

# Upper Nicola Band Annual Report 24-25

23 April 2022



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# ANNUAL REPORT 2024—2025

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I am proud to present this year's summary of the work carried out on your behalf in all of our departments. Upper Nicola is a growing community, and we have seen tremendous achievements in all our work over the past year! Our discipline and resilience have prepared us for the moment we find ourselves in, one where political turmoil has taken over much of the world and increasingly, we see our values and systems held up as models for sustainable growth. Over the past year, like the year before I have travelled often to participate in local, regional and national meetings to discuss the many pressing issues of the day, all of them leading back to our community in one form or another. There are literally too many topics to cover in these remarks so I will focus on a couple of the key initiatives I have been involved in over the past year.

#### IAMC-TMX

As the Okanagan Representative on the Indigenous

Advisory Monitoring Committee – Trans Mountain Pipeline, I attend regular meetings with the whole committee on a bi-monthly basis and may attend sub-committee meetings more frequently. At the IAMC-TMX we are tasked with providing advice to regulators and monitoring the operation of the pipeline. This committee has 13 Indigenous Representatives and 6 Federal Representatives. The Committee discusses a range of topics that are primarily focused on the review and monitoring of environmental, safety and socioeconomic issues that arise as a result of the ongoing operation of the pipeline. While the Government of Canada committed to the implementation of the committee prior to construction of the pipeline which included a commitment to fund the committee for the entire lifespan of the project including operation, the committee must continually meet key performance indicators and seek annual budget approval. This past year the primary focus of the committee has been on defining long-term goals and objectives of the committee with a focus on development of Indigenous led regulatory systems to oversee the terrestrial and marine environments affected by the pipeline.

#### AFN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure

I was appointed to the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure as the BC Region Political Representative by BC Regional Chief Terry Teegee in 2023. As the BC representative I attend semi-annual meetings which normally coincide with the general assemblies of the AFN which are held twice per year. During these meetings we discuss the implementation of resolutions that are passed by chiefs in assembly. We also meet on an as-needed basis to discuss urgent issues that may arise and that have some national significance. The past years focus for this committee was on the First Nations Clean Water Act Bill C-61, the Closing the

CHIEF AND COUNCIL

Infrastructure Gap Report, the Federal Homelessness Advocates Final Report on Homelessness and the Federal Urban, Rural and Northern Housing Strategy. The work of this committee is key an important part of informing the national dialogue on these important issues.

Douglas Lake Commonage Specific Claim

Closer to home I am involved with the negotiations of our Specific Claim on the loss of the Douglas Lake Commonage. Over the past year we have focussed on maintaining the pressure on both levels of Government as they went through their election cycles. First with the Provincial election in the Fall of 2024 and then the Federal election earlier this year we experienced delays to due to what’s called “Caretaker Mode” of governments during elections. Having moved through these processes we are now re-engaging our negotiating tables and will continue to push for settlement of this long-standing claim.

Child and Family Services

In 2024 after lengthy legal proceeding and negotiations, Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, Chiefs of Ontario and Nishnawbe Aski Nation came to

an agreement on the long-term reform of the on-reserve Child and Family Services Program. National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak visited our community in September 2024 to hear from our Kwu Stemtima and community members and to provide information related to the draft agreement. National Chief Woodhouse Nepinak and her entourage spent the day touring our lands and spent a few hours with the community at Glimpse Lake enjoying the beautiful setting of our camp and the warm hospitality of our community. It was a great honor to have our National Chief take the time to visit with us and I continue to maintain a close working relationship with her to advance the interests of our community. During her visit the National Chief expressed her admiration for our collective work and was very impressed with the beauty of our lands. Although I supported approval of the Settlement Agreement it was ultimately rejected by Chiefs in October 2024.

Quilchena Community Centre

It has been exciting to see the progress on the new community building in Quilchena, and I can’t wait to see the fulfilment of another long-standing community priority. This building will provide much



needed community space in Quilchena complete with a large commercial kitchen for community gatherings. I know it will very quickly become a hub of activity and excitement!

#### Language and Culture

Perhaps the biggest success of the past year is the continual work we have completed in restoring our language and culture. It is amazing to participate in the land-based activities and to listen to our language speakers both fluent and learners. We have held gatherings on our land to share language, cultural teaching and site-specific knowledge. This work will continue to be a priority, and I encourage everyone to participate!

#### Economic Development

Lots of activity over the past year on the economic development initiatives of the community. We continue to work through our corporation to create economic opportunities. Our UNB/ONA Solar project continued to make progress, we continue to advance the Boulder Elkhart Wind Project with our development partners, work is commencing on the feasibility stage of a data storage facility for which the use of land on our designated land was recently approved. These projects alone have the potential to generate large financial benefits for Upper Nicola for generations. Other projects are continuing to be looked at as we progress.

In closing I want to thank the Staff in all of our departments for their continuous effort and countless hours of service for the community. It's not always the easiest place to work but I am confident in every staff member and wish everyone another successful AGM and I look forward to seeing everyone!

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#### Governance

##### Chief and Council Governance Strategy

In January 2025, the Chief and Council held a two-day workshop in Kamloops for developing the self-governing strategy that will aid with the next steps as Upper Nicola progresses out from under the Indian Act and towards self-governance. This workshop was facilitated by Carden Consulting, an Indigenous Company that specializes in developing strategic planning.

Some of the key outcomes from the workshop include:

- Developing the Captikwł Strategy (Reconciliation Agreement) utilizing UNDROP and International Human Rights Laws.

- Establishing a Lands Committee to advance the Land Use Planning and Land Code.

- Develop Pre-election training for band members who may be interested in running and working on the Council.

- Further supporting the Kwu StemtimA and their work to develop their Laws that protect the interests of Upper Nicola Families.

- Establish Community Safety Laws that are aligned with Upper Nicola's Community Safety Plan.

##### Consultation and Accommodation Policy

We have been working closely with Catherine MacQuarrie, Project Manager, and her research associates from the Centre for First Nations Governance to create and develop a comprehensive policy that will ensure that Upper Nicola Band's Title and Rights are recognized and affirmed and enforces the government bodies and their proponents to consult with Upper Nicola on all proposed projects and work within the traditional territory.

In addition to this policy, we are also working on the Suxwbtəm Policy and the committee terms of reference as well as updating the Stewardship Department Policies to ensure they are in alignment with the Consultation and Accommodation Policy.

Following this, further work will be done on the current Governance Policy to strengthen the following:

- Code of Conduct

- Updates to Chief and Council remuneration and travel

- Updates to the New Chief and Councillor Orientation package

## SIYA PLACE

Skemixist

### Siya? Place, 26-unit housing project, IR 3 Spaxmn

After the grand opening of the units on March 25, 2024, we worked to begin to accept applications for the 26 units. We experienced challenges related to Rent Geared to Income, as some rents were considered too high. This prevented us from renting the units. The UNB Housing Society advocated BC Housing to change the rents to fixed rental rates. This change was accommodated by BC Housing.

2 units experienced challenges with deficient plumbing, and repairs were needed for these two units.

The cold snap in January 2025 caused challenges to the septic system in a few of the units. This work kept the Housing Department

and contractors busy responding to the challenge.

UNB Housing introduced having a Maintenance Worker, to assist with maintenance of the new units, as well as other UNB owned units.

When BC Housing was going to take out the mortgage, it was determined that one of the housing units was constructed outside of the permitted Lot 142, IR 3. This caused action to go to UNB voters to set aside Lot 143, IR 3 for the 26- unit Siya? Place. Staff worked with Indigenous Services Canada to organize this vote, which took place in May 2025. The vote was successful. Indigenous Services Canada is working to update the designation document.



We are working to implement the Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Community Plan, Community Safety Plan, and recently approved Communications Strategy. All plans can be located on our webpage.



This year we worked to have our voices heard, regarding the rental rates at Siya? Place. We needed BC Housing to hear our concerns, that the Rent Geared to income was not a suitable rental regime for us on reserve. Our voices were heard, and we have received accommodation to have fixed rate rents. The construction of the ᑎᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ Quilchena Community Centre began in April 2025. In May 2025, ancestral remains were located on the site, and cultural protocols were implemented to show respect to the ancestral remains and have our members voices heard. The majority that participated in the community engagement sessions confirmed that we must move ahead with the construction of the Community Centre, as there is a high need for a gathering space.

Other highlights that we are working on for improving Administration include:

- Development and use of Laserfiche, online filing system
- Payworks, online payroll system
- Expanded Communication efforts.
- Job evaluation tool, updating PayScale.
- Recruitment and retention strategies
- Leadership Training, February 2025
- Managers Meeting: every six weeks, including Joint Occupational Health Safety Meeting.

We posted Requests for Proposals for the following projects:

- Subcontractors for Construction of Quilchena Community Centre: various companies, including: UNB Member owned companies: 4 Elements, JF Archachan Contracting, Nic Pac Contracting.
- Our Relations Jurisdiction Co-ordination: MNP, a company that is assisting us prepare for assuming our Relations jurisdiction.
- External Auditor from 2025-2030. The successful company to complete UNB's external financial audit is Crowe MacKay LLP
- ᑎᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᑎᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ (Our Language, Our Ways) Strategic Planning: Tarbell Network Facilitation who facilitated our strategy to use Four Pillars funding, to revitalize our nsyilxcen language.

Chief and Council Election 2026: At the February 26, 2025, General Band meeting, a presentation providing overview of the election cycle, as per the UNB Custom Election Regulations was presented, to inform members of the upcoming election in March 2026. Members were advised of key dates to consider if amendments were to be brought forward, prior to the next election. The presentation is posted on [www.uppernicola.com](http://www.uppernicola.com)

## Communications

Our Communications Team worked to improve how we communicate with our members by launching UNB Live, a Podcast, broadcast, and video news magazine all in one. In the 24-25 fiscal year, seventeen episodes were produced featuring important information and an interview with various Band officials to help us dive deeper into the issues we all face.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the work of all who have contributed to the positive changes that you see happening at Upper Nicola. We are doing our best to implement our mission statement in our work: Upper Nicola is a proud, inclusive Syilx community working together to promote sux<sup>w</sup>txtəm, teach our cap<sup>w</sup>tik<sup>w</sup> and committed to building foundations through EnoWkinWixw.

<u>OBJECTIVES</u>	<u>TASKS AND ACTION ITEMS</u>	(People Responsible)	<u>Begin and End</u> Task on these dates:
To	By		
<b>Portfolio changes 2024–2025</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New subdivision portfolio grew by 26 units <input type="checkbox"/> New housing employee: Housing maintenance assistant <input type="checkbox"/> Housing senior position tenant relations officer vacated for maternity leave will work part time and remotely as housing managers assistant. <input type="checkbox"/> Housing position posted tenant relations officer, Firesmart LFR and capital planner.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Darcy Swakum (housing maintenance) Elaine Paul (housing manager's assistant)	April 2025 – March 2026
<b>BC Housing Asset Management Program</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct quality review check on BC Housing Asset Management audits <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal healthy community & empowering member.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager)	March 2025 – March 2026
<b>Electronic file storage with Laserfiche program.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Attended in person training in unb boardroom on how to utilize web platform Laserfiche. <input type="checkbox"/> Organize housing department shared drive folder electronic documents on unb server by confirming document type and date. <input type="checkbox"/> Organize housing department desktop electronic documents by confirming document type and date. <input type="checkbox"/> Organize housing department Rico scan folder for documents already stored on unb server. <input type="checkbox"/> Attended manager's meeting to watch land's department assistant present demonstration on how to utilize web platform Laserfiche. <input type="checkbox"/> Organize housing department, file cabinets paper documents by document type, date, and dismiss duplicates and to prep for Rico Scan process. <input type="checkbox"/> Initiate Rico Scan process of confirmed paper documents in file cabinets. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal supportive workplace.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Elaine Paul (housing manager's assistant)	January 2025 – ongoing
<b>Energy programs &amp; rebates with BC Hydro, Fortis, Clean BC, ICEC</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage and research on energy programs and rebates with BC Hydro, Fortis, Clean BC, and ICEC. <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with energy specialists, consultants, and service contractors to conduct energy audits on all residences for asset management. <input type="checkbox"/> Attend meetings, gatherings, and forums on energy efficiency programs and rebates. <input type="checkbox"/> Research on heat pumps and solar panel projects. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal healthier community	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager)	January 2025 – Ongoing

## HOUSING

<u>OBJECTIVES</u>	<u>TASKS AND ACTION ITEMS</u>	(People Responsible	<u>BEGIN</u> and <u>END</u> Task on these dates:
Then list routine (recurring) objectives/tasks next			
<b>Properly operating Blaze King woodstoves</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage with citizens of Upper Nicola on properly burning wood on high efficiency Blaze King woodstove by YouTube tutorial video. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal empowering members & healthy community.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Darcy Swakum (housing maintenance)	January 2025 – ongoing
<b>Provide septic box Cover to all rental units</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> By providing septic boxes, it ensures the septic cover safety from environmental hazards such as: horses, quads, and heavy snowfalls. Service providers are requesting that Housing department have septic cover cleared before service is obtained. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal healthy community.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Darcy Swakum (housing maintenance)	March 2025 – Ongoing
<b>Provide Basic Home Maintenance Items to all rental units</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> By providing basic home maintenance items encourages better practices of home maintenance and ensures life warranty to asset. For example: garden hose (flush out hot water tanks) furnace filters, septic dilute formula, metal buckets (for wood stove ashes), and wood pallets (for wood storage by woodstove or stabilize washer and dryer). <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal healthy community.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Darcy Swakum (housing maintenance)	April 2025 – Ongoing
<b>Host Info Sessions from partner programs</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing department staff will host info sessions requested by UNB members, UNB Housing Society, UNB Chief and Council, and UNB Band Administrator. <input type="checkbox"/> Housing department staff will host Hub Insurance info session with Chad Belbin in February 2025. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal healthy community & Supportive Workplace.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Elaine Paul (housing manager's assistant) Darcy Swakum (housing maintenance)	January 2025 – March 2026
<b>To attend Council and General Band Meetings</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Community engagement is essential, and the housing department will start to set aside time to attend functions. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal healthy community & economic opportunity.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Darcy Swakum (housing maintenance)	Ongoing
<b>Participating in Managers Meeting</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication between departments is essential and the housing department will set aside time for UNB Housing employees to attend sessions. \ <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal supportive workplace & healthy community.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Elaine Paul (housing manager's assistant)	Ongoing
<b>Provide Chalets (store wood) to all residents of UNB within budgetary means</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> It is essential to have chalets for residents that have woodstoves to ensure firewood to be properly seasoned by storing firewood off the ground. This task had started from the previous year phase 3 – 4 rental units were completed and supported by Housing Budget 2020 – 2021. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Goal healthy community, cultural identity & economic opportunity.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Darcy Swakum (housing maintenance)	Ongoing

<u>OBJECTIVES</u>	<u>TASKS AND ACTION ITEMS</u>	(People Responsible)	<u>BEGIN</u> and <u>END</u> Task on these dates:
<b>Applying to funded programs: ISC, CMHC, and NAS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing department search and apply for multiple funding from governing partners such as CMHC, ISC, and NHAS. <input type="checkbox"/> Housing department has engaged in funding program for CMHC Co invest implemented in November 2023. <input type="checkbox"/> CMHC contributed 40% toward reno repair program and UNB contributed 60%.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Collette Sunday (band administrator)	Ongoing
<b>Participate in Band Organized Community Events.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing department will set aside time to participate in community events such as: AGA, Aboriginal Day, Orange Shirt Day, Winter Solstice, and or Food Hamper Delivery. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic goal supportive workplace and healthy community	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager) Darcy Svakum (housing maintenance)	Ongoing
<b>Tenant Counselling</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing department offers tenant counselling year around for tenants who wish to learn about: monthly rent, affordable analysis, my hydro app, basic home maintenance best practices, housing forms, housing policy, rental agreements, arrears counselling, share budget info for residence. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic goal empowering members, supportive workplace, and healthy community.	Clifford Chilhitzia (housing manager)	Ongoing
<b>Housing Applications (new or resubmission)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing department accepts housing application ongoing basis and filled housing applications can be stored in the housing department for up to 2 years. <input type="checkbox"/> To ensure fair and equitable manners there is only 1 housing employee appointed to collect and maintain housing applications. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic goal supportive workplace	Elaie Paul (housing manager's assistant)	Ongoing

The Human Resources Department continues to play a critical role in supporting organizational growth, strengthening internal capabilities, and aligning talent strategies with long-term goals. The reporting period from April 2024 to April 2025 reflects notable changes in staffing, successful implementation of HR initiatives, and efforts toward digital transformation and process improvement.

## NEW HIRES

Between April 2024 and April 2025, the organization welcomed several new team members in both leadership and support roles: John Adebajo – Chief Financial Officer River Anderson – Junior Community Prevention Worker Tierra Holmes – Community Services Assistant Peyton Moffat – Cook/Janitor Christine Chillihitzia – Child and Family Preservation Worker Tiffany McRae – Child & Family Preservation Worker Catherine Holmes – N’Kwala Administrative Assistant Harleen Kaur – Finance Assistant Harshitha Hemanna – Tenant Relations Officer

## SHORT TERM CONTRACTS

The following individuals were engaged in short-term and on-call contracts during the reporting period: Cindy Tom-Lindley – Interim Principal, N’Kwala School Bernard Manuel – Cultural Teacher, Headstart Sylvester Cohen – Kwu'stemtima Assistant Justine Manuel – Substitute Language Teacher, N’Kwala School Juanita Lindley – 13 Moon Curriculum Facilitator Ben Clark – On-Call Maintenance/

Firewood gatherer Cathy Tom – Accounts Payable Mathilda Chillihitzia – Teacher on Call, N’Kwala School Mary Ann Androlick – Cultural Heritage Manager Phil Dumont – Relief Bus Driver Dylan Dunn – Maintenance Worker Randy Chillihitzia – Security Guard, Admin Building Nexpekto Joe – Substitute Okanagan Language Teaching Assistant Casey Holmes – On-Call Indigenous Monitor Wylie Head – Relief Bus Driver Philip Chillihitzia – Community Garbage Removal Worker Opal Charters – On-Call Principal Relief Samantha Tom – Substitute Cook Abraham Sheena – N’Kwala School Cultural Assistant

## STAFF TERMINATIONS

The following employees’ tenures concluded between April 2024 and April 2025: Larissa Law – N’Kwala school Administrative Assistant Tyler Ernst – N’Kwala School Principal Hannah Roos – N’Kwala School Education Assistant Ivan Sunday – N’Kwala School Education Assistant Carol Smith – Child & Family Preservation Worker

## GRANTS APPLIED & RECEIVED

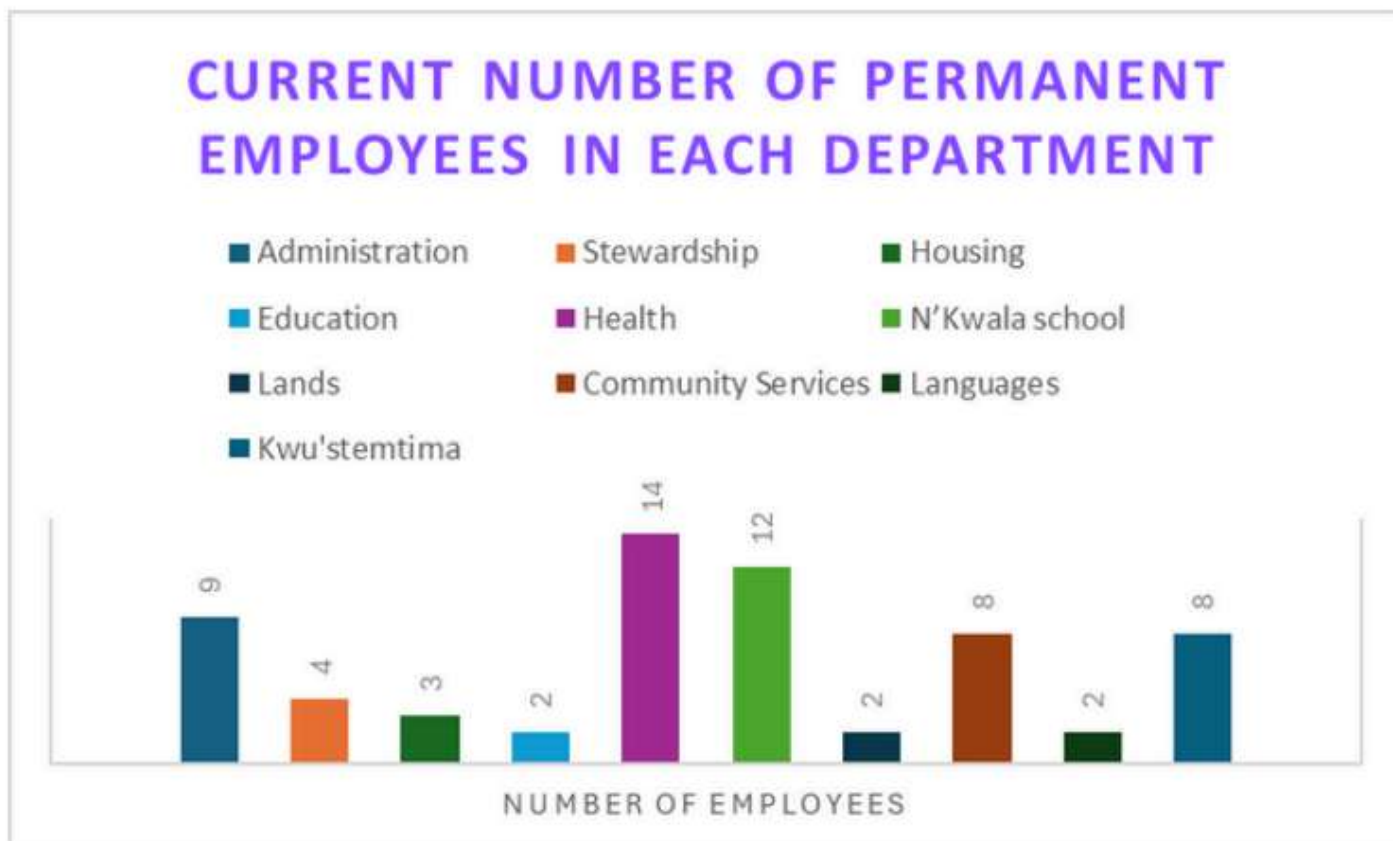
BC Employer Training Grant: A total of \$26,400.00 was awarded and utilized to conduct a two-day leadership development program in February 2025. This initiative targeted the top management and leadership team, equipping them with essential leadership competencies. Summer Student Employment Grant: Applications were submitted in both 2024 and 2025. Funding was not re-

## HUMAN RESOURCES

ceived for 2024, and the organization is currently awaiting results for the 2025 application.

### HR PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

Several strategic HR projects were initiated or continued during the year: UNB Salary Grid Restructuring: The salary grid is undergoing a comprehensive restructuring to ensure competitiveness and internal equity. Completion is anticipated in May 2025. Applicant Tracking System Implementation: Currently in its testing phase, this system is expected to go live in May 2025. It will enable applicants to apply directly through the organization's website and allow HR to capture essential recruitment data such as job views, applications, interviews, and rejections—providing valuable insights into workforce planning and department needs. Laserfiche Digital Transition: Following comprehensive training sessions, all departments are actively working toward digitizing files and documents. This project supports efficient records management and strengthens data accessibility across the organization.



**#UNBSTRONG**



## Lands, Wills & Estates

**Staff:** Susan Manuel      Manager  
Iris DeMontigny      Assistant

### Highlights of 2024-25

#### Assisting Band Members with Land and Estate matters:

Land Transfers, Land Allocations, Estate Management, Will Writing, Notarizing documents (Commissioner for Taking Affidavits in BC)

#### Band Projects:

Ensuring that proper permissions to enter the Reserve are issued for a variety of Band Projects:

- Nicola River & Michel Road Improvement, Various BC Hydro Projects, Quilchena Community Centre Contractors.

#### Policy Updates:

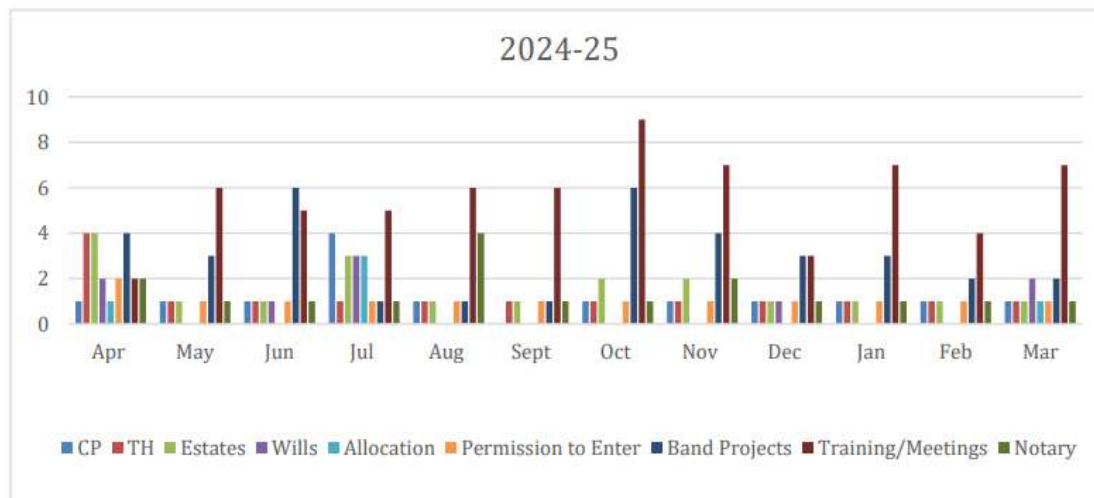
UNB Land Use Plan and UNB Residential Land Allocation Policy have both been updated and are now in the final stage of approval.

- There was a total of 5 community engagement session with Elders, Youth and General Community.

#### Staff Training/Meetings:

Lands staff has participated in training and conferences to increase knowledge and capacity within the department:

- Assistant: Laserfiche Training, Links to Learning Conference.
- Manager: Completion of Land Management Training, Introduction to Surveys, Practical Applications of Land Surveys, Links to Learning Conference.



LANDS, WILLS, AND ESTATES

Siya—EMPOWERING MEMBERS



Way' xast sxelx?alt, In our strategic plan, we identify that one of our priorities is to empower our member to play in creating their future, and to assist ensure each member is empowered to take responsibility for both their own future and building a strong flourishing community that is in harmony with our Tmixw. To support and improve education outcome for kindergarten - grade 12, and our Parents through learning at school/home, youth programs/activities. The education department is willing to share and give information that will give opportunities to gain awareness of our existing programs and services that is provided are:

**Post-Secondary (PSE)** –UNB students and plan on pursuing post-secondary studies on a full-time or part-time basis and qualify for financial support as outline in our PSSSP. The objective of the post-secondary student support program is to improve the employability by providing eligible students with access to education and skill development opportunities at the post-secondary level. Reporting to ISC is due: General Pool: May last Friday, and PS Registry Report: August 30th of every year. Post-Secondary Additional Funding:

- Post-Secondary Full-Time – 35
- Post – Secondary Part-time - 4
- 7 Post -Secondary Graduations

**Elementary & Secondary Funding:** The Nominal Roll is an annual census of eligible students living on reserve and attending elementary /secondary school. Nominal Roll (NR) Student Census Report:

Nkwala School – 29.1250 FTE student

Merritt Central School – 19 Students FTE

Merritt Secondary School – 21 Students FTE

High School Graduates – 7students (5 continued with Post-Secondary Education)

#### **Other Funding Sources:**

##### **First Nation Education Steering Committee –**

**Mentored Work Placements** – the position filled (1) at N'Kwala School, (2) Community Services – \$52,329

**Youth Summer Employment** – 3 students filled this position as Camp Leaders, Supervisors and did basic office assistant jobs, maintenance of Band Buildings - \$9,800.00

**Science & Technology and Youth Leadership-** Had 30 students who participated at our Camps at Douglas Lake and Quilchena. This year we had activities such as nature walks, build a sweat, leather work, painting, beading, plant / medicines, stories, and science projects. Through activities enhancing our cultural & traditional teachings, and focusing on building capacity development enhancing knowledge, abilities skills.

**FNESC:** Impact of Students Learning – \$82,426.00; Youth Initiatives SD558; Community initiatives - \$10,000.00; school year under this program, in providing support: RE: the provisions of supervision, and learning supports, mental health supports, safety equipment and materials, and or other directly related activities such as: Tutorials, Activities – art & crafts, Incentives – activities; NRT - \$8000.00 – Youth Initiatives

#### **REPORTS:**

UNB Strategic Planning/ Operational Plans - on going.

Budget – Draft budget, due in January, quarterly meetings

Post Secondary Deadline – April 30<sup>th</sup> of every year

Post Secondary Interview – Second week in June of every year.

School District 58 –Local Education Agreement, Enhancement Agreement, AIC and AAC monthly/quarterly meetings, and Community Support Meeting

Student Support – working collaborating to support our students continuously, with school base teams,

First Nation Support Workers, Education Coordinators to support our parents, students, and families.

MSS - DVR Meetings /reviews

## IR#1 QUILCHENA

Quilchena Community Centre: there was much work to co-ordinate for the construction to begin. The necessary environmental approvals from Federal and Provincial government needed to take place, as we are in a zone for Species at Risk, and adjacent to the Nicola River, a fish bearing stream. After we got environmental approvals to construct building, and infrastructure to support building, Canadian Human Rights Tribunal 41 funding was approved, at 58% level, from the Federal Government. Administration worked with Finance Audit Committee and Chief and Council to plan for other funds for the construction.

The Groundbreaking ceremony took place on April 20, 2024. Community Members witnessed a day of celebration, as we came together to take note of our present situation, with limited places to gather in Quilchena. Four stat'at'imc bear dancers blessed the ground, along with Elder Sara McLeod who offered prayers. Golden shovels were used, to begin to break ground, on the construction of the community centre, that officially started. Within the first two weeks of construction, the crew came across ancestral remains. Construction halted, and the community came together to determine who we would proceed. After two community sessions, it was decided that we would rebury the remains on June 19, 2024. The community sessions included updates from archaeologists, history about how the Nicola River has changed course throughout time, spiritual leaders who could communicate with the ancestors. After the reburial of the remains, the construction of the building has been moving ahead. We as a community could see the building rise from the earth, and we are excited to see the final result in Winter 2026.

Throughout the year, Public tenders occurred, to ensure we got the best price, and quality build for the net-zero building. Upper Nicola Team worked with Colliers Project Leaders, Michael Green Architecture, Unitech Construction Management, to co-ordinate all subcontractors to construct the 23,000ft<sup>2</sup> building, and design the outdoor buildings.

Three phase power: To bring power to the Quilchena Community Centre, we require three phase power. BC Hydro worked on design, and constructed began in Spring 2025. Telus Purefibre runs along the same poles as BC Hydro. New purefibre lines we will be needed for the new community centre. Construction of purefibre is expected later in early 2026.

Nicola River & Michel Road and Drainage Upgrade: This year we have continued to develop a detailed design for this project. Work includes completing various assessments for the project and continued work, closely, with effected property owners. As a result, the design phase has been approved by Indigenous Service Canada's Capital Program for funding. Engagement will continue with property owners as we look to begin construction in the Spring 2026. The goal is to have an upgraded road, that leads to the Quilchena Community Centre. The safety of the people in the area is a priority.

Quilchena Fire Hall: We continue to work on the Fire Hall to be constructed across the Church. The BC Hydro / Telus poles have been relocated, to make room for the Fire Hall. Future work will be to complete some site assessments (archaeology, environmental) moving into the fall. We hope to begin construction in early 2026. Administration and Chief and Council request that the members of Quilchena be ready to participate in serving, volunteering, working at the future firehall, to provide safety for the community.

### IR#3 SPAHOMIN

N'kwala School Repair, from the 2023 flood due to broken sprinkler system throughout the past year Repair work, throughout the effected classrooms and offices has been completed. Electrical and Mechanical repairs resulted in the longest wait times for the reopening. The last of the electrical work is projected to be fully complete by August 2025.

N'kwala School will look to reopen in the fall for the 2026-27 school year, with a new fire protection system and some recently renovated classrooms and offices.

Water Treatment Plant: Work has been well underway with the design of the new treatment plant. We have complete various site and water source investigations. It was found that additional water sampling for Lead and Copper was required to determine the potential need for more treatment, the results came back negative (we will maintain the current level of disinfection).

Further, we have included in the design the realignment and widening of Corral Rd with goal of providing a safer road and securing maintenance funding from Indigenous Services Canada.

Currently, the design is projected to be 100% complete by Fall 2025 with presentation to community of completed design to date at this years AGA.



## Staffing, School Operations, and Instruction

The 2024-25 school year began with no Principal in place. Fortunately, the school was able to hire on Cindy Tom-Lindley as part-time Principal in September, with Opal Charters filling in while Cindy was away. Aside from that, our school was fully staffed throughout most of the year. Travis Klak was hired on as the new Principal starting June 9, 2025. The staffing assignments can be found below:

Principal	Cindy Tom-Lindley/Opal Charters
Elementary Teacher	Colleen Brandrick
Intermediate Teacher	Nathan Chenoweth
Highschool Teacher	Sean Cretien
Educational Assistant (Intermediate)	Judy Chillihitzia
Special Education Assistant	Cindy McLeod
Educational Assistant (Connected Classrooms)	Tanya McRae
Cook	Judy Chillihitzia
Bus Driver	Alex DeMontigny
Administrative Assistant	Catherine Holmes

Our school experienced a major flood during January 2024. This had a significant impact on our enrollment for the 2024-25 school year. We will be focusing on increasing enrolment for the 2025-26 school year. Our enrollment for each sector was:

Elementary (K-3)	2 students
Intermediate (4-7)	6 students
High School (8-12)	12 students
Homeschool	4 students

We are extremely proud of our four graduates this year. These students worked tirelessly to complete all of the requirements to satisfy their dogwood diplomas. Graduation was celebrated on June 23, 2025. Our graduates for 2025 are:

Ashton Washington
Wyatt Smithers
Rayne Wallace-Bobroski
Shaylynn Blue

The B.C. Independent Schools Monitoring Inspection occurred throughout the school year. There were several challenges to complete this, including being able to access our account to verify criminal record checks, as well as processing times for letters of permission for non-certified teaching staff. These issues were addressed, and eventually resolved. The inspection is currently in the very final stages of completion, and it is expected that we will remain in good standing with Independent Schools Branch.

Our high school students (grade 10-12) continue to utilize Connected Classrooms through FNEC to complete the majority of their coursework. Connected Classrooms allows students in smaller schools to access a wide range of academic courses (eg. Pre-calculus, Physics, ELA, etc.) that would otherwise be very challenging to be able to offer. This allows our students to complete graduation requirements with appropriate coursework to allow them to continue with any post-secondary programming they intend to take.

This year, all staff intend on returning to school. This is a huge win for the community, as we have such a wonderful, hard-working, and dedicated staff. Continuity is important in building a successful school, and we are fortunate to have a full staff who continue to provide excellent services to our students.

In the upcoming year, we will be focusing on mathematics and writing as part of our school improvement process. Mathematics is something that is often overlooked, with literacy being the primary focus of instruction. We will be utilizing Jump Math as our main program for grades K-8, and looking at resources that we can implement to improve student writing.

### **Operations and Maintenance**

Building repairs from the flood have mostly concluded. There is still an electrical panel that needs to be installed before we are able to officially move back into the school. This is expected to be installed over the summer, and if all goes according to plan, we should be able to move back into the school for our September start. On June 20<sup>th</sup> we brought in movers to bring over the majority of school supplies and belongings from the Meeting Place and high school trailer up to the school.

We also received a new bus for our school. This funding comes through a grant from FNEC. Our old bus is currently for sale, and we are looking for reasonable offers. We continue to struggle with finding substitute bus drivers for when Alex is not available to drive. If anyone in the community has a valid license with the bus endorsement and is willing to be on call as substitute bus driver, please reach out to the school. As well, our tractor and mower are currently in need of some minor repairs. We are looking at options for getting these fixed up in order to better maintain our fields.

I look forward to a wonderful 2025-26 school year!

Respectfully,

Travis Klak, Principal,  
N'kwala School





# Stuwix Resources Joint Venture

2 - 98 Hwy 8, Merritt, BC V1K 0A7

Phone: 250-378-2277

## Upper Nicola Band Harvest report for April 1,2024- March 31,2025

Stuwix delivered 180,165m3 from Upper Nicola Bands Forest License A88927 in 2024/25

- 15,936m3 - DZ5006 – Peter Hope/Jack Douglas
- 32,426m3 - DZ5007 and associated right of way – Whiterock Lake
  - o 7,575m3 focused on 2021 Whiterock Lake Fire that was under burnt and showed signs of continued mortality and increased level of Douglas fir beetle.
- 7,718m3 - DZ5008 – Jack Douglas
- 41,974m3 - DZ5009 and associated right of way – Salem Creek (Coldwater Valley)
- 82,111m3 - DZ5010 and associated right of way – Lamont Creek (Princeton)

Stuwix continues to implement forest practices based on standards derived from Upper Nicola Bands Suxwtstem Principles which focus on sustaining the diversity of species and their habitats in perpetuity for the well-being of future generations. Stuwix's T'mixw Principles and Ecological Anchor strategies build upon this underlying expectation of Upper Nicola Band to deliver forest management in manner that focuses on respecting the water, soil and habitat. The principles continue to evolve based on communication and field reviews.

*Ecological Anchor(TUZ) dispersed leave trees in DZ5007 ND1346 (Whiterock Lake) and post-harvest Ecological Anchors and Road Construction with piles ground by Valley Carriers*



As part of the 2024-25 harvesting, 45.3km of road was constructed and 15.7km prescribed for rehabilitation where access was not needed in the future or values required the roads be deconstructed.

Stuwix coordinates with Valley Carriers, a post-harvest grinding contractor, to grind most piles on DZ5006, DZ5007, DZ5008 and continue to work on DZ5009 this Spring. The grinding operations are estimated to eliminate the need to burn +-200 debris piles.

Total revenues received by UNIB for the year were \$2,495,220.

Respectfully,

Lindsay Tighe,  
General Manager Stuwix Resources JV.

On March 31, 2025, the Upper Nicola Health program completed the final year of our ten- year contribution agreement with the First Nations Health Authority. Most BC First Nations communities are in a similar situation and for the most part, new ten- year funding agreements will be rolled over to continue delivering Health Services on reserve.

When thinking about this past year, I am reminded that that our members have faced significant instability with pressures from increased fuel and food costs, independent living, hospital closures, family breakdowns just to name a few. It certainly was a year of adapting to these many challenges for our office with our efforts to recalibrate Health and Social Services to support membership.

With the goal of raising awareness of our Health Services, and building important relationships, it was important for us to be present in our Okanagan communities. Our work here continues to open doors. In particular, we have been active in participating in a Primary Care Network with other Interior First Nations and Interior Health. Across BC, divisions of family practice and health authority's and community partners have been working to establish Primary Care Networks (PCNs). In a PCN, physicians (via patient medical homes), other primary care providers, allied health care providers, health authority service providers, and community organizations work together to provide all the primary care services a local population requires.

Together, we:

Enhance patient care using a **team-based approach to care**.

Support each other and **work to their strengths**.

Further link patients to other parts of the system, including the health authority's specialized community services programs for vulnerable patient groups (e.g., frail elderly, mental health and substance use). Collectively increase a community's capacity to provide greater access to primary care for people without a primary care provider.

Participation in a primary care network enables a patient medical home to operate at its full potential. Our work in the PCN is for members to get access to timely, comprehensive and coordinated team-based care. The success of our efforts is evident by the recruitment of a family physician coming to our Health Center every two weeks. This provides our community members with support and direction on their health. The doctor comes to the Health Office which is a huge advantage for members who cannot drive or do not own a vehicle. The consistency having a physician seeing the members is immeasurable especially for follow up and engagement for our community members.

In Nation work (ONA), we have participated in Health services with the wellness committee. As mandated by the ONA's Chief's executive council, the purpose of the wellness committee is to provide technical advice, current information and strategic input to the CEC to continue quality wellness services. This work included providing feedback, guidance and direction to the development and implementation of Nation based programs and services. Current highlights include pursuing Health restoration in the Interior Health region, advancing the Letter of Understanding with Interior Health, and establishing preliminary development of the Ashnola Treatment centre.

Getting to the Core functions of our programs and services, we have continued to respond to individual health concerns and needs as well as providing membership with good health promotion. We will make progress by infusing all aspects of the Bands six strategies with a principled and practical approach to wellness.

<i>Empowering Members</i>	<i>Cultural Identity</i>	<i>Healthy Community</i>	<i>Sustainable Environment</i>	<i>Economic Opportunity</i>	<i>Supportive Workplace</i>
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There were many program functions delivered in each strategy to strengthen members with the essential tools of education and support. The determination of our staff will continue to support people to achieve the best possible outcomes.

These supports included:

- Nursing and Health Services
- Medication consolidation
- Holistic Nursing approach
- Wound Care
- IV care and medication administration
- Support with doctor and specialist appointments
- Lifeline- Monitoring and wellness checks
- Immunization clinics, information/education, disease management
- School engagement and health education (vaping and tobacco use, healthy eating, puberty, diabetes and cardiovascular education
- Meal support
- Community based rapid testing
- Access to primary care and Institutional care
- Access to mental health and substance use outpatient counselling
- Communications
- Access to Pharmaceuticals-Advocations
- Ongoing Wellness checks
- Personal Care: Home support services, community clean up and firewood delivery
- Crisis and Mental Health Counselling
- Income Assistance Distribution-Special needs, inflation relief, shelter support
- Medical Transportation- Milage, meals and accommodations
- Distribution of air purifiers, fans
- Youth development-sports, nutrition, culture, education
- Pre and Post Natal Support
- Diabetes Education and Support-footcare, healthy meal preparations
- Cardiac care education and support
- Oral Health
- Wellness days/outings-food harvesting
- Gardens
- Hunting Camps- Salmon Distribution
- Employment /training referrals

- Membership requests-Basic home repairs, sewage, ramps, ect..
- Drinking water testing
- Residential School Survivors support
- Accreditation Preparations
- Yard cleaning
- Weekly Bus services
- Kids Christmas party
- Childcare support



## Responding to the Toxic Drug Crisis

Our team continued to focus on the toxic drug crisis. Street drugs continue to be increasingly dangerous, particularly for members residing in urban areas. In partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance, members of our team routinely checked on members in the streets of Merritt with wellness checks, support, referrals, drug alerts and distribution of Naloxone. Resources describing self-care was also disseminated with lessons on how to react positively in a crisis.

## Mental Health and Wellness

People have been dealing with a lot over the last few years. As a result of stress and social challenges, more people are suffering from depression and anxiety. Our team continues to provide members with crises response approaches as well as wellness promotion, prevention and intervention. These approaches include outpatient counselling, detox, residential treatment, self care workshops, cultural activities and peer supports.

An additional important activity the office provided was to ensure coordination of Health Services in membership care through preparing for emergencies that may include fires, smoke, floods, pandemics, and the opioids crisis.

As we close a door on this past fiscal year, I am thankful for the doors that we will continue to open for our membership. We still recognize that there are profound challenges that persist for so many members and for our leaders who take on difficult tasks at various tables. A key area that requires considerable attention and development that will address these gaps is to promote greater traditional wellness programming. While I am very pleased in the hard work of our leaders, staff and community members, I am also once again reminded of the teaching of a community elders who spoke of important teachings of getting back to the land, “that is where our medicine is”.

# HEADSTART/SNSCECMALATAN DAYCARE

## ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

The Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve Program nurtures the healthy growth and development of community children from birth to the age of 6. With programming designed and delivered by the community, it supports the physical, developmental, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual well-being of the children. The local content and focus add culturally relevant learning opportunities and experiences. Children also receive daily instruction for one hour and/or exposure to the Nsyilxcen language from community elders, Linda Holmes , and Buzz Manuel

Our centre is divided into 2 areas. For children from newborn to age 3, we have an infant/toddler program focusing on sensory and play-based learning. Children are encouraged to learn through discovery supported with positive reinforcement from staff. Children aged 3 to 5 are provided with the same opportunities as those younger than them, with the addition of preschool learning options. This preschool experience helps children develop self-confidence, while learning beginning literacy and numeracy concepts to aid in a smoother transition to kindergarten. We foster an environment to encourage the desire of the children to become lifelong learners.

The Aboriginal Head Start program provides activities built around 6 principles:

- Nutrition
- Education
- Culture and Language
- Social Support
- Healthy Promotion
- Parental Involvement

## NUTRITION

The Head Start staff continue to make nutrition a top priority for community children and families. This includes teaching the children about healthy food choices, providing nutritious snacks, allowing children to aid in food preparation (where appropriate).

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Parents and students were able to participate in several field trips including Energy Plex (Kamloops), Swimming Lessons, Davidson's Apple Orchard and Pumpkin Patch (Kamloops Zaaz Eatery and play)

We had our own pow wow' on June 5, 2024 up at Glimp's Lake with Nkwala school, Lower Nicola school, coldwater School, N.V.I.T daycare and Nooaitch Headstart, total of 257 students. On June 5, 2027 , We will be hosting another powwow.

We take part in the Culture and Language with the community activities and events.

Buzz Manuel came to the Head Start to show the children a deer head with the alters and explained what they do with the hide and brains from the deer.



## STAFF

Staff included: Manager, Lead Head Start Instructor, Infant/Toddler Instructor, Early Childhood Assistant, Custodian, and On-Call Maintenance Worker.

All the staff at Head Start are dedicated individuals who are committed to providing valuable learning opportunities for the children of this community. We are honoured to be a small part of creating a strong foundation for a flourishing future.

We use the six comports from the Head start, Empowering members to drop their children off at the Head start for daycare are for the Head start program from ages 3-5, we like parents and members, but it is tough because parents are both working or going to school.

Healthy community we have the nurse come in and talk about germs, head lice, and about nutrition. We have the Hygienic from Merritt come in to check the children's teeth.

Supportive workplace for the staff to take work shops once a year to get their 40 hours for licensing requirement's, have staff meetings once a month to touch base on how their job is going and what kind of supports, they need.

Cultural identity with the CAN-8 and Linda comes down for an hour a day, we do some native crafts, but we would like to do some more such as tanning hides, fishing, picking berries, like to learn about the pit houses and sweats, and so on.

## Summary of our achievements from this year

We haven't did to much travelling because we don't have a driver for the 15 passage van to drive so Natasha or myself will be trying to get or class four licenses, in the future.

We went from Can-8 to one Language teacher from N'kawla school, Linda Holmes. We are still working on Can-8.

Lots of visit to Rotary Park

We are working on getting the flooring changed in the centre in the summer time or late fall.

Buzz Manuel comes in drums and dances with the children for an hour a day.

We have purchased a 15-passage van so we can transfer or children for fields trips and start making home visits to our elders, and that way we are not taking staff vehicle wherever we go.



# #UNBSTRONG

# Kwu stəmtíma?

## Background/How Did We Arrive Here?

We Arrive Here? In accordance with UNB's Council Resolution of Sept. 30, 2017, the kʷu Stəmtíma? (Grandmothers Group) have the right (together with the UNB Child and Family Preservation Worker and the Health Director) to represent and plan for "all matters relating to Upper Nicola Indian Band Children, Youth and Families"; the clause "Upper Nicola Indian Band Children, Youth, and Families" is restated as "UNB Relations". "Relations" means the UNB children, families and community. Our family relationships are inclusive of all individuals connected to our families, both biological and non-biological.

The kʷu stəmtíma? Declaration, December 15, 2020, states "the safety, well-being, and identity of our Relations is a priority". They are working to reassert and resume full, inherent, Indigenous jurisdiction as their Aboriginal (S. 35) right in Canada. Annual the kʷu stəmtíma? have developed a Strategic Plan to identify goals and critical actions needed to achieve the development and enactment of UNB jurisdiction. This was the fourth kʷu stəmtíma? Strategic Planning Session, and it is the second time that others, including community members and SCFSS representation, have been invited to attend.

The kʷu stəmtíma? focus on sqllXwcAWt (Syilx Ways of Being) and community wellness, including protection and keeping children at home with family and in the community. The kʷu stəmtíma? acknowledge and raise their hands to all the volunteers at the various events, including the 13 Moon Calendar Events, who support family and community wellness. The kʷu stəmtíma? and the Upper Nicola community working towards dependence and interdependence impact any generations. The sqllXwcAWt teachings focus on who we are, as sqllXw from the Upper Nicola, where we came from and where we are going, as we decolonize our thoughts, our words and our actions.



kʷu stəmtíma?

The kʷu stəmtíma? declare the children must be at the center. Children will walk beside us – it takes love, compassion, and commitment. Syilx/sqllXw laws are embedded in our ceremonies, practices, and captíkʷt. The four Food Chiefs, and sninA/ nA/] qʷw'qʷc'W'iy'A/ (Owl Woman and Chipmunk) are examples of captíkʷt which include laws, customs, values, and principles teachings. We have our laws; we must recognize our laws.

## Strategic Goal

The kʷu stəmtíma? strategic goals for 2024 align with the Upper Nicola Band's Five-Year Strategic Plan (2021-2026) priorities of:

- Empowering members
- Cultural identity
- Healthy community
- Supportive workplace

To achieve these goals, the kʷu stəmtíma? will continue to collaborate with SFCSS, Scw'exmx Tribal Council, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, other organizations, Federal and Provincial representatives, volunteers, and other organizations committed to reconciliation.

Included are some of the highlights for 2023-2024 from our Strategic Plan:

Goal #1 – Enhance the wellness and self-development of kwU stemtima? What was accomplished?

kwu stəmtima? Office – Quilchena.

8 staff • Mental Health Support currently have 2-part-time counsellors – Neil Burrows and Carolyn Charleyboy; and support from other agencies • SCFSS and ONA have been included in events and schedules, but still a work in progress.

Goal #2 – Build capacity and community relationships by supporting our Relations in a way that reflects Syilx culture and values and keeps children in the community.

The 13 Moon Calendar of events and activities does address the goal.

Goal #3 – Develop a 13 Moon Workplan for the in caring for children and community to strengthen and support UNB Relations, will name a few events that happen throughout the year of 2024:

spqwllic Fishing

Traditional Feast

Horseman Ship – Youth & Horses

Goal #4 – Collaborate with and direct the work of Scw'exmx Child and Family Services Society (SCFSS) What was accomplished?

- File / case reviews.
- Relations work 1-1; family preservation / planning.
- Initial adoption discussions.
- Developed cultural plan.

Goal #5 – Develop laws to be the basis for negotiations with the Federal and Provincial governments to fully reassert inherent rights over Relations (children and families) which are appropriately funded by both levels of government in accordance with Bill C-92.

What was accomplished?

- Adoption law – provincial.
- Bill C-92 – ISC funding.
- captíkʷł – the way it is.

Goal #6 – Train and hire appropriate UNB staff to implement all the necessary preventative, protective, supportive social services and after-care services for healthy families and all Relations

What has been accomplished?

- Expanded events to the whole family and whole community.



Upper Nicola Band  
(Sq̓əqaxʷ) Burrowing Owl Reintroduction Program 2024 Summary  
by  
Dawn Brodie & Loretta Holmes

Annual Burrowing Owl Release

The annual Burrowing Owl release took place April 17, 2024. The Upper Nicola Band and community gathered at the Pit House to welcome burrowing owls to their land with prayer and drumming. Attendees included Elders, Band Administrator, Band Councillors, Language instructor, N'kwala School students, N'kwala School Ambassador, Senior Cultural Heritage and Resource Technician and community members.



Upper Nicola Band members release owls, April 17, 2024

Captive owls were raised at three Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of British Columbia breeding facilities: the British Columbia Wildlife Park (BCWP) Kamloops, BC; Oliver, BC and Port Kells, BC. Prior to release, eleven owls (5 males, 6 females) were given a health check, banded with a US Fish and Wildlife aluminum band on the left leg and a green over black alphanumeric band on the right leg.

Returning Owls

One female owl returned to the Upper Nicola site in early April and was identified by leg band photographs. The return female K/77 1094-91479 is wild born and has returned to the Upper Nicola 2022, 2023 and 2024. She has produced 23 offspring!

Productivity

Three owl pairs produced 12 wild born offspring. Juveniles were banded at 30 days of age with US Fish and Wildlife band on the right leg and an alphanumeric green over black band on the left leg. They were weighed using a Pescola scale and given a health check. The Upper Nicola site produced 15% of all BC wild born Burrowing Owls.

The field monitoring conducted by Loretta Holmes, Senior Cultural Heritage Research Technician and Dawn Brodie, Registered Animal Health Technologist includes field surveys, banding juveniles, burrow maintenance, data collection, supplemental feeding and other field activities.

Location	Release Owls	Wild Born Juveniles	Return Owls
Upper Nicola Band Burrowing Owl Site	11	12	1

Predators

Reconyx trail cameras have proven invaluable for observing burrowing owl behaviours, band identification and identifying predators (weasel, ravens and Northern Harriers).

## Transmitters

Where do British Columbia burrowing owls migrate to? To determine migration routes, stopover sites, habitat used, mortality and other unanswered questions, the Pacific Northwest Tagging Study was initiated. Partners include The Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of BC, University of Idaho, Washington Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife, Conservation Northwest and the Upper Nicola Band. Three Upper Nicola juveniles were tagged using Druid transmitters. Data is being collected, analyzed and reports shared when complete. Dr. Troy Wellicome, masterbander permit #10796 fitted the owls with the transmitters.

## Education and Outreach

Loretta Holmes and Dawn Brodie provided Burrowing Owl presentations, pellet analysis, volunteer opportunities to the local community and information via the Upper Nicola Newsletter and social media.

Attachments: Upper Nicola Band Records: Release, Wild-born and Return Burrowing Owls 2024

*Upper Nicola Band Chief Danny Manuel "We look at our traditional and cultural knowledge and find their (Burrowing Owls) purpose here on our lands, and we can find our responsibility to animals and birds".*





## FINANCE DEPARTMENT

**Mission Statement:** Finance Department mission statement is to provide useful and accurate financial information in a timely manner to all stakeholders, Upper Nicola Indian Band (UNB) Community and Chief and Council.

**Summary:** UNB. Finance Department is responsible for financial planning, budgeting, and financial reporting. The Band Administrator oversees the Finance department, and she coordinates the management operations and ensures the financial integrity of the Band under the Financial Administrative Law.

- The administrator and Finance department are responsible for maintaining the financial integrity of the organization by ensuring compliance with the policy approved by the Chief and Council.
- Annual planning process of budget, strategic plan, and annual financial reporting.
- Investment policy, purchasing procedures, budget variance reporting and analysis by each department to UNB Finance and Audit Committee (FAC) and also to the Chief and Council on a quarterly basis.
- Monitoring and encouraging departmental monthly reviewing of financial statements.
- Following Council instructions on financial transparency in presenting annual budget and audited statements to the community.
- Ensuring that Upper Nicola Band significant financial transactions are accurate before seeking UNB FAC recommendations and Council approval.  
Finance team members pursued professional development courses and workshops during the fiscal year.
- The majority of finance teams are pursuing accounting certification courses with AFOA or CPA
- Finance team members achieved higher levels of proficiency in their daily tasks and provided excellent services to the community.



Finance team members:

Cathy Tom- Accounting Officer-Accounts Payable:

Pay all Invoices that have been signed and coded by Managers on a weekly basis  
Forward Invoices that come to the Accounts Payable email to appropriate Departments  
Print off approved and coded Invoices from the S drive for processing  
Print off Statements from Vendors to ensure all Invoices have been paid  
Add and update Vendor or Individuals as needed

Trudy McLeod-Accounting Officer-Accounts Receivable and Property Tax:

Accounts Receivable, work with all managers to record and maintain all revenue, ensuring we are following the UNB, FAL.  
Property Tax, work with the First Nation Tax Commission and Tax Administration Software, on an annual basis to administer UNB's annual property taxation cycle.

Harriett- Isaac-Accounting Supervisor:

I started with Upper Nicola Band as the Office manager on August 29th, 2022, and then I moved into the Accounting Supervisor role on September 15th, 2022.  
I reconcile Bank and VISA statements. I work closely with Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Payroll. For about a year on and off, I was doing the Accounts Payable, Payroll and Accounting Supervisor positions until we were able to fill the AP and Payroll positions. I am currently taking some courses through AFOA to get my CAFM certification

Harleen Kaur-Finance Assistant:

Harleen joined UNB in September 2024, currently enrolled in Chartered Professional Accountants of BC programs. Performing various tasks such as accounts payable, visa reconciliations, manual cheque entries, payroll duties of monitoring timesheet accuracy, working closely with other finance team members and CFO projects and other tasks assigned to me. I enjoy working with UNB staff and supporting the community.

John Adebajo (CFO) Chief Financial Officer:

John Adebajo-Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) and Certified Aboriginal Financial Manager (CAFM) has been with UNB for 11 months in April 2025.  
He has over three decades of First Nations Accounting & Finance experience.  
John works closely with the Band Administrator, Directors, and Managers to prepare annual budgets and financial statements. I am looking forward to continuing with excellent services to the leadership and UNB community.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## UNB 2024-25 Financial Statement Summary

	2025	2024
Revenue	36,026,308	15,025,665
Expenditures	17,172,297	13,127,807
<b>Excess of Revenue Over Expenditure</b>	<b>18,854,011</b>	<b>1,897,858</b>

### Revenue Summary

Indigenous Services Canada	26,665,203	7,453,107
Other Income	10,707,720	4,609,094
ISC - Revenue deferred from prior year	4,733,550	3,794,710
First Nations Health Authority	2,232,745	1,539,147
CMHC		1,275,000
Other Province of BC	687,467	1,056,575
Other - Revenue deferred from prior year	4,393,792	946,602
Forest Licenses	2,675,845	899,324
Income from portfolio investments	1,202,172	732,924
BC Gaming Revenue	498,505	618,458
Investment income	759,746	477,989
First Nations Education Steering Committee	430,427	438,355
Rental Income	243,487	264,283
CMHC Subsidy	301,793	91,793
Indigenous Skills & Employment Training	135,179	
Modified equity from government business	144,343	-44,354
Other Revenue deferred to future year	-4,038,520	-4,342,175
ISC - Revenue deferred to future year	-15,747,146	-4,785,167

### Summary of Expenses

Administration	2,484,160	1,897,761
Amortization	1,010,934	816,748
Community and Social Services	4,096,930	3,772,014
Economic Development	17,646	18,646

Education	2,897,985	2,685,110
Forestry	1,148,459	32,936
Health	2,212,865	1,848,823
Housing	1,483,372	613,052
Language and Culture	242,035	250,772
Other	473,908	164,708
Title and Rights	1,028,240	789,303
Property Tax	6,888	9899
Capital Fund	68,875	228,035



**NSYILXCEN DEPARTMENT**

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

**kʷu cʔullus ul kʷu sqʷaqʷaʔalx**

Let's gather and talk!

The UNB Nsyilxcen department is responsible for overseeing and contributing to the community's Language Revitalization efforts. The department is dedicated to creating an environment that encourages, nurtures, and expects the use of the Nsyilxcən language. Over the past year, the Nsyilxcn department have been able to provide language services to the community in the forms of gathering our Fluent speakers and knowledge keepers together twice a month for Tea Talks. Tea Talks provides the opportunity for our speakers to share their knowledge, brainstorm ideas, and speak nsyilxcen amongst each other. We have also been able to host some community language classes in Kamloops as there was interest to meet and learn in that area. Language resource creation and sharing via website and social media.

The department was able to use funding from various sources to help support general language programming and also the annual Nsyilxcen Language Camp. We extend our gratitude to the First Peoples Cultural Council, and the Upper Nicola Band for their support of nsyilxcən initiatives and activities. With ongoing financial support and advocacy, community backing, patience, healing, and dedication, nsyilxcən (Okanagan language) will become our primary means of communication.

The department is working with Administration and Leadership to create our own language house to create new speakers in the 2025-2026 year.

**EMPOWERING MEMBERS**

Advocating and Supporting Language Learners

Nsyilxcen language classes in Kamloops

Various community members are participating in language learning initiatives.

Promoting community engagement in language learning by offering opportunities for members to learn the language.

**CULTURAL IDENTITY**

*Sharing of language materials and resources with community*

Social media, newsletter submissions, access to materials via website

Sign Project: nkʷritkʷ (Glimpse Lake) Language signage

Tea Talks

**HEALTHY COMMUNITY**

*Supporting the community in revitalizing our language*

*Establishing a language-promoting environment*

# LANGUAGE

## SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

*Nsyilxcen Language Program Team*

Language Manager

Community Language Engagement Coordinator

Fluent Speaker

*Language Program Grant Funding*

First Peoples Cultural Council – Pathways to Language Vitality (PLV) grant

First Peoples Cultural Council – Language Revitalization Planning Program (LRPP) grant

## SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE

*Collaborating and assisting the Upper Nicola Organization in their language utilization and language revitalization initiatives*

*Collaborating with other UNB Departments on hosting community events such as the captíkʷł story-telling evenings, Summer Cultural Camp, Culture and Heritage – Traditional place name project, Traditional Foods celebration, Language Camp*

**OKANAGAN PRAYER**

kʷu kskʰaʔx  
Let us pray

ʔu kʷɪncutɪ  
Oh Creator

kʷu pɪxʷtɪ iʔ xʷɪt  
Light up the road for me

mɪ wɪkn ɪksɪxʷúy  
So I can see my way

kʷu kʷuɪtɪt ɪspʔús  
Fix my heart

ʰapnáʔ t sʰɪxʰaɪt  
today

mɪ xʰast ɪksɪxʷúy  
So that where I go will be good

kʷu xʷɪxʰt ɪksɪpʰaʰt  
Give me wisdom

mɪ lut ɪksɪtɪpt  
So I will not forget

kʷu xʷɪxʰt t ɪkskʷæckʷáct  
Give me strength

mɪ nɪʰáyp kn tɪtmɪst  
So that I can defend myself

ɪʔ tɪ ɣʰayʰát ɪʔ tɪ kʰast  
From all that is evil

xʰast tɪ čxɪt  
It is good that way

  
RECORDING

 Upper Nicola  
Language Department

## Jurisdiction and Laws for Our Relations Submitted by Carol Holmes

In October 2024, the kwU stemtimA/ posted a Request for Proposal to hire a contractor/consultant to **assist with the jurisdiction work**. **MNP** was the successful contractor.

MNP has been working on the following:

- UNS Relations Summit (April 29 to May 1) World Café - What We Heard Report from questions and discussions. The report will focus on **Vision for Jurisdiction, Future Programs and Services that honour sqllXwcAWt and strengthen kinship ties and a thriving Upper Nicola Syilx family and community, including Family Wellness**.
- Terms of Reference for the Indigenous Governing Body (IGB). This may include the representation of a “family head” from each of the larger families
- UNS Relations Governance Model
- Contribution Agreement for 2025-2026

In February 2025, select lawyers, with Indigenous Child and Family laws and jurisdiction experience, were contacted to submit their interest in supporting law development and developing the co-ordination agreement. **Miller Titerle, Nick Smith**, will be supporting the kwU stemtimA/ with writing **Upper Nicola Laws for Our Relations**.

cAptikw] **Ethic Agreement with SCFSS** (Scwexmx Child and Family Services) – The development of a **Practice Guide** to expand on the processes and procedures of the Agreement.

**The Special Chiefs Assembly (AFN) – Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program** conference held in Calgary, Alberta in October 2024 – four kwU stemtimA/, along with Chief Dan Manuel and Councilor Scotty Holmes attended. AFN Chiefs in assembly rejected the \$47.8B Final Settlement Agreement.

### Other work in progress

Paradigm shift in vocabulary and words from ‘colonial’ to ‘syilx’, as examples “Prevention” to “sqllXwcAWtet” (Our Way of Being), “Protection” to “sEn’kllp”

Survey – There were 78 respondents, the most remarkable result was 99% agreed and 1% disagreed with UNS Jurisdiction of Our Relations.

Video – Mastermind Studios draft video was made available June 11, 2025. Challenges included capturing youth input/ voices regarding *Our Children Our Future*.

Celebration for Adoption – The kwU stemtimA/ held a *Welcome to our Community – Adoption Celebration* on May 25, 2025 at nkwr’ltkw acknowledging the interest of a family to adopt an UN Rights Holder and accepting the family into our community.

Collaboration with other First Nations asserting Jurisdiction of Children and Families – Two trips are being planned for September to visit and learn from two First Nations.

Link:

[Axa I/ sccUntet I/ tl xA/Xitet xl I/ neqsl’l’tet Family Declaration](#)

## STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Department continues to be responsible for:

- Technical support for Chief and Council in consultation processes that may impact UNB Aboriginal Title and Rights, to facilitate informed decision making
- Conducting or managing a diversity of research projects (e.g. traditional use studies, Archaeological Impact Assessments, environmental assessments, cumulative effects assessments)
- Technical support for referral responses and reports
- Technical representation on committees (West Kelowna Transmission Project (WKTP) FNs Project Review committee, TransMountain Indigenous Monitoring and Advisory Committee (IAMC), etc.)
- Archaeological and environmental monitoring of large and small-scale development projects
- Assist other UNB departments as requested to ensure that UNB's consultation procedures and policies are followed by government and industry in referrals
- Writing funding proposals for stewardship and natural resource related projects

Responding to cultural, historical and traditional research questions (internal and external)

### Some highlights throughout the year:

#### Ancestors Discovered

Stewardship department monitoring staff Loretta Holmes was on site during the first days at the ńtqítəmłx Quilchena Community Centre construction when on Day 2 of excavation, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, human remains were discovered. Brenda Gould, Similkameen Consulting was hired to be on site to

oversee the excavation. Initially thought to be 2 individuals, however, final count was 5 individuals buried in a 2'x2' wooden box. Due to the discovery, the construction was halted while we called in traditional knowledge keepers to ensure cultural safety. We hired 6 full-time UNB monitors to assist in the excavation of the site. This full-time work took place over 4 weeks period. The ancestors were reburied June 19, 2025, in the Quilchena Graveyard. This project and our participation in it, showed the expertise UNB has in its Stewardship employee, Loretta Holmes, who assisted in overseeing the reclamation project.

#### UNB Stewardship Department RISC Training

RISC Cultural monitoring training for 6 UNB employees was hosted by Brenda Gould, Similkameen Consulting. Staff, while out on the land during one of the afternoon training sessions, discovered a violation of UNB Traditional Territory. UNB has addressed this with the TNRD. Well done, learners! Participants were James Tom, Jerry Tom, Gerald McLeod, Troy Holmes, Loretta Holmes, and Jenna Archachan. UNB Stewardship department was able to provide monitoring services and steady work to our community members who attended the training.



## Species at Risk Program

### Burrowing Owl

5 pairs of owls were released at the site on IR #3.

### Great Basin Spadefoot Habitat Protection

Upper Nicola Band has taken measures (fencing, signage, etc.) to protect areas where Great Basin Spadefoot are known to habitat.

## Monitoring and Small/short-term projects

Ongoing monitoring TransMountain pipeline construction

Ongoing construction monitoring and water quality sampling on Highway 97C (Highway Creek Remediation Project, Pennask)

Ongoing construction monitoring for Roger's Fiber Optic Cable installations on HWY 5

Ongoing participation in the Project Review Committee for BC Hydro's West Kelowna Transmission Project

Ongoing BC Hydro Douglas Lake/Quilchena Pole replacement Project

Ongoing construction monitoring for McElhanney for the new Douglas Lake Water Treatment Plant

Ongoing ONA Pennask Fisheries Project/trout distribution

Ongoing Burbot monitoring

Ongoing Yellow Perch eradication program

Ongoing Foreshore Integrated Management Planning (FIMP) work and involvement with the Nicola Watershed Salmon Ecosystems Table and monitoring the Upper Nicola and Douglas Lake Watersheds in conjunction with Living Lakes Canada

## In Memoriam

In closing, the Stewardship department wants to acknowledge our former Monitor and friend, James Tom. Gone too soon, he was a reliable, hard working and valuable addition to our team. He is missed. Thank you for your service, James and rest easy.



# #UNBSTRONG

## COMMANAGE UPDATE

### BC'S CANCELLATION OF THE DOUGLAS LAKE COMMONAGE

This document explains, in brief, and in part, why BC is liable to Upper Nicola Syilx for BC's role in cancelling the Douglas Lake Commonage.

**First:** BC's liability is based on breach of historical legal obligations and key facts.

Under the 1871 Terms of the Union, BC committed to conveying lands to Canada so that Canada could create reserves.

Joint Commissioner Sproat set aside the 18,553 -acre commonage between UN Syilx and settlers in 1878, with instructions that if he could not reserve the land for common use, then it was to be Indian Reserve for UN Syilx.

Peter O'Reilly, Sproat's successor as Joint Indian Reserve Commissioner, was a member of a cattle syndicate which bought up lands around Douglas Lake. For his part, he received large payouts from the syndicate in 1884 and 1886.

On October 10, 1889, O'Reilly recommended cancelling the Commonage and on October 21, 1889, the DIA agreed to relinquish the Commonage.

On October 25, 1889, Chief John Shillihitsa (name spelled at the time) did not agree to relinquish the Commonage. And DIA did not consult the UN Chief for disposition of the Commonage under the Indian Act.

BC opened the Commonage Land to settlers in August 1890.

**Secondly,** in part, the legal bases for BC's liability to UN Syilx:

The provincial Crown is bound by the Honor of the Crown and "sui generis" fiduciary obligation to UN Syilx arising from the unilateral reserve creation process in BC.

Through the Terms of the Union, BC committed to cooperating with Canada to create Indian Reserves by conveying lands to Canada for that purpose and BC's commitment is a constitutional promise.

Solemn constitutional promises to FN engage the Honor of the Crown.

Honor of the Crown requires: a) TAKES A BROAD PURPOSIVE APPROACH TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PROMISE; b) ACTS



DILIGENTLY TO FULFILL IT.

BC's action in cancelling the Commonage and opening it up to settlers breached the Honor of the Crown and its fiduciary obligation to UN Syilx.

**Third**, why it is a good policy for BC to join the negotiation table is by invoking UNDRIP and DRIPA-key points:

Syilx claims are real, important, and it's not going away.

Redress and Restitution negotiations is less costly than litigating.

Honor of the Crown requires BC to stop relying on "bureaucratic self-interest rules" for its own interests.

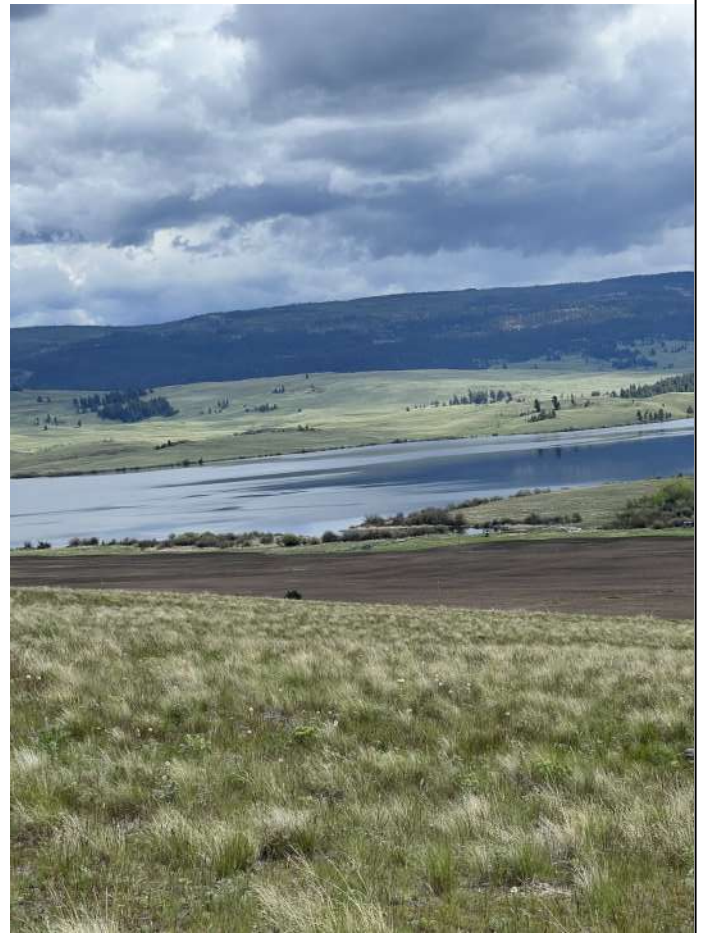
UNDRIP and DRIPA require the signatories to provide redress and restitution when FN lands have been taken without consent.

If "reconciliation" is of a true valued principle, historical wrongs must be redressed.

UNDRIP's Articles 28(1); Articles 28(2) and Articles 20(2) are some of the guiding principles for redress and restitution.

**In closing**, the above submissions are UN Syilx perspectives or worldviews on the constitutionality of Crown conduct in cancelling the Commonage based on the Constitution Act, 1982, s. 35(1) and captikw'l protocols, laws and directives regarding their occupation and use of Syilx tmxw'ulaxw.

Any diversion from these constitutional principles is unconstitutional and a breach of the highest laws of the land.



Upper Nicola Syilx is working to right the wrong. As the registered owner of much of the land within the Douglas Lake Commonage, Douglas Lake Cattle Company has a role to play in that process.

**Submitted: Scotty Holmes, UN Syilx Council**  
May 1, 2025

**#UNBSTRONG**

# CHRISTMAS TREE ENCHANTMENT

December 5-15, 2024, Quilchena Church

33 sponsors

70,000 tickets sold

19 trees

100's of ticket purchasers

Many UNB Members volunteering time

Four programs: nsyilxcen language, UN Volunteer Fire Department, Elders & Youth

**way'kwu k'wuk'wstp p ya'ya'at i? sponsors**

Thank you to all of our sponsors for their donations to the UNB Christmas Tree Enchantment!

**way'kwu k'wuk'wstp p ya'ya'at i? ticket purchasers**

Thank you to ticket purchasers

**Congratulations to the Winners!**



## CHRISTMAS TREE ENCHANTMENT

<u>TREE</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>WINNER</u>
Washer/Dryer	JF Archachan Contracting	Peggy Joe
Deep Freeze	Trans Mountain & City Furniture	Rick Shoebridge
Fencing Tree	Nicpac Contracting & Joe & Son Concrete Ltd.	Andrew Phillips
Tool Tree	McElhanney Consulting & Nicola Chainsaw & Equipment Rentals	Eva Tom
Weekend Getaway	HUB International	Craig Draney
Boys Tree	Snuffy's Contracting, Mack Kirk Roofing & Sheet Metal Ltd., Ashcroft & Company & Nancy Saddlemen	Francine Prairiechicken
Girls Tree	Mandell Pinder LLP, RBC Indigenous Relations, Unitech Construction Management	Megan Ward
Women's Tree	Kamloops Office Systems & Nancy Saddlemen	Willa Ermineskin
Money Tree	Richo Canada	Melinda Carman
Ice Fishing Tree	Construction Foundation of BC, Home Hardware, RBC Dominion Securities – Rhonda Hymers	Barb Kelly
KwuStemtima? Tree	KwuStemtima? Tree	Steve Manuel
Outdoor Adventure	Tracer Electric & Bass Coast	Bernice Clark
Grocery Tree	D& T Developments, Tracer Electric, Charlotte McRae & Charlee McRae	Harold Aljum
Sports Tree	Fortis BC	Mughar Mann
Gift Card Tree	Stuwix Resources & Michael Green Architecture	Dawn Nikols
Lotto Tree	Kala Geoscience	Stephanie Joseph
Gamer Tree	Crowe MacKay	Charlene Harder
Calgary Stampede	Unitech Construction Management & Michael Green Architecture	Dallas Ingvarsen Kallen Ross
Living Room Tree	Upper Nicola Holdings Limited Partnership	Satara Twan



**UPPER NICOLA BAND**

**MAILING ADDRESS:**

**GENERAL DELIVERY**

**DOUGLAS LAKE, BC V0E 1S0**

**BAND ADMINISTRATION OFFICE:**

**2225 VILLAGE ROAD,**

**DOUGLAS LAKE, BC**



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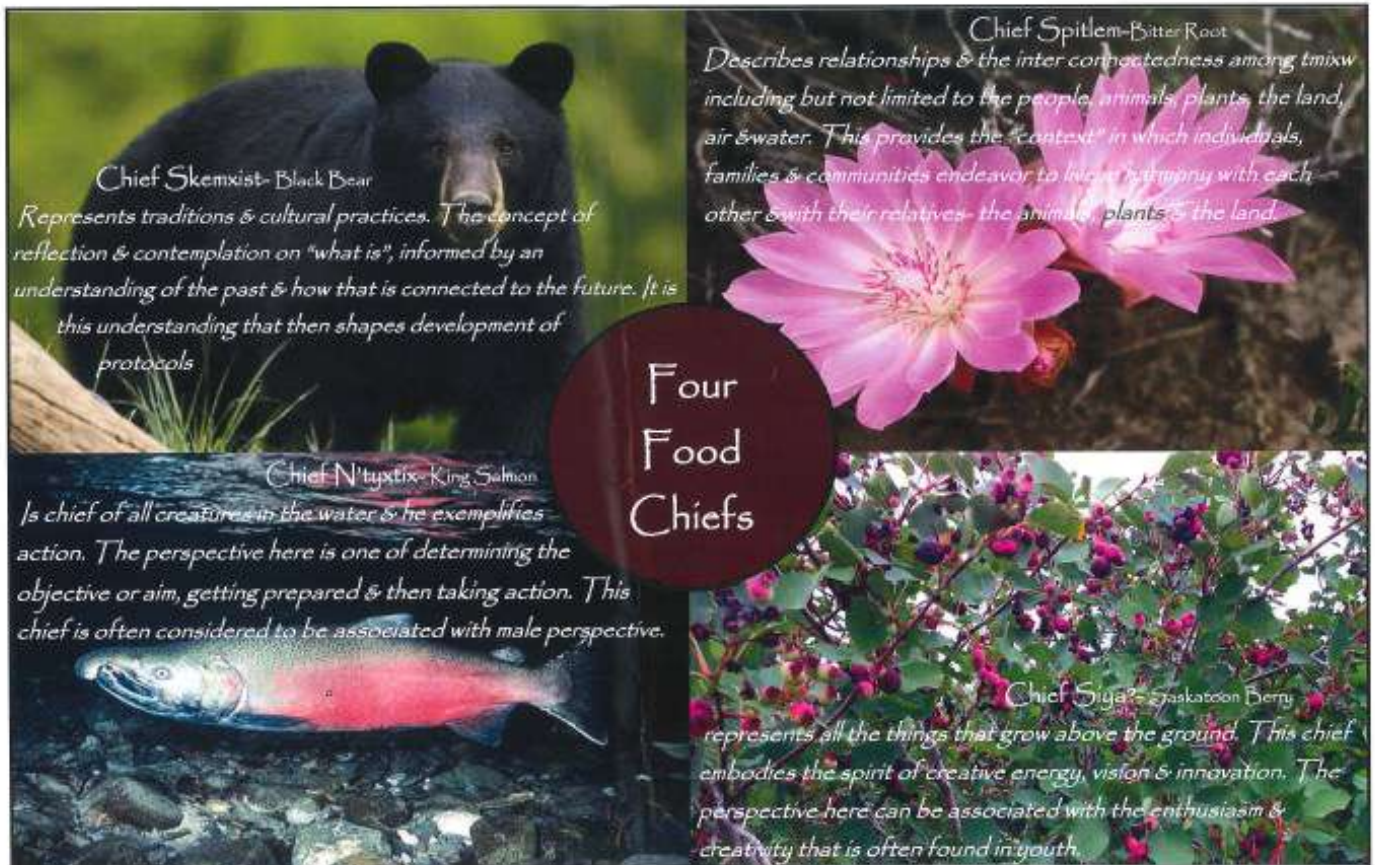
Facebook @ <https://www.facebook.com/uppernicola/>

Instagram @uppernicolaband

TikTok @uppernicola

YouTube @Upper Nicola Band

UNB App email [communications@uppernicola.com](mailto:communications@uppernicola.com)



### Mission Statement

Upper Nicola is a proud, inclusive Syilx community working together to promote suxwtxtem, teach our Captikwl and committed to building foundations through En'owkin'wixw.

### Vision Statement

A strong flourishing community in harmony with our tmix<sup>w</sup>



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