allows our internal team to easily create and manage apps for our numerous events, and will make attending and participating in these events even easier for our delegates.

##### COVID-19 Response

COVID brought huge challenges to how the BCAFN communicates with First Nations leaders and members in BC. In response we developed a COVID-specific site in collaboration with the First Nations Leadership Council that brought clarity to First Nations communities, business owners, and individuals on what resources were available to them. We also began a weekly COVID-19 bulletin circulating to our email list to keep our constituents up to date on the rapidly shifting situation during the pandemic. Regional Chief Teegee recorded ads for CFNR, (the second-most listened to radio station behind CBC Radio 1 among Chiefs) publicizing the COVID website as an easy way to access resources during the pandemic. Finally, during the height of the pandemic, Regional Chief Teegee took to Facebook Live to broadcast important information up to three times a week.

##### Social Media Growth

Our primary social media channel is Facebook, which is the number one social channel identified by Chiefs in surveys,

and the number one channel used by the Canadian public in general. Since November of 2019, the BCAFN Facebook Channel has seen 63% growth, from 1,695 followers to 2,697. We plan on continuing to grow this audience through advertising in the next year. The BCAFN Youth Representatives have also begun to develop other social media channels that are more popular among younger audiences, including TikTok, Instagram, and SnapChat. This is a new initiative, and we will have further information on the success at the next BCAFN Chiefs Assembly.

##### Internal Communications Infrastructure

Following the goals set out in our communications strategy, the BCAFN developed some internal communications infrastructure to make our daily communications more consistent and easier. This included a set of organizational key messages to help staff stay consistent in how we discuss our work with the public. The BCAFN also developed a contact information database for all Chiefs and relevant First Nations staff members to ensure that contact information is maintained in a uniform manner, and to make for smooth transitions between administrations as required. Finally, we started a Slack channel for our internal work that is helping to reduce our reliance on email for internal communications.

##### Regular Newsletter

The BCAFN continues to produce and distribute a quarterly newsletter collecting stories from our policy team to help keep Chiefs up to date on issues that matter for First Nations in BC.

##### News Media

As part of developing our internal communications infrastructure, the BCAFN contracted Resonant Strategic to provide bi-monthly media monitoring reports. The BCAFN has consistently excellent media coverage, although there are often wide swings in the number of stories per reporting period which is usually linked to news media becoming interested in Indigenous and related issues such as Black Lives Matter.

The BCAFN's work pushing for an action plan for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, advocacy for changes to policing and healthcare, and our work on salmon returns and aquaculture were all high points in the last year of news media. We also hosted our first virtual press conference during this time with members of the First Nations Leadership Council and the First Nation Wild Salmon Alliance.







## Board of Directors



### WILLIE BLACKWATER

#### Chief

*Simo'oogit (Chief) Djiuwuus (Willie Blackwater) originates from the Gitksan Nation in British Columbia. His authentic home community is Kispiox First Nation and he is a registered member and Elected Chief Councillor of the Gitsegukla First Nation. He is the wing Chief next to Sim'ogit (Hereditary Chief) Tsa Bux; Wilp'sTsa Bux is one of many Lax'gibuu (Wolf Clans) within Gitksan First Nation.*



### REBECCA DAVID

#### Chief

*Chief David was elected Chief of Pauquachin First Nation in October 2014 at the age of 33, with a vision of applying her experience and education in the hope of improving the quality of life of Pauquachin First Nation members.*



### HARVEY MCLEOD

#### Chief

*Chief Harvey McLeod is the elected chief of the Upper Nicola Band. He was elected to the BCAFN Board of Directors on October 12, 2017. Chief McLeod was first elected to Upper Nicola Band council in 1982. He was elected Chief in March of 2014 and re-elected in 2017.*



### CHARLES MORVEN

#### Chief Councillor

*Chief Charles Morven is the elected Chief Councillor of the Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw. He was elected to the BCAFN Board of Directors on October 12, 2017. Charles is a member of the Nisga'a Nation and belongs to Wilps Axdii Wil Luugooda and Ksim Xsaan. He currently holds the Nisga'a name, Daaxheet. Chief Councillor Morven originates from the community of Gitlaxt'aamiks and is currently serving as the Chief Councillor on the Gitwinksihlkw Village Government. Charles holds the responsibility for Economic Development and Finance to the Village Government. He also has responsibilities to Nisga'a Lisims Government where he sits on the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and where he chairs the Nisga'a Fisheries and Wildlife Committee.*



### MARILYN SLETT

#### Chief

*Marilyn Slett is a member of the Heiltsuk Nation and is serving her ninth year as elected chief councillor. Marilyn has also served two consecutive terms as an elected tribal councillor and is a former executive director of the Heiltsuk Tribal Council. She has completed the certificate in administration of indigenous governments and diploma in public sector management with the University of Victoria. Her regional representation currently includes: President of the Coastal First Nations/Great Bear Initiative and, BCAFN's Women's Representative on the AFN's Women's Council.*

# Board of Directors' Update

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

The BCAFN Board of Directors are pleased to present the Annual Report for 2019/2020 to the 17th Annual General Meeting and to the Chiefs in Assembly. We continue to carry out the resolutions and mandates provided by the Chiefs in Assembly from our previous AGM and latest Special Chiefs Assemblies, in coordination and collaboration with the Regional Chief's mandate and in alignment with the vision and mission of our organization.

The Board has spent considerable time preparing for this AGM and the elections that will be occurring. Throughout the year we have sought multiple legal opinions and guidance on how to ensure secure, fair elections that meet all of the organization's legal governance requirements.

We would like to acknowledge the feedback provided by our membership when we undertook an engagement process to determine how to proceed during these difficult times. As your society representatives, we are tasked with the oversight of the organization along with ensuring compliance with our governance documents. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of our communities and has also impacted the way in which we conduct our business. With your guidance and support, this has led us to the first ever online Annual General Meeting and online Election.

This past year has presented a number of challenges but BCAFN has met the challenge, and has adapted in order to continue fulfilling its mandate. The organization has moved forward on various priorities, under the leadership of the Regional Chief and the Board. Many of these efforts have been undertaken in partnership with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, and our regional First Nations organizations.

Priority activities have revolved around:

- Children and families,
- Justice,
- Economic development,
- Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act,
- Federal UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples legislation,
- Women's safety, security, and leadership,
- Forestry and Fisheries,

- Climate action,
- Cannabis,
- COVID-19 response and economic recovery.

The Board of Directors would like to acknowledge the hard work and support provided by Chief Marilyn Slett and Rebecca David, as their term as Directors comes to an end. Your contributions and leadership in guiding the BCAFN is greatly appreciated and we wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours.

The Board of Directors would like to welcome the newly acclaimed Board Directors, Chief Brian Assu from We Wai Kai and Chief Rosanne Casimir from Tk'emlups te Secwepemc . We look forward to working with you as we continue to govern and guide the BCAFN into the future. As we move forward collectively, we will look to fill the remaining vacant Directors positions.

Thank you to the Chiefs in Assembly for providing us the opportunity to work on your behalf with the Regional Chief and staff at BCAFN. As we move forward, as an organization and nations, we wish everyone positive health as we continue to face the threat and effects of the pandemic.

*Chief Marilyn Slett, Chief Harvey McLeod, Chief Councillor Charles Morven, Chief Willie Blackwater, and Chief Rebecca David*

**BCAFN Board of Directors**



Board meeting before SCA-Nanaimo



# BCAFN Representatives

## Elders' Update

*Dear Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Elders, Youth and honoured guests,*

The Elder representatives have attended the BCAFN 2020 monthly board meetings, the 2020 Special Chiefs Assembly and the 2020 BCAFN Annual General Meeting. Amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been my honour to witness and support the work done by our Regional Chief, the board, and the staff. In particular support to the National Action Plan in a follow up from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry, the National Assembly of First Nations Knowledge Keepers Council, and including:

- address COVID-19 and the racism targeting the Atlantic lobster fisher families by sending key messages to families/communities;
- draft and submitted amendments to the AFN Chiefs to approve and update the Charter.

Changes to the national Elders' organization have taken place including:

- "replace The Council of Elders" and replace it with "Knowledge Keepers Council."
- amend and update the "Knowledge Keepers Council Composition"
- Amend and update "Role and Function" of the Council of Elders;

Work in the education sector:

- The National Chief's Action Committee on Education addressing Education Partnerships Program, Infrastructure (school space accommodation and Standard options);
- Post-Secondary and COVID-19;
- Attended the AFN symposium for First Nations K-12 for Directors and Education Administrators addressing key issues to support student success that include High Cost Special Education, Regional and local education agreements, and funding formulas to name a few;
- Provided opening and supported the National Youth Council at a number of their meetings.

Shoyshqwelwhet,

**Dr Gwendolyn Point**



### DR. GWEN POINT

#### Elder Representative

*Dr. Point is a well-respected and 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. Dr. 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. Her connections to our University stretch back decades. She's been a student, a member of the Board of Governors, a faculty member, and an Aboriginal Curriculum Coordinator, to name just a few of her roles. Dr. Point has also held a number of provincial government and regional posts supporting education, child and family services, and First Nations communities.*

### CHIEF DR. ROBERT JOSEPH, O.B.C.

#### Elder Representative

*Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, O.B.C. is a peace-builder whose life and work are examples of his personal commitment. A Hereditary Chief of the 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". In 2003, Chief Joseph received an Honorary Doctorate of Law Degree from the University of British Columbia for his distinguished achievements in serving BC and Canada. In 2012, he was presented The Diamond Jubilee Medal by the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada.*



### LOUISA HOUSTY JONES **Women's Representative**

*In 2018 Louisa Housty-Jones, a member and Councillor for the Heiltsuk Nation, was elected by the BC Chief's in Assembly as BCAFN's Women's Representative. 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 Haislaq 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.*



Honourable Melanie Mark and Louisa Housty Jones at the BCAFN Women in Leadership Dialogue Session



# Women's Update

## *Greetings Chiefs and leadership,*

My name is Louisa Housty-Jones. I am a member and Councillor for the Heiltsuk Nation. In 2018 I was elected by the BC Chiefs in Assembly as BCAFN's Women's Representative. I play a key role in supporting BCAFN's mandate with regard to women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. I also represent our region on the AFN Women's Council.

I continue to be extensively involved in supporting women and families within my community. My goal is to build wellness so that women and gender diverse people are honoured and empowered in a sustained way. Some initiatives include facilitating the creation of a *Hałtzaqv* women's declaration and supporting the creation of a Women's Council that will be included in our Constitution, called the *Mn'yaqs* Council. *Mn'yaqs* means "one with you" specifically in reference to our women. This is one way we are working to restore the place of our matriarchs within our governance system.

I also organized the community to participate in the National Inquiry, teach cultural practices, and work directly with people and non-profits to meet a range of cultural and mental wellness needs. I am raising daughters and a granddaughter who know their amazing worth, and a son and grandson who honour and respect women and matriarchs.

What drives me is the conviction that reconnecting and going deeper with the foundations of our people gives life and will help people heal and find their way back to their true identities. Creating safe spaces and supports for healing is what this work is all about. Our women, girls, and gender-diverse people must be able to be safe and live their lives fully. They must have access to justice, must be supported to heal, and must be empowered as leaders.

## **Advocacy**

The BCAFN has been advocating for a National Action Plan on MMIWG2S that is:

- led by survivors, families, and Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA people;
- respects and upholds the role of Indigenous governing bodies;
- takes immediate action on the Calls for Justice;
- supports community-based action planning, resourcing, and healing;
- provides for accountability, transparency, and adequate, sustainable resourcing;
- and takes into account the many voices of survivors,

families, and advocates reflected in over 3000 recommendations on the issue of MMIWG2S in BC to date.

To support the development of the National Action Plan, the AFN Women's Council is in the process of planning for, and holding regional virtual engagement sessions.

The BCAFN is in the process of determining an approach to holding engagements on the National Action Plan at the regional level and has held several planning meetings.

It is important to ensure a process that is:

- collaborative; bringing together survivors, family members, Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA people, leadership, grassroots advocates, and front-line service providers,
- strengths-based,
- trauma-informed,
- action and implementation focused,
- and respectful of the fact that people have already shared so much, and we already have many recommendations about how to move forward.

## **Resources**

[Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)

[BC Path Forward Action Plan](#)

[Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside](#)

## **Dialogue Sessions and Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples' Declaration and Strategy**

BCAFN is planning for the next annual BCAFN Women's Dialogue Session in January 2021, and has established a planning committee to direct this work. This event will be held virtually.

Based on feedback from previous years BCAFN will be hosting a large forum as well as regional sessions (virtual and in-person when it's safe). This will allow for more discussion, self-care, and time to address priority topics.

At these sessions BCAFN will be reporting on BCAFN's work to develop the Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples' strategy and seek feedback. This strategy is based on the Declaration that was developed during previous Dialogue Sessions.

## Youth Representatives



**JAYDE DURANLEAU**

### **Female Youth Representative**

*Jayde has been the youth councillor for the McLeod Lake Indian Band since 2017. Prior to becoming a councillor, she worked as the community's archivist which gave her an appreciation of the importance of her history and culture. She also sits on the board of Tse'khene Community Development Corporation which encourages community enhancement and growth.*

*Jayde works hard to better her community and is passionate about her language, culture and education.*



**JUSTEN PETERS**

### **Male Youth Representative**

*For years Justen has been intrigued by the concept and practices of Indigenous Economic Development and the empowerment that economic independence brings to communities and individuals. Recently, he completed the Indigenous Youth Internship Program with the Province of B.C. where he worked with the Ministry of Jobs, Trade, and Technology in the Joint Office of Indigenous Economic Development which taught him about the relationships that First Nations have with the Province of B.C. and the opportunities that exist.*

*Justen is excited to see increased Indigenous ownership of natural resources and trade and the opportunities that will have for entrepreneurs. He aspires to have a career in economic development that will help individuals build onto their competencies so that they can sustain healthy communities.*



# Youth Update

In December 2019, Justen and Jayde attended the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly in Ottawa for the first time as youth representatives from the B.C. region. Highlighting the event was at the end of the conference when Justen and Jayde participated in a blanketing ceremony for the Honourable Minister Judy Wilson-Raybould Member of Parliament for Vancouver-Granville on behalf of the BCAFN to acknowledge her advocacy for First Nations. The BCAFN youth were excited to be a part of this historic moment and look up to the Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould as a role model and a trailblazer for Indigenous Rights.

In January 2020, the Youth attended the “Our Gathering” conference in Vancouver which hosted multiple B.C. First Nations and the federal government (ISC and CIRNAC). The youth in attendance helped create a videography project of the conference which we presented to the audience at the closing ceremonies. Utilizing videography and media to capture important truths and reach farther audiences and creating a stronger network for First Nation youth leadership were the big takeaways.

Also, in January, Justen volunteered at “Finding the Path to Prosperity” which was a historic UN Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples meeting in Vancouver between First Nations, government officials, and corporate professional to explore and expand on the opportunities for economic reconciliation.

In February 2020, the BCAFN held their Business Forum in Prince George. There was a youth business panel that Justen moderated and Jayde presented at as well. Three of the presenters/speakers at the event were people Justen had recruited. It was a good practice for public speaking and our youth panel was well received from the attendees. Afterwards, loads of people came up to us (the youth) asking us to be involved with their projects or companies. The Youth Representatives feel that it is important to venerate First Nations entrepreneurs for the value that they bring to communities, and the lessons of self-sufficiency, community mindedness, and bravery that they encompass.

In March, Justen and Jayde attended the BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly in Nanaimo where they introduced themselves to the chiefs and proxies in attendance. A lot of important information about the politics and business effecting B.C. First Nations was shared, and valuable networking took place. After the SCA had concluded, our BCAFN Youth reps were a part of another historic moment when they spoke at the initialization of the B.C. First Nations Justice Strategy (BCFNJS) along side BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee. Following the BCAFN Special Chief's Assembly in Nanaimo, Justen attended the

Shared Territories Forum in Vancouver which had to end prematurely due to the rising cases of Covid-19.

As a result of Covid-19, conferences have come to a halt and meetings have gone virtual. It's a significant change to adapt to, but BCAFN Youth Reps have been actively working to engage fellow youth with the United Aboriginal Youth Collective as well as working with MIRR to have youth involved with the implementation of the UN Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in B.C. as well as remain connected and find creative ways to network in our new reality. Covid-19 has been a burden for many but has also been a positive opportunity for youth to reflect on what is important. Given these times of uncertainty, the Youth have taken time to return to their communities and learn about traditional food harvesting and food security.

Currently, the Youth Reps are creating a BCAFN Youth leadership website which will dedicated to reaching out to youth by providing updates on events, news, and training opportunities for professional and community development. The site will feature blogs, video content, social media engagement, and has an option for online forum membership. The mission of the BCAFN website is to create a strong network of courageous First Nations youth who meaningfully engage with their communities and aspire to be great leaders.

Sustaining a strong network of competent and passionate First Nations youth in B.C. is one of our major goals as BCAFN Youth Reps, which is now more important than ever with social distancing restrictions in place. We hope that creating programs through partnerships, that we can collaborate to provide a sense of belonging for First Nations Youth through these isolating times. I'm looking forward to what the upcoming year brings, and I am optimistic that these challenges will make our youth stronger and more resilient than ever before.







# Chief of Staff

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

I am honoured to report to you as the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) Chief of Staff. I would like to first acknowledge the leadership of the BCAFN provided by our Regional Chief Terry Teegee, our Board of Directors, our Knowledge Keepers, and our Youth/Women's representatives. Through their guidance, support, and continued focus on finding ways to better the lives of our BC First Nations, BCAFN has continued to move forward in a positive direction during these unprecedented times.

The following report will be a brief review of the work completed over the past year, a reflection of accomplishments, and the identification of a path forward. When I last reported to the Chiefs-in-Assembly in September 2019, I never imagined that a year later our reality would be so changed and our world so different. We moved forward in the work that was mandated to our Regional Chief and our BCAFN team not seeing that the ways in which we conducted our business would be dramatically changed less than six months later. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was felt by all of us and we had to modify our ways to reflect this new reality.

On March 4-5, BCAFN met with our First Nations leadership in the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation for our Special Chiefs Assembly in Nanaimo, BC. This was then followed up by the FNLC Shared Territories and Overlap Meeting that took place in Vancouver from March 11-13 which was cut short due to the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic provincially. From this announcement, BCAFN operations had to be modified to ensure the continued safety of staff with the foundational focus of stemming the transmission and acquisition of the virus. The Work from Home Protocol was implemented on March 16 and both the BCAFN-Lheidli T'enneh and Vancouver offices were temporarily closed with staff working from home. Although this was a drastic shift, the transition was seamless and the work continued with no interruptions. BCAFN along with our counterparts began to engage and work within a virtual world and our lives began to revolve around Zoom.

As we began to see incidences of the virus decrease, the BCAFN - Lheidli T'enneh office reopened on May 19. The Vancouver Office remained closed as COVID-19 incidences remained high in the densely populated urban setting. It was also at this time that we began to focus on the preparations for our upcoming Annual General Meeting and Elections scheduled for the fall of 2020. The concern raised and discussed with the Board of Directors was the ability for the organization to conduct the necessary

business without being able to meet in-person. Although the natural approach would be to modify our engagement practices utilizing virtual options, our governing documents did not specify ways in which to actually do this. Darren Haines of Ratcliff & Company, BCAFN's legal counsel, was engaged to determine ways in which to proceed to make the required changes to allow for online assemblies and elections. Engagement processes with our BC First Nation leadership were implemented and followed up with a Special Chiefs Assembly on August 13 in which BCAFN received support for the resolution required to modify governance documents to allow for this new approach for assemblies and election voting. This has culminated in the first ever BCAFN Online Annual General Meeting and Online Voting for the positions of Regional Chief and Female Youth Representative.

For our administrative arm of operations, a key undertaking that has supported the transition and the work of the policy team, has been the modification and expansion of the communication strategy practices implemented to ensure a steady stream of information is provided to our BC First Nations leadership. There have been advancements in the manner in which we engage and share information through our Action Network platform along with the expansion of internet tools for accessible information. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our communications team spearheaded the development of the [fnlc.ca](https://fnlc.ca) website that shared information on resources available to our First Nation communities and members throughout BC. Also, to support our internal online assemblies and events, a separate website has been developed and utilized for the dissemination of information for our AGM: [events.bcafn.ca](https://events.bcafn.ca). This site will also be utilized for upcoming events, such as our Economic Development forums and women in Leadership Dialogue sessions. It is hoped that this stand-alone website dedicated to BCAFN events will allow for increased access to event materials.

In moving forward, BCAFN will continue to further streamline and modify our operations so that we are in the best positions to serve our First Nations members and leadership to maximum benefit. BC First Nations and the BCAFN are progressing through unprecedented times as many exciting opportunities have presented themselves through positive collaborative relationships with both provincial and federal governments. Significant progress has been made as a result of many legislative changes which places BC First Nations in a position to initiate positive change for their communities, especially in light of the passing of provincial Bill 41 Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Significant progress has been and

will continue to be achieved through the guidance of your leadership, through the mandates provided by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, through resolutions passed, and through the voices and stories shared by our people.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge my BCAFN staff. Through the upheaval that occurred in which the ways in which we engage to do our work have changed, they adapted and met the challenge. Although their work environment drastically altered in March of this year, this did not affect the high-level standard of work they produced. As I stated last year, for them, this is not simply

a job but an opportunity to support positive change for our First Nations now and into the future and in the midst of the chaos, this focus was never as important as it is now. For all of their hard work, long hours, and dedication, I am grateful.

On behalf of the BCAFN Administrative and Policy Staff, I look forward to working with our BC First Nations leadership as we continue to forge 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**

## BCAFN Staff



### VANESSA WEST

#### Chief of Staff

Vanessa 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.



### JAIME SANCHEZ

#### Special Advisor to the Regional Chief

Jaime has spent over 14 years working with First Nations in BC focused on building capacity, policy and strategic advice, natural resource management and negotiations with the Crown and industry. Some of his accomplishments include establishing a centralized mapping office, providing certified aboriginal land use planning training, co-designed and delivered a First Nations Referrals Officer Program, as well as assisting with multi-million-dollar negotiations for energy projects and reconciliation agreements.

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. His own family was displaced due to the military dictatorship in Chile in the 1970s, which has informed his drive and passion for seeking solutions to conflicts and restitution of historic wrongs.





### MAUREEN BUCHAN

#### Senior Policy Advisor

An Anishinaabe from Bearskin Lake First Nation in Northern Ontario, Maureen has over 16 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.

Maureen was formerly an Associate Faculty Member at the University of Victoria and has worked as a Policy Analyst and Specific Claims researcher for the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC). Recently, she was appointed by the BC Attorney General to the Law Foundation of BC Board of Governors. Other experience includes research work for various organizations including the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, and Musqueam Nation. As co-founder of Sparrow-Grant Consulting, Maureen has provided policy, political, and strategic advice for a number of BC First Nations.

A proud mother of two, Maureen currently resides on Musqueam Territory.



### 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. Katzie is a part of the linguistic family that is the known as the downriver dialect of Halkomelem, the language shared by the peoples residing on the rivers and shores of the Salish Sea. ḱíçəy means “the land of the moss,” and is also the name of the village site on the Fraser River near the present day community of Port Hammond.

Melanie 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. Melanie currently lives in Prince George, B.C. and joined the BCAFN team in May 2018.



### DEREK HANSOM

#### Economic Development Policy Analyst

Derek has spent the last twenty years working for non-profit Aboriginal organizations. Six years of this time was dedicated to engaging Aboriginal people and communities to restructure child and family services, listening to experiences and opinions to transform the way these services could be provided. He spent another six years working with a delegated aboriginal agency in different roles. Furthering his work in Community Development, Derek completed an MBA in Indigenous Business and Leadership and has completed a number of roles and projects that enhance the capacity of the economic landscape.

Derek is an elected Councillor for Skowkale First Nation, and holds the Health, Education and Child and Family Services portfolios. Prior to his move into politics, Derek sat on the Board of Sto:lo Service Agency as part of the first non-political group overseeing the agencies operations. He currently lives on Skowkale First Nation with his wife and three young daughters.



### VICTORIA AUSTIN

#### Executive Assistant to the Regional Chief

Victoria is of the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Nation from Hagwilget First Nation Government and Stellat'en First Nation. She has resided in the Prince George Area for 22 years and has worked with the urban aboriginal organization for 20 years. Victoria has thoroughly enjoyed her time at the BCAFN and networking with the 203 first nations in BC. As an added file to her work as Executive Assistant, the Emergency Response Administrative Coordinator position has taken much of her time in 2020 networking with others to keep apprised of the situation in BC. Victoria looks forward to continuing her work with the BCAFN and hopes normalcy comes soon for our nations amidst the COVID19 Pandemic.



### PATRICIA ROJAS

#### Regional Climate Change Coordinator

Patricia is the BCAFN's Regional Climate Change Coordinator. She has worked for over 15 years with indigenous peoples focusing on the protection of collective rights, social and environmental justice, and self-determination. Her experience providing technical and strategic support to indigenous communities includes: policy analysis and political advocacy related to mining, climate change and environmental issues; engagement with mining companies and governments; and, reform to Peru's water protection and governance laws. Other experience includes measuring carbon footprints, teaching and curriculum development.

She received a Master's Degree in Sustainability, with a speciality in Policy Analysis, from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (Barcelona, Spain); and a Master's Degree in Social Management from the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, and a Bachelor Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Cajamarca.

Patricia is a first-generation Canadian from Peru. She lives in the unceded territory of the T'exelc (Williams Lake Indian Band) with her husband and her two beautiful daughters.



### ANNETTE SCHROETER

#### Communications Officer

Annette 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. Most recently she worked for the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council as the Communications Coordinator and has also worked with First Nations communities in northern Ontario in a liaison capacity. Annette has a Master of 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.

For many years Annette has worked for First Nations in a variety of capacities, including: communications, project facilitation research, etc., Annette has demonstrated a passion and commitment for social justice and Indigenous rights.





### SARAH FROESE

#### Policy Analyst

Prior to joining the BCAFN Sarah completed her Masters in Public Policy and Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia. Here, 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. Her aim is to make a valuable contribution toward the goals of First Nations in BC and develop skills to continue serving our communities in the future.

Sarah grew up in a Mennonite community located in Treaty 1 territory before moving to Vancouver. She is now grateful to be residing on the unceded territories of the Xwməθkwəy̓ əm, Skwx̱ wú7mesh and Səlilwətał peoples. Sarah enjoys being active in her community and building relationships, listening and learning, and spending time outdoors.



### SAMANTHA SEYMOUR

#### Administrative Support Worker

Samantha Seymour has just started as the Administrative Support Worker at the BCAFN. She is a proud member of the Lheidli T'enneh Band and recently finished a position as a Community Engagement Intern for the Lheidli T'enneh Treaty team. Samantha attended school at Kelly Road Secondary and graduated in 2015. Her goal is to acquire more knowledge in administrative duties and further develop a work ethic that will benefit herself and her community.



### SOPHIA ILIOPULOS

#### Regional Water Coordinator

Prior to joining the BCAFN team, Sophia worked for McLeod Lake Indian Band as the Chief's Executive Assistant. This role introduced her to the multi-faceted aspects of First Nations governance including researching and writing policy, engagement and consultation, as well as negotiations and relationship-building with government and industry. She holds a double major in International Studies (Hons) and Political Science from the University of Northern British Columbia where she worked as a Research Assistant. This role helped her develop her Honours thesis which focused on decolonizing Canada's foreign and domestic policies and the MMIW.

Sophia was born, raised and currently resides on the Traditional Territory of Lheidli T'enneh Nation. Sophia enjoys spending time with her two dogs, Barb and Gloria, on the trails, cycle touring and making salvaged wood projects in her workshop.



### MAGGIE MILLS

#### Economic Development Policy Analyst

New to BCAFN, Maggie is a second-generation Danish settler, raised on Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas territories. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the University of Guelph and is currently working towards a Master of Environmental Studies degree from Wilfrid Laurier University. Her experience has involved partnering with Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario and the Northwest Territories to assess food security improvement projects, environmental quality and financial feasibility studies using two-eyed seeing approaches.

Maggie currently resides on Musqueam Territory and looks forward to contributing to BCAFN's objectives in the capacity of Economic Development Policy Analyst.



### 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 23 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. She brings with her a wealth of knowledge related to social issues and stigmas that Indigenous peoples have experienced on and off reserve, particularly related to the youth.

Joanna has also worked in a variety of physically demanding jobs such as tree plant nursery work, residential frame carpentry, and collecting pine seeds in the forests in Northern BC.

Joanna's hobbies consist of hiking, snow shoeing, snowboarding, camping, mountain biking and travelling the globe.



### MICHELLE CONNOLLY

#### Carbon Specialist

Michelle has a background in forest resilience and climate change and has implemented and overseen the strategic plan for a climate solutions research institute for the last four years. Michelle's research and high-level coordination skills have also been applied to protected areas planning and the conservation of species at risk.

She has worked with governments, communities, academia, non-governmental organizations, practitioner and professional networks and is working with the BCAFN on a climate change-related project. Michelle lives and works in the territory of the Lheidli T'enneh and is the daughter of immigrants from Ecuador and Ireland.







FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

And Independent Auditors’ Report thereon  
Year ended March 31, 2020

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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.



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*B.C. Regional Chief*



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*Chief of Staff*



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Canada  
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## 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, 2020
- the statement of operations and accumulated surplus for the year then ended
- the statement of changes in net financial assets (debt) 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, 2020 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.





### ***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'. The signature is written in a cursive, stylized font and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Chartered Professional Accountants

Prince George, Canada  
September 28, 2020



# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

## Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2020, with comparative information for 2019

	2020	2019
<b>Financial assets:</b>		
Cash	\$ 2,180,333	\$ 1,185,782
Accounts receivable (note 2)	686,098	1,061,804
	<hr/> 2,866,431	<hr/> 2,247,586
<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	617,811	661,811
Deferred revenue (note 3)	2,102,998	1,606,029
Long-term debt (note 4)	157,893	-
	<hr/> 2,878,702	<hr/> 2,267,840
Net financial debt	<hr/> (12,271)	<hr/> (20,254)
<b>Non-financial assets:</b>		
Tangible capital assets (note 5)	331,847	365,865
Prepaid expenses and deposits	19,069	17,840
	<hr/> 350,916	<hr/> 383,705
Subsequent event (note 12)		
<b>Accumulated surplus (note 6)</b>	<hr/> \$ 338,645	<hr/> \$ 363,451

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, 2020, with comparative information for 2019

	Budget	2020	2019
<b>Revenue:</b>			
Indigenous Services Canada ("ISC")	\$ 1,441,137	\$ 1,323,194	\$ 1,365,015
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation ("MIRR")	3,742,385	1,938,630	1,237,523
Assembly of First Nations ("AFN")	675,000	695,000	613,883
Other income	-	5,850	4,132
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs ("UBCIC")	192,199	99,000	56,100
Donations and sponsorship	-	3,560	352,826
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>6,050,721</b>	<b>4,065,234</b>	<b>3,629,479</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>			
Administration	1,336,716	1,473,681	1,317,244
Cultural events	54,744	67,200	312,693
Legislation	3,069,160	1,302,013	420,652
Policy development	1,590,101	1,247,146	1,402,408
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>6,050,721</b>	<b>4,090,040</b>	<b>3,452,997</b>
<b>Annual (deficit) surplus</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (24,806)</b>	<b>\$ 176,482</b>
<b>Accumulated surplus, beginning of year</b>	<b>363,451</b>	<b>363,451</b>	<b>186,969</b>
<b>Accumulated surplus, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 363,451</b>	<b>\$ 338,645</b>	<b>\$ 363,451</b>

Segmented information (note 7)

See accompanying notes to financial statements.



# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

## Statement of Change in Net Financial Debt

Year ended March 31, 2020, with comparative information for 2019

	Budget	2020	2019
Annual (debt) surplus	\$ -	\$ (24,806)	\$ 176,482
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(2,500)	(39,101)	(326,135)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	-	73,119	45,798
	(2,500)	34,018	(280,337)
Use of prepaid expenses and deposits	-	(1,229)	(17,840)
	-	(1,229)	(17,840)
Change in net financial debt	(2,500)	7,983	(121,695)
Net financial assets (debt), beginning of year	(20,254)	(20,254)	101,441
Net financial debt, end of year	\$ (22,754)	\$ (12,271)	\$ (20,254)

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

## Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2020, with comparative information for 2019

	2020	2019
Cash provided by (used in):		
<b>Operating activities:</b>		
Annual (debt) surplus	\$ (24,806)	\$ 176,482
Items not involving cash:		
Amortization	73,119	45,798
	48,313	222,280
Change in non-cash operating assets and liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	375,706	(852,875)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(44,000)	250,037
Deferred revenue	496,969	640,052
Prepaid expenses and deposits	(1,229)	(17,840)
	875,759	241,654
<b>Capital activities:</b>		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(39,101)	(326,135)
	(39,101)	(326,135)
<b>Financing activities:</b>		
Proceeds on long-term debt	186,000	-
Repayment of long-term debt	(28,107)	-
Increase (decrease) in cash	994,551	(84,481)
Cash, beginning of year	1,185,782	1,270,263
Cash, end of year	\$ 2,180,333	\$ 1,185,782

See accompanying notes to financial statements.



# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2020

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

### 1. Basis of presentation and significant accounting policies:

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

#### (a) Revenue recognition:

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

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

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

#### (b) Deferred revenue:

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

# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2020

## 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) Financial instruments:

Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that BCAFN is not exposed to significant interest, currency, or credit risks arising from financial instruments. The fair values of financial instruments approximate their carrying values, unless otherwise noted.



# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2020

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

### (f) Pension plan:

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

## 2. Accounts receivable:

Accounts receivable by funding source is summarized as follows:

	2020	2019
AFN	\$ 341,400	\$ 156,616
MIRR	-	670,333
Province of British Columbia	212,000	-
UBCIC	-	121,832
GST rebate receivable	123,635	94,568
Other	9,063	1,000
Due from employees	-	2,684
Due from Regional Chief	-	14,771
	<b>\$ 686,098</b>	<b>\$ 1,061,804</b>

## 3. Deferred revenue:

Deferred revenue consists of the following:

	2020	2019
ISC	\$ 166,242	\$ 350,727
MIRR	1,887,756	1,211,402
UBCIC	-	43,900
AFN	49,000	-
	<b>\$ 2,102,998</b>	<b>\$ 1,606,029</b>

# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2020

## 4. Long-term debt:

	2020	2019
Royal Bank of Canada term loan, repayable in monthly instalments of \$3,485 including interest at 4.65% per annum, maturing May 2021.	\$ 157,893	\$ -
	\$ 157,893	\$ -

In the event that the bank renews the term of the loan, principal repayments over the next 5 years and thereafter are approximately as follows:

2021	\$ 35,223
2022	36,897
2023	38,649
2024	40,485
2025	6,639
	\$ 157,893



# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2020

## 5. Tangible capital assets:

2020	Leasehold improvements	Furniture & equipment	Computer equipment	Building	Total
<b>Cost:</b>					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 55,358	\$ 55,498	\$ 190,134	\$ 188,143	\$ 489,133
Additions	15,188	4,126	16,679	3,108	39,101
Balance, end of year	70,546	59,624	206,813	191,251	528,234
<b>Accumulated amortization:</b>					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 6,595	\$ 20,922	\$ 85,477	\$ 10,274	\$ 123,268
Amortization	10,490	7,443	37,270	17,916	73,119
Balance, end of year	17,085	28,365	122,747	28,190	196,387
Net book value	\$ 53,461	\$ 31,259	\$ 84,066	\$ 163,061	\$ 331,847
<b>2019</b>					
<b>Cost:</b>					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ -	\$ 36,822	\$ 126,176	\$ -	\$ 162,998
Additions	55,358	18,676	63,958	188,143	326,135
Balance, end of year	55,358	55,498	190,134	188,143	489,133
<b>Accumulated amortization:</b>					
Balance, beginning of year	\$ -	\$ 14,372	\$ 63,098	\$ -	\$ 77,470
Amortization	6,595	6,550	22,379	10,274	45,798
Balance, end of year	6,595	20,922	85,477	10,274	123,268
Net book value	\$ 48,763	\$ 34,576	\$ 104,657	\$ 177,869	\$ 365,865

# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2020

## 6. Accumulated surplus:

Accumulated surplus consists of individual fund surplus and reserves as follows:

	2020	2019
Unrestricted surplus (deficit)	\$ 6,798	\$ (2,414)
Invested in tangible capital assets	331,847	365,865
	<b>\$ 338,645</b>	<b>\$ 363,451</b>

## 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, 2020

### 7. Segmented information (continued):

2020	Administration	Cultural events	Legislation	Policy development	Total
<b>Revenues:</b>					
MIRR	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 780,732	\$ 1,157,898	\$ 1,938,630
ISC	811,716	29,744	481,734	-	1,323,194
AFN	570,000	25,000	-	100,000	695,000
UBCIC	-	-	99,000	-	99,000
Donation revenue	-	3,560	-	-	3,560
Other income	300	-	-	5,550	5,850
Total revenues	1,382,016	58,304	1,361,466	1,263,448	4,065,234
<b>Expenses:</b>					
Salaries, benefits and consultants	667,269	11,916	306,804	382,865	1,368,854
Advisory, technical and professional	62,590	34,265	408,587	256,030	761,472
Office	142,917	-	21,110	249,804	413,831
Travel	195,716	-	100,359	100,085	396,160
Amortization	73,119	-	-	-	73,119
Meetings and assemblies	332,070	21,019	465,153	258,362	1,076,604
Total expenses	1,473,681	67,200	1,302,013	1,247,146	4,090,040
Annual surplus	\$ (91,665)	\$ (8,896)	\$ 59,453	\$ 16,302	\$ (24,806)

## BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2020

### 7. Segmented information (continued):

2019	Administration	Cultural Events	Legislation	Policy Development	Total
<b>Revenues:</b>					
MIRR	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 313,332	\$ 924,191	\$ 1,237,523
ISC	811,715	45,256	54,308	453,736	1,365,015
AFN	496,089	10,000	-	107,794	613,883
UBCIC	-	-	56,100	-	56,100
Donation revenue	352,826	-	-	-	352,826
Other income	204	-	-	3,928	4,132
Total revenues	1,660,834	55,256	423,740	1,489,649	3,629,479
<b>Expenses:</b>					
Salaries, benefits and consultants	585,389	1,800	114,950	308,802	1,010,941
Advisory, technical and professional	97,032	45,791	118,416	464,359	725,598
Office	168,668	257,436	2,012	218,472	646,588
Travel	157,405	7,204	28,568	231,368	424,545
Amortization	45,797	-	-	-	45,797
Meetings and assemblies	262,953	462	156,706	179,407	599,528
Total expenses	1,317,244	312,693	420,652	1,402,408	3,452,997
Annual surplus	\$ 343,590	\$ (257,437)	\$ 3,088	\$ 87,241	\$ 176,482



# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Notes to Financial Statements (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2020

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## 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 \$55,401 (2019 - \$31,405).

## 9. Employee remuneration:

For the fiscal year ending 2020, BCAFN paid total remuneration including taxable benefits of \$812,183 to 7 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% (March 31, 2020 - 4.45%, in aggregate). The credit facility was not utilized as at March 31, 2020.

## 11. Comparative information:

Certain 2019 comparative figures have been reclassified to conform with the financial statement presentation adopted for the current year. These changes do not affect prior year annual surplus.

## 12. Subsequent event:

The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. This has resulted in the Canadian and Provincial governments enacting emergency measures to combat the spread of the virus. Subsequent to March 31, 2020, 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.

## Upcoming events

### NOVEMBER

Assembly of First Nations National Climate Strategy Webinar  
Online November 20

Assembly of First Nations 2020 Water Summit  
Online via Zoom November 24

Beyond COVID-19: First Nations Leaders in the Sustainable Economy  
Online via Zoom November 25

### DECEMBER

AFN Annual General Assembly 2020  
Online December 8 & 9

Find more information and updates on BCAFN events on the  
new BCAFN Events Website at [events.bcafn.ca](https://events.bcafn.ca)

Go to the Assembly of First Nations website [afn.ca](https://afn.ca) for AFN events

## Contact us

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**British Columbia  
Assembly of First Nations**



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