



BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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Newsletter

B C A s s e m b l y o f F i r s t N a t i o n s

Message from Regional Chief Terry Teegee

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

Hadih! The summer of 2020 has been challenging on many different fronts. We began with all the challenges of the continuing pandemic, including a lot of pushback on closed communities by our non-Indigenous neighbours. We have seen grandmothers in Haida Gwaii harassed by rich tourists. But we have also seen respectful settlers asking for more information, which led the FNLC to build a full list of closed communities accessible by anyone.

The murder of George Floyd by police in the US sparked protests across the continent. At my home in Lheidli T'enneh Territory, there was a large protest in downtown Prince George. It moved me to see Black, Indigenous and People of Colour come together in solidarity against racism in policing. I was able to bring our concerns to the House of Commons, and we are seeing more and more calls for a rethink on how our society deals with public issues like mental illness.

We also saw another report showing how open-net salmon farming is dooming our wild salmon to extinction by spreading deadly parasites and other pathogens. The First Nations Leadership Council convened a panel and presented an online press conference on the issue, and we continue to push for replacement of all open-net pens to land-based aquaculture systems.

A few months ago a disgusting story of racial profiling in BC's health care system was uncovered. Indigenous people are so often denied or experience limited/poor services based on racist assumptions; now we have Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond leading an inquiry into racism in healthcare. As I write this, she is still collecting stories. I am hopeful that this will lead to real change and respect for our people when they are most vulnerable. The summer of 2020 has been hard. But I also see progress towards our goals, and that's what makes it possible for me to get up in the morning and continue fighting for the rights of our people.

At this time we are fighting two pandemics, and unfortunately one is a contributing factor to the other. The skyrocketing drug overdose deaths overshadow the COVID-19 fatalities in BC, and sadly the work we've done in response to the pandemic has contributed to the drastic increase in overdose deaths. If you are using, or you know someone who is using illicit substances, practice and advocate for use in the presence of someone else. Supervised drug injection sites or drug overdose prevention sites throughout B.C. can check substances for toxicity. Please do not use alone and spread the word. We need to advocate change in policies and laws - decriminalize drugs, provision of a safe supply for users and erasure of the stigma surrounding substance use. I would like to send my condolences to all families and communities that have been impacted by this terrible crisis.

Stay healthy, stay safe and look after each other. We will get through this together.
Mussi Cho!



Economic Development

Along with devastating health implications, COVID-19 has shaken the status-quo of local, regional, national and global economies, supply chains and international relations, causing unprecedented economic tension and uncertainty. Those who were living in the economic margins were hit the hardest by the economic downturn; namely, First Nations in BC who face systemic barriers to accessing markets and capital. It remains to be seen how economies will recover. However, this lapse in “business as usual,” combined with the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (“the Act”) puts First Nations in BC in a unique position of being able to increase their economic participation in a post-COVID world, if recovery is done in congruency with reconciliation and the Act.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic struck the west coast, BCAFN has been active in advocating for resources First Nations businesses, First Nations economic development as a lever for recovery and has been ensuring that adapted community concerns are encompassed in the BCAFN Economic Development Strategy. Several ministerial meetings have taken place at the provincial and federal levels to press for supports specific to First Nations business operators, including fishers. Regional Chief Terry Teegee was able to convene the Assembly of First Nations National Chiefs’ Committee on Economic Development in order to discuss economic impacts of the pandemic to First Nations across Canada and various mechanisms for working collaboratively.

BCAFN hosted a province-wide Black Books distribution webinar after 3 in-person sessions prior to COVID-19 to ensure that communities have the knowledge to use the economic development toolkits. Following that, 8 online regional engagement sessions, along with a survey, took place in June to elicit economic development priorities from our membership in order to reflect those needs in BCAFN’s Economic Development Strategy, in light of COVID-19. A ground-truthing exercise was held virtually to ensure that the recommendations for development that were expressed during those sessions were adequately accounted for. BCAFN looks forward to updating our membership on these economic development activities as the Regional Chief advocates for expedited economic reconciliation in light of the pandemic.

Margaret Mills, Economic Development Policy Analyst

Non-medical Cannabis Legalization and Regulation

The BCAFN supports First Nations’ numerous, diverse and self-determined pathways of governance and economic development with respect to cannabis. While federal and provincial legislation continues to ignore First Nations jurisdiction regarding cannabis, many First Nations and First Nations business owners are demonstrating leadership and innovation when it comes to launching new businesses and partnerships, and developing legal and regulatory frameworks that fit community values and needs.

Many First Nations are choosing to engage in the federal and provincial regulatory frameworks for various reasons. The spirit of entrepreneurship and community-mindedness, and tangible economic benefits these businesses bring to community are worth celebrating! We also acknowledge that some have chosen this route for pragmatic reasons – knowing that exercising certain rights associated with cannabis cultivation, processing, distribution, processing, and governance comes with risks. We support First Nations governing bodies that have “occupied the field” with respect to their Nation’s cannabis jurisdiction. Future legislative changes to federal and provincial legislative frameworks must empower First Nations to choose their route to cannabis governance and economic development that is unencumbered by risks and the potential infringement of their rights and title.

With this in mind, the BCAFN participates in the AFN Chiefs Committee on Cannabis (CCC), which is Co-chaired by Regional Chief Terry Teegee. This group is mandated to work for legislative change at the federal level that would recognize First Nations jurisdiction over cannabis. BCAFN is also involved at the provincial level with the FNLC-BC Cannabis Working Group. In this forum we advocate for progressive policy change that will enable economic development and recovery in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as for progress on jurisdictional issues and revenue-sharing. Chief Harvey McLeod serves as a BCAFN regional representative on both of these groups.

The provincial working group is monitoring developments towards Indigenous branding and shelf space, direct-delivery, and farm-to-gate policy frameworks for BC, Section 119 agreements, upcoming labour market research, and enforcement activities undertaken by the Community Safety Unit; and is working towards a strategic partnership initiative with the federal government to provide further opportunities.

The BCAFN is developing a toolkit for First Nations cannabis governance and economic development, which will serve as a valuable resource for those who wish to understand more about engaging in this new and evolving economic sector.

Sarah Froese, Policy Analyst



FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



First Nations Children & Families

BCAFN, with our partner organizations have been collectively working to address the needs of communities with respect to the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic will have directly on our communities and families. Specific issues and resources that have been identified include:

- access to prevention and respite services for children and families in need;
- emergency funding allocations to address the needs of children and families;
- youth and young adults who are currently in care, or who have recently aged out of care, and high-risk youth;
- children and youth with special needs;
- food security;
- access to Justice, including family violence services and support and access to mediation and alternative court processes during court closures;
- access between children and in care and their families during the pandemic;
- education concerns and needs;
- MCFD communications procedures; and,
- ongoing implementation of *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families*, 2019.

The Children and Families Tripartite Working Group continues to meet and work on the reform of the child welfare system. We continue to advocate for appropriate funding support for the implementation of the Act as well as advancing a BC-specific process as it relates to the resumption of our jurisdiction over our children and families. The TWG have sent out a survey to Chiefs and leaders to gather input and direction on how to implement the Act in partnership with Canada and BC. Further we are planning a Townhall Session with First Nations on Tuesday September 15 via Zoom. We encourage you to complete the survey and attend the townhall. Further information is forthcoming.

Maureen Buchan, Senior Policy Advisor

BCAFN and COVID-19

The COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) pandemic has profoundly impacted our work at the BCAFN and Regional Chief Terry Teegee and the staff quickly pivoted as they have been attending and holding meetings online to make sure the work in the many priority areas continues. It was critical when lock-down was put into place in March that information about the governments' response be communicated quickly. The BCAFN worked with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) to communicate information relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. Health information relevant to the virus is found at the FNHA [website](#). Information about community closures, resources and supports is found on the the new FNLC [website](#).

In addition, BCAFN has been sending out a weekly updated bulletin with helpful news, links to supports and resources and more about the pandemic to our email lists. News and information is also shared on the BCAFN [Facebook page](#) and [website](#). First Nations in BC have responded well to the emergency as, to date, most cases in or near communities have recovered.

If you would like to receive the BCAFN COVID-19 weekly bulletin, contact [Annette Schroeter](#)





BRITISH COLUMBIA
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Are you planning to travel beautiful British Columbia?

Some First Nations communities are closed to visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Check before you go!

Go to the First Nations Leadership Council website

fnlc.ca

for a list of closed communities.

Be respectful and help to create a safe environment for everyone.



Justen Peters BCAFN Male Youth Representative



Jayde Duranleau BCAFN Female Youth Representative

BCAFN Youth Update

In October 2019, the BCAFN welcomed two new youth representatives; Jayde Duranleau from McCleod Lake Indian Band, and Justen Peters from the Okanagan Indian Band. Both Jayde and Justen are aspiring young leaders who have shown great initiative in being involved with opportunities offered by the BCAFN via meetings and engagements with federal, provincial, and local levels of Indigenous organizations and governments.

National AFN Youth Council and national AFN conference

In December 2019, Jayde and Justen traveled to Ottawa, Ontario for the national AFN Special Chiefs Assembly for their first meeting with the AFN National Youth Council (NYC). The NYC is made up of two youth representatives from each of the AFN regions and has the mandate to advocate for issues concerning First Nations youth from across Canada. Following the conclusion of the NYC meeting, the youth representatives sat in on the Special Chief Committee meetings, then attended the regular SCA conference. Jayde and Justen commenced their time in Ottawa by facilitating a blanketing ceremony for the Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould which was organized by B.C. and Yukon First Nations leadership to honour her tenacity, integrity, and courage that she has embodied in her professional career advocating for Indigenous peoples through leadership in government.

Business Forum Youth Panel in Prince George

In February, 2020, the BCAFN hosted their Business Forum in Prince George where they held a Youth Leadership panel made up of young First Nations entrepreneurs and leaders from across BC. The youth panel was moderated by Justen Peters, and Jayde Duranleau was accompanied by three other speakers on the panel who were Ryan Oliverarius, Okanagan Indian Band Councilor; Nolan McAlister, Orenda Films; and Taryn Hiltergerke, Fine Feathers Vintage Clothing. The topics the panel offered were their experiences of starting and operating a small business, technology and media, being

in leadership positions within First Nations governments, and their personal life stories and lessons. There was also a strong youth presence outside of the panel with presentation by Trevor Jang of the First Nations Technology Council, as well as Chad Day of Taltahn Central government. The panel and presentations were well received and one of the main messages heard was the need for their to be more capacity to help keep young Indigenous leaders connected and working together.

Youth Engagement during times of the Covid-19 pandemic

Jayde and Justen have been meeting regularly with the AFN NYC as well as the B.C. United Aboriginal Youth Collective (UAYC) via online zoom calls. The main topics of discussion are how to engage with youth during the pandemic, dealing with mental health during these times, and seeking what skills might be helpful for future development. Regional engagement with youth via zoom may be the best option for the foreseeable future with respects to communities with visitor restrictions. The youth reps are working with the UAYC to work on how to deliver future engagements. Given the recent trends, training on health, technology, and communications are shaping up to be valuable skills for youth to have; also, food security and preserving Indigenous knowledge from elders is crucial for the wellbeing of all of us moving forward.

Jayde and Justen would like to thank the First Nation leadership of B.C. for all of the hard work you do for our peoples. We have been very fortunate to be given these positions of opportunity, and we would like to raise our hands to the communities across B.C. Please reach out to us, we want to see more youth get involved in leadership positions across the many sectors that effect our nations. We want to hear the youth's voice, and walk together with them as we are the future leaders. Stay strong and we share our thanks and gratitude.



Louisa Housty Jones BCAFN Women's Representative

Womens' Representative Update

The BCAFN is committed to supporting the leadership, wellbeing, safety, and security of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. At the 2020 BCAFN Special Chiefs Assembly the Chiefs-in-Assembly supported the 2020 iteration of the Indigenous Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples' Declaration. As a living document, the 2020 Declaration builds upon the work of the 2017 Declaration. The Declaration can continue to be shaped through discussion and feedback processes surrounding the Dialogue Sessions.

The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directed the BCAFN to develop a strategic plan for addressing the Declaration and other issues that impact Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. This work is currently in preliminary stages. Draft material will be deliberated on at the next Women in Dialogue Session targeted for early 2021. In the meantime, BCAFN will continue to advocate in the areas outlined in the Declaration and BCAFN Resolutions and work collaboratively with organizations and individuals who share the BCAFN's goals.

One key area of advocacy remains the implementation of the 231 Calls for Justice made in the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S Final Report. On June 4, 2020 BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee released a statement to mark the first anniversary of the release of the National Inquiry Final Report. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly elected Women's Representative, Louisa Housty-Jones, Heiltsuk Nation Councillor represents BCAFN on the AFN Women's Council, which also released a statement on the first anniversary of the National Inquiry Final Report. The BCAFN is disappointed by the lack of action, true partnership with Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, survivors, and families, and transparency on the National Action Plan. While the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed progress toward a National Action Plan, it has further highlighted the need for greater action to address gender-based violence and structural barriers to wellbeing, safety, and access to justice.

The AFN Women's Council is planning for upcoming engagement sessions on the National Action Plan, and also met with Minister Bennett on July 20, 2020 to express concerns and recommendations around how the National Action Plan is being developed.

The BCAFN continues to advocate with the federal and provincial governments that the development of a National Action Plan must:

- a. Be led by Indigenous women and two-spirit people, survivors, and families, and their voices must be at the centre;
- b. Respect and uphold the nation-to-nation and government-to-government relationships between First Nations and the Crown as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- c. Take immediate action on the CFJs while continuing to build strong partnerships and resourcing First Nations governing bodies and organizations to plan for and implement the CFJs;
- d. Be accountable and transparent about all processes regarding the National Action Plan, including commitment of the required financial resources;
- e. Consider the many recommendations, reports, and engagements that took place before the National Inquiry.

The issue of MMIWG2S is not new, and the voices of survivors, families, and advocates that have spoken out for many years must be upheld.

While we have been advocating regarding many pressing issues, we also realize that the responsibility for change starts with each of us in the realms where we live, work, and play. That's why we've initiated a review of BCAFN's governance and internal policy documents as per Resolution 2020/11 Support for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People Declaration and Strategy. The goal of this review is to ensure BCAFN's policies are inclusive of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and promote an organization that is free from gendered and lateral violence, and discrimination.

BCAFN is also working on an organizational framework to support the implementation of gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) in all areas of our mandate. GBA+ is viewed as a crucial analytical process for organizations who are responsible for designing and implementing initiatives that impact diverse populations. 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.

Louisa Housty-Jones has also supported the development of the Heiltsuk Women's Declaration, a demonstration of the internal work the Heiltsuk Nation is undertaking to uphold the women in their community.



Special Chiefs Assembly Nanaimo March 2020

Special Chiefs Assembly Nanaimo - March 2020

The BCAFN brought together Chiefs and leaders from across British Columbia for two days this week for the 16th Annual Special Chiefs Assembly. Featured speakers at the event included, Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould, National Chief Perry Bellegarde (AFN), Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada, Quebec Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, Yukon Regional Chief Kluane Adamek, and many more. Key discussions were held on issues in justice, fisheries, climate emergency, implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, education and skills training, economic development, cannabis, etc.

BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee stated, "This annual event is an opportunity for British Columbia leadership to assemble, provide updates, hold discussions and set priorities and direction on urgent issues affecting First Nations peoples. We hold up our hands to our leaders who are working so hard for their communities and bringing their voice to these gatherings to provide all of us who attend with guidance and the wisdom of their collective experience."

During the event Regional Chief Terry Teegee provided drums as special gifts to Kukpi7 Ron Ignace and Regional Chief Kluane Adamek for their exceptional work on behalf of, and for the BCAFN in the areas of First Nations languages and climate change respectively.



Special Chiefs Assembly August 2020 Online - Zoom August 2020

The BCAFN held an online Special Chief's Assembly this month (August). The meeting addressed the changes required to the BCAFN's Governance Manual to ensure that the upcoming election for Regional Chief, 2 Board of Directors and 1 Female Youth Representative scheduled for November 17 - 18, 2020, will be carried out via an online, clear and transparent process due to the realities of COVID-19.

"Since face-to-face meetings are unlikely to happen any time soon, it's essential that the BC Assembly of First Nations gets our electoral system right to respond to these challenging times," said BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

Ron Laufer, BCAFN Electoral Officer engaged chiefs to determine how best to run an election that abides by the requirements of social distancing. Based on information provided during the engagement process, changes to the BCAFN's policies were recommended by Mr. Laufer and Darren Haines, BCAFN Legal Counsel.

During the Special Chiefs Assembly, First Nations leadership from across BC reviewed details of the proposed changes, including security measures in place for online voting, and approved the proposed regulations.

The new regulations provide guidance for how to hold online elections during a public health emergency and allow for instant runoff voting through ranked ballots that mimics BCAFN's election process. The BCAFN Regional Chief election will be held using the new regulations on November 17 & 18th, 2020. Go to [here](#) for updates on the upcoming AGM.



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

17th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

November 17-18th, 2020

ONLINE Via Zoom

IMPORTANT - SAVE THE DATE

To: All BC Chiefs and Delegates
From: BCAFN Board of Directors

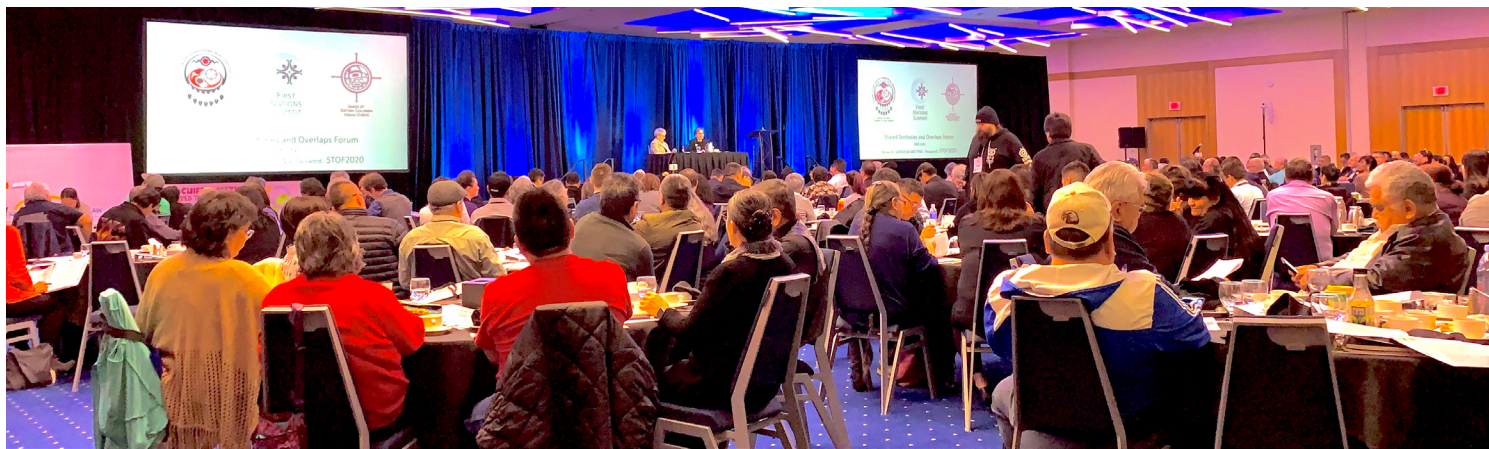
The BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) will be hosting a the 17th Annual General Meeting on November 17-18th, 2020 via Zoom.

At this Annual General Meeting, the BCAFN will be holding **ONLINE ELECTIONS** for:

1. Regional Chief of British Columbia – 3 year term
2. BCAFN Board Director Member – 3 year term
3. BCAFN Board Director Member – 3 year term
4. BCAFN Female Youth Representative – 3 year term



Special Chiefs Assembly Online (Zoom)



FNLC Shared Territories and Overlaps Meeting March 2020

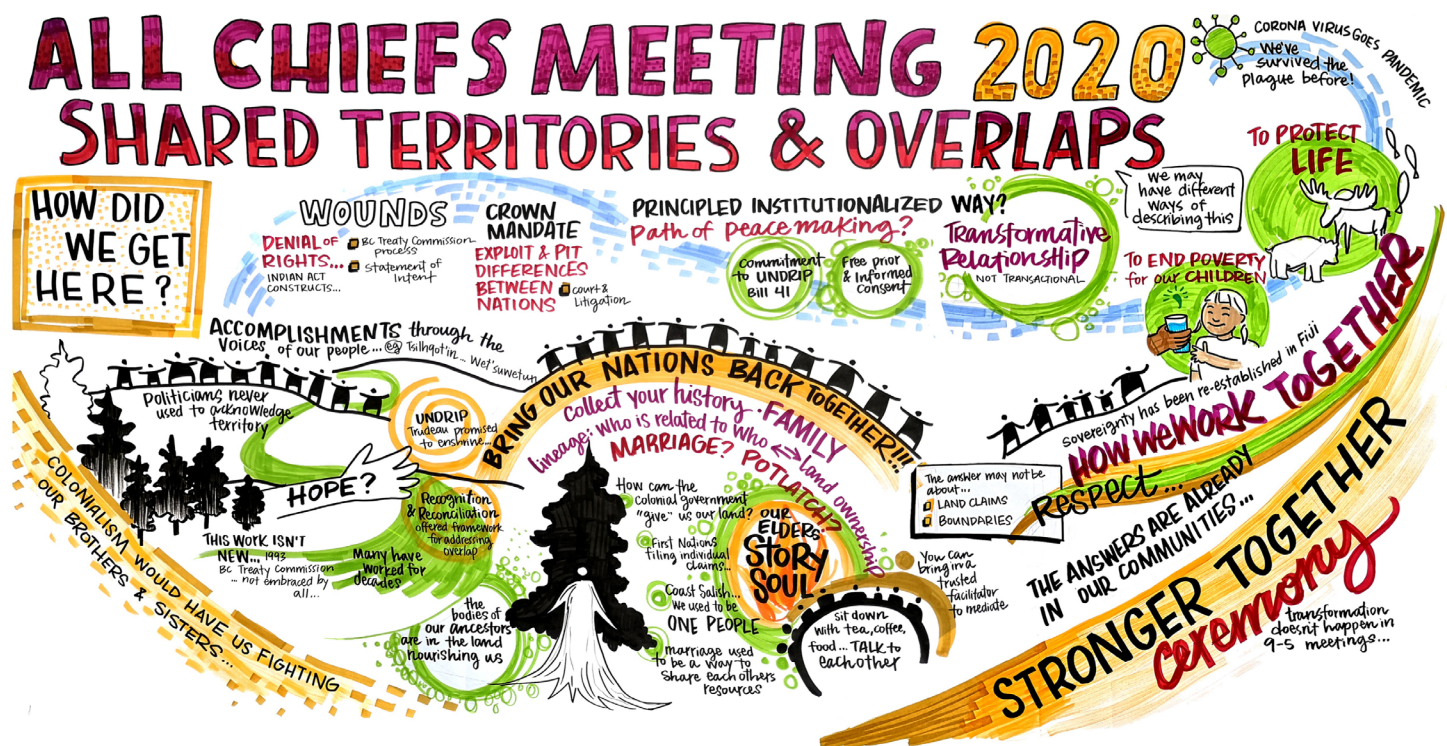
Shared Territories and Overlaps

Thank you to all who joined the 2020 FNLC Shared Territories and Overlaps Forum in the Xwməθkwəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Skwx̱w.7mesh (Squamish) and Səlil̓x̱ lwətaʔ/Sel̓x̱ lwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Territories (Vancouver) or via livestream. The objective of this meeting was to come together for a solutions-oriented, strategic conversation on shared territories and overlaps to continue the dialogue and build on work started in March 2014. This work is mandated by resolutions passed by the Chiefs at each of the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and BC Assembly of First Nations' assemblies.

While the evolving situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic meant that we were not able to gather for the full three days, it was nonetheless an important springboard for more solutions-oriented dialogue.

The First Nations Leadership Council is currently planning for how to continue this dialogue virtually, and will provide an opportunity for follow up on the March 2020 forum and input on the next forum shortly.

Sarah Froese, Policy Analyst



Shared Territories and Overlaps (March 2020) Graphic Recordings



Languages

The BCAFN is working with the First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs as the First Nations Leadership Council, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and the First Peoples Cultural Council to see First Nations languages supported in provincial legislation as mandated via resolution.

These resolutions direct the FNLC to partner with FNEC and the FPCC to establish a BC Languages Legislation Working Group. The organizations will be seeking the co-development and implementation of legislation to support the revitalization and protection of Indigenous languages in BC, including as a first step, the implementation of a BC First Nations Languages Legislation Working Group.

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 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 established a decade of Indigenous Languages, 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 through the International Year of Indigenous Languages. We hope to build upon the Government of BC's historic investment of \$50 million in Indigenous languages, and the passage of federal Bill C-91 An Act respecting Indigenous languages.

Sarah Froese, Policy Analyst

Check out the BC Indigenous Languages Legislation: Draft Discussion Paper (2019) [here](#)



BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES LEGISLATION

Draft Discussion Paper

Climate Emergency

Scientists called July 2020 (tied with July 2016) as the second-hottest month ever recorded on earth since records began in 1880. Consecutive high temperatures show a dire upwards warming trend for the earth that has caused two Canadian ice caps to completely vanish from the Arctic this year, two years earlier than predicted. Locally, the fast warming in spring put more than ten First Nations on alert for flooding. The recent wildfire events in the south of the province have impacted ?Akisqnuq First Nation and Osoyoos First Nation. The warming climate is also a contributing factor in the dismally low returns of Fraser River salmon this year, the worst return since records began. Contrary to what is needed our human-made GHG emissions are trending up by 21% between 1990 and 2018, and in BC, by approximately 14%. The challenge to reduce GHG emissions while preparing communities to adapt to climate change is huge and a test for all levels of government.

BCAFN continues working with the FNLC to accomplish the mandate given to us by the Chiefs-in-Assembly. We have engaged provincial and federal governments through the FNLC–CleanBC Technical Working Group and the Joint Committee on Climate Action (JCCA) respectively, to advocate for First Nations in BC to be equitable partners in the processes and the opportunities arising from the implementation of the CleanBC plan and the Pan-Canadian Framework. We have also advocated for the inclusion of First Nations in the clean energy sector to become energy self-sufficient and support economic independence. Our work also encompasses monitoring upcoming changes to legislation, climate policies and programs while advocating for early and deep engagement of all First Nations in BC, and to ensure that such changes reflect their unique vision and worldviews, centered in respect for their Rights, Title and Treaty Rights. During the COVID-19 pandemic our advocacy includes the need for clean post-pandemic recovery investments that reflect our collective challenge to address climate change, the health and healing of Mother Earth, and the well-being and aspirations of First Nations.

We are also continuing our work to develop the *First Nations Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan* in collaboration with our FNLC partners. Based on the results gathered from the climate survey last year, we are working on the first draft that will be the starting point for initial discussions with BCAFN members. We have also been supporting community-based climate actions and facilitating information sharing with First Nations by reviewing, analyzing and preparing briefing notes and email updates on climate change at all levels - international, national and provincial- including climate initiatives, scientific reports and funding opportunities. This information is being shared through BCAFN social media, website and email lists. Contact Patricia Rojas at if you would like more information or to be added to a distribution list.

Patricia Rojas, Regional Climate Change Coordinator



Sophia Iliopoulos Regional Water Coordinator

New BCAFN Staff Member

The BCAFN is pleased to welcome a new staff member, Sophia Iliopoulos as the Regional Water Coordinator, who will be working with our policy team as well as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Water Team on projects and initiatives in B.C.

Water is sacred to First Nations and vital for human survival. Our ecosystems and livelihood are dependent on this limited resource. BCAFN seeks to further advocate for and assist B.C. First Nations communities in strengthening their inherent jurisdiction over their waters in addition to ensuring that all reserves have access to clean drinking water.

Some of the initiatives that we will be focusing on for 2020/21 is working with the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) and the provincial government to review and reform the Water Sustainability Act. Specific recommendations have been provided to the province from FNFC and supported by way of resolution from BCAFN including, but not limited to, the development of a First Nations Water Caucus, the implementation of a Water Sustainability Fund, as well as the support of regional advisory workshops for First Nations in B.C. These recommendations have been identified as key initiatives that are necessary in order for a bilateral governance and management process to meaningfully proceed. The BCAFN will be working with FNFC to determine the structure and scope of these various recommendations with further input and participation from communities across B.C.

On a national level, AFN has focused on repealing the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act (SDWFNA). By way of resolution, AFN has called for the SDWFNA to be replaced and is seeking input from First Nations across Canada regarding how to move beyond the act and proceed with a First Nations-led process. This engagement process will establish a framework for new legislation that will be co-developed with the Government of Canada. Sophia will be facilitating regional engagement sessions to assist AFN with this important process.

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Upcoming Events

November 2020
BCAFN Annual General Meeting
Online November 17 & 18th

BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER

Have health related
questions about
COVID-19? Visit
the **First Nations
Health Authority**
website

fnha.ca



British Columbia
Assembly of First Nations

Looking for
resources, supports
& news? Visit the
**First Nations
Leadership Council**
new website

fnlc.ca

"Please listen to and heed our hardworking health professionals' and authorities' advice for good health practices. Mussi Cho!," *Regional Chief Terry Teegee.*

BCAFN website at
bcfn.ca
Check it out!