Upper Nicola Band
Annual Report 2025-2026



wa̓ý p̓ʸʃayʃát (Hello everyone)
kʷu climt p̓ʸcyʃap (We are glad you all have arrived)
A strong flourishing community in harmony with our tmixʷ

Upper Nicola is a proud, inclusive Syilx community working together to promote suxʷtxtəm, teach our captíkʷɬ and committed to building foundations through EnoWkinWixw.

Upper Nicola Band



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As always, I am proud to present this years Annual Report to UNB Membership. It is my great honor and privilege to have been re-elected as your Chief and I am committed to doing the best I can to achieve your goals and to implement your vision. As a community we have continued to move forward together in everything we do.From exciting community-based activities to regional and national recognition of our work individually and collectively we can look back on the past year with pride and a deep sense of accomplishment!

I want to acknowledge the work of one of our long-time leaders, Scotty Holmes, whom has dedicated a tremendous amount of time and energy to our community over the past 50+ years. What a great example of service, dedication and perseverance. This year Scotty decided to step back from his leadership role on Council to focus his efforts on settlement of our Commonage Claim.As we continue to advance our claim with Scotty's leadership and direction, I want to personally thank him for his work at both the Council and Chief level. It is often said across Indian Country that Chief and Council is a tough job, but Scotty always made it look easy to me. I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with him at the leadership level and can attest to his strong will and belief in our Inherent Title and Rights and his willingness to do whatever it takes to protect them.Every strong leader needs a strong support system, and I know Scotty's family will be happy to have a little more of his time in the coming years.

Chief & Council

This report will highlight the tremendous work of our teams across every program and service area. Also, you can learn more about the governance and inherent rights work being undertaken.I encourage you to add your voice to this work by staying connected and taking part in the events and meetings that are held throughout the year. The newly elected Council has reaffirmed the importance of continual improvement in communication, and I am excited to share space with all members in creating a communication system that is rooted in respectful dialogue, information sharing and building on the work we are already doing in communication.



Thank-you to all of our amazing staff who support us daily.This annual report and AGM are the showcase for your work and excellence over the past year! I ask all members to take a moment and acknowledge your hard work and effort! In closing, I have to say again how proud I am of our community!Everything I do as your chief is for you. I will always do the best I can to put your needs and interests at the front of everything I do. I am always happy to sit and meet with all members whether its off the side of a community event, over a coffee or in the office please do not hesitate to reach out.
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Four Food Chiefs

In 2025-26 we focused on organizing our departments into the Four Food Chiefs. By doing this, we are incorporating our sqlxʷɬcaẃt – "Indian way of being".
When doing our Staff meetings and Managers meetings we do updates in order of the 4 Food Chiefs.
In Spring we have the Departments that are aligned with sp̓iƛ̓m – Bitterroot lead discissions.
The following Departments focus on sp̓iƛ̓m perspectives, interconnectedness & relationship:
Kwu Stemtima, Headstart, N'kwala, and Education.
In Summer we have Departments aligned with síyaʔ - Saskatoon berry lead discissions.
The following Departments focus in síyaʔ creativity, vision and innovation:
Social Development, Health, Lands, Community Services, and Housing.
In Fall we have Administration and Finance Departments aligned with ńtytyix – King Salmon lead discissions, that consider the perspective of action.
In Winter we have Departments aligned with skḿxist – Black Bear lead discissions.
The following Departments focus on skḿxist perspective of wise reflection, Traditions and Culture:
Governance, Stewardship, and Nsyilxcen.
We will continue to practise implementation of our way of being, in our day-day work.
We are also incorporating our nsyilxcən – Syilx language, by utilizing the 13 Moon times. We practise how to say the moon time together as Staff. The nsyilxcən calendar words, and voice recordings can be found on the UNB webpage under the nsyilxcən Language Department tab.

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Four Food Chiefs

Chief spitlem - Bitter Root

Describes relationships and the inter connectedness among tmixw including but not limited to the people, animals, plants, the land, and the air and water. This provides the "context" in which individuals, families, and communities endeavor to live in harmony with each other and with their relatives - the animals, plants, and the land.

Chief siya? - Saskatoon Berry

Represents all the things that grow above the ground. This chief embodies the spirit of creative energy, vision, and innovation. The perspective here can be associated with the enthusiasm and creativity that is often found in youth.

Chief n'tyxtix - King Salmon

Is chief of all creatures in the water and he exemplifies action. The perspective here is one of determining the objective or aim, getting prepared and then taking action. This chief is often considered to be associated with male perspective.

Chief skemxist - Black Bear

Represents traditions and cultural practices. The concept of reflection and contemplation on "what is," informed by an understanding of the past and how that is connected to the future. It is this understanding that then shapes development of protocols.



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Governance Executive

This report provides an overview of recent governance, policy development, and community engagement initiatives undertaken by Governance, under the direction of the Chief and Council for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Governance continues its transition away from the programs and services model of the Band Office, with an increased focus on Upper Nicola's Rights and Title, self-government, and self-determination. This shift reflects a long-term vision of strengthening jurisdiction and advancing Nation-led decision-making.

A comprehensive plan to move away from the Indian Act is currently in development. This plan will serve as a guiding framework as Upper Nicola works toward exercising greater autonomy and moving out from under the constraints of the Act. Several key initiatives are supporting this transition, including the development of a Consultation and Accommodation Policy and Law, the advancement of an Our Relations Law, and the initial stages of developing an Upper Nicola Land Code. Together, these initiatives are building a strong legal and governance foundation that will support the Nation's path toward self-determination.



Governance Executive

Governance with the Chief and Council have continued advancing work on a formal Consultation and Accommodation Policy/Law. This initiative is aimed at strengthening the Nation's governance framework by ensuring that all consultation processes with external stakeholders—particularly governments and industry—are conducted in a manner that respects Aboriginal rights and title. The policy establishes clear expectations, procedures, and accountability measures to ensure meaningful engagement, protection of community interests, and alignment with legal obligations. It represents an important step toward asserting jurisdiction and improving decision-making processes related to land and resource use.

The Terms of Reference for Chief and Council have been reviewed, updated, and formally ratified. These updates provide greater clarity on roles, responsibilities, and governance procedures. The revised document supports transparency, accountability, and effective leadership by clearly outlining decision-making protocols, ethical standards, and operational expectations. Ratification of the updated Terms of Reference ensures that governance practices remain current and aligned with community values and priorities.

Governance has actively collaborated with the Douglas Lake Commonage Advisory Council on the development of the Cultural Fracturing document. This work focuses on identifying and addressing the impacts of land use and development on cultural integrity, traditional practices, and community well-being. This collaboration has incorporated Indigenous knowledge, values, and perspectives into the document that supports Upper Nicola's ongoing claim of the commonage.

Governance Executive

The recent Chief and Council elections resulted in a successful voter turnout of over 40%. This level of participation reflects strong community engagement and interest in governance processes. The election process was conducted in a fair and transparent manner, reinforcing confidence in leadership selection and community decision-making. Increased voter turnout is a positive indicator of trust in governance structures and a willingness among members to participate in shaping the Nation's future.

The Stewardship Department is overseen by Governance and Chief and Council as their role is to protect the land, preserve the Rights and Title of all Upper Nicola Rights Holders.

Jamilynn Viviers, CD, BBA-HR
Governance Executive
Upper Nicola Band



Band Administrator

2025-26 is year five of implemtation of the UNB Strategic Plan. We have updated 90% of our goals that have been identified. Please check out the Status Update Under the Plans and Reports page onnour webpage.

Our new community centre construction has been underway. From April 2025 when we were doing... you can see the change to the site. By the end of the fiscal year in March, we were...
We have had 7 UNB apprentices continuing their on the job learning experience.

Nkwala Gym experienced a break to the sprinkler. The gym was closed for x days.we had a core group respond to the break. We worked to dry the space, repair major damage that was caused. A few things that resulted from the break include upgrades to the kitchen appliances, hot water tank.
We have also initiated replacement of the HVAC system, that hasn't been working properly. Our community gathering space in Spaxmn is getting some needed repairs.

The Kwu StemtimA? continue to develop our own law, that will determine how we will govern how we will take care of our own people. This work will need all hands on deck, and we will need to be strong individually, as families, and as community.





Band Administrator

We had to update the lease for the UNB Housing Society units to include lot 143. This was done after the referendum vote, May xx, 2025. Work proceeded on the negotiation of the headlease for Lot 87. This headless will support the sublease for the solar development, and other developments that will located on lands designated for economic development, Lot 87, IR 1. To improve the timelines to complete transactions, was considered when Chief and Council have made decision to enter the Land Code process. Work began in April 2026.

In the fiscal year, we developed our nsyilxcen plan to revitalize our language. We then started to action our plan, by hiring two instructors, and six Language Apprentices. It is the job of these 8 people yo teach and learn our language. We have goal to develop fluent speakers. With the assistance of funds we accessed through our participation in the class action suit to bring back language and culture, we can bring our dream to reality.

This year brought forward opportunity for us to look at ourselves, to do healing, through trauma informed teachings. As Staff and community we learned about lateral kindness, and approaches to work eith our people. We will continue to do this important work, and participate in on the land work, that will also assist us in our healing, and movement forward.

2025-26 has seen continued growth and change. Together we are stronger.

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Kwu stemtima?



kʷu stəmtíma?

OUR RELATIONS • OUR STRENGTH • OUR FUTURE

Guided by our values.
Grounded in our culture.

Building strong families.
Strengthening our community.

The kʷu stəmtíma? continue to grow and make changes reflective of community need.
In 2016, Upper Nicola held an eńowkinwixw to address the number of children in care; and in 2017, a meeting was held with five stəmtíma? and the band administrator. There was a clear goal to make changes and to strengthen families.

2016 Upper Nicola held an eńowkinwixw to address the number of children in care.

2017 A meeting was held with five stəmtíma? and the band administrator. There was a clear goal to make changes and to strengthen families.

2026 Ten years later, we continue to develop and make change. The chart reflects our strategic plan.

The stəmtíma? provide guidance and the eight staff who do the good work of building family relationships and family wellness and upholding the strategic plan.

OUR DAY IS DYNAMIC. OUR COMMITMENT REMAINS.

Our day may begin with a plan and at the end of the day; the plan is still there; no change.

What may happen in a day?

Addressing a family emergency or providing family support

Planning or being on-the-land to learn, to share knowledge, and to just laugh and enjoy each other's company (build relationships) – gathering, playing golf, skiing, youth horse clinic, hockey school

Involvement with Men's Wellness, men's and women's sweat, physical/mental wellness

Meetings, sometimes one meeting after another, including family, SCFSS, and ONA

Preparing for or being at event sewing, cooking, making moccasins/quilts, etc

Advocating for people experiencing hardship and challenges – justice systems, financial support, mental health support

And then, there are times when we enter "The Unknown" – a community member may not know where to turn and they are stressed and at a loss; so they reach out to the kʷu stəmtíma?. It may not be part of our mandate; but we do our best to help.


OUR STRATEGIC PLAN
kʷu nəqsiłtət (Our Relations)
sqiłxawtət and captikʷt
• Land based experience, knowledge, and learning
• Strengthen relationships
The Unknown
Acknowledging what we don't yet know as we continue to learn together.
Access to Support and Services
• Advocacy and partnership
• UNB interdepartment collaboration
• Community engagement
• Continuum of care
kʷu nəqsiłtət (Our Relations)
Collaboration and Teamwork
• Scw'exmx Child and Family Services; Okanagan Nation Alliance; RCMP
Capacity and Infrastructure
• Staffing – build capacity
• Space – brick and mortar, on-the-land
• Strengthen policies and procedures
syilx laws, guided by our captikʷt
• captikʷt Ethic Agreement
• Community engagement
• Data and Informed Decision Making
• syilx Law for Our Relations development
Family centred support
• Family centred support
• Build individual/family capacity – workshops, training
• Mentorship and peer support
The work we do every day is guided by our relations, our responsibilities, and our commitment to family wellness.
Together, we build strong families and a strong community.
Upper Nicola BAND

Education

1. Executive Summary

- Way’ x̌ast sx̌ĺx̌ʕaĺt.

- The Upper Nicola Band (UNB) Education Department continues to support learners across all stages of education, from early childhood through to post-secondary and lifelong learning.

- This year focused on strengthening land-based and cultural learning opportunities, advancing Nsyilxcən language integration, supporting youth leadership and identity development, expanding post-secondary supports and governance processes, and building strong partnerships.

- UNB Education remains committed to supporting members in creating their own futures, grounded in community, culture, and responsibility to one another.

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2. Department Overview

The UNB Education Department provides support across Head Start, K–12 Education (N’kwala School & SD #58 Merritt), Post-Secondary Education, Adult Learning, and Cultural & Language Revitalization.



Education

- . Key Initiatives
- 3.1 Laptop Initiative – Giving Back to Community
- Refurbished laptops and tablets were provided to youth, community members, Elders, and students to improve access to technology for learning and communication.
- Impact includes improved access to online learning, reduced digital barriers, and increased support for student success.

3.2 Cultural & Land-Based Learning: Horsemanship

Youth participated in horsemanship programming supporting land-based learning, cultural teachings, and connection to traditional practices.

3.3 N'kwala School Sewing Initiative

12 Janome sewing machines, 2 sergers, and a leather machine (in progress) support student and community programming including ribbon skirts and shirts.

3.4 Honouring Community Members

This initiative honours Late Laura Manuel and upcoming recognition of Late Amy Tom in collaboration with family.

3.5 Youth Leadership – Gathering Our Voices

13 UNB youth attended Gathering Our Voices, supporting leadership development and cultural identity.

3.6 Language Integration & Identity

Nsyilxcən language integration continues through programming and updated Education Department logo.

3.7 Elder & Youth Engagement Initiative (ONA Partnership)

Elders and youth gathered at N'kwala School for a shared meal and connection, followed by participation in ONA Bingo.

Education

4. Programs & Services
4.3 Post-Secondary Education
Post-Secondary Policy development is ongoing and aligned with the Student & Family Handbook, both projected for release June 30, 2026.

Education prepares applications while the Education Steering Committee, including Elder representation, reviews and makes final decisions.
5. Parent & Guardian Engagement
Student & Family Handbook is in development, projected for release June 30, 2026, to support communication and access to education services.
6. Community Partnerships & Governance Engagement
Participation includes IEC, Syilx Education Steering Committee, Okanagan Grandmothers Group, SD #58 ISA, FNESC, and Four Food Chief Meetings alongside UNB departments.
7. Initiatives in Progress
Post-Secondary Policy and Student Handbook (June 30, 2026), language integration, technology supports, and partnerships ongoing.
8. Community Impact & Education Snapshot (Preliminary)
Post-Secondary: 30 Students
Elementary & Secondary: 45 Students
Funding & Supports: FNESC, SD 58, New Relationship Trust, Construction Foundation of BC,
Youth Programming: Youth After school Program, Gathering Our Voices, Youth Hockey, Youth Basketball, and Post-Secondary Student Support

Education

9. Challenges & Opportunities
Challenges include rural access and funding demand. Opportunities include language revitalization and land-based learning expansion.
10. Looking Ahead (2026–2027)
Release of handbook, policy implementation, continued programming, and strengthened partnerships.







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way',

This has been a wonderful year at N'kwala School. A brief outline of our school year can be found below. I am working on a more detailed annual report for our school that will go into more detail about all the exciting learning opportunities we have got to experience, which should be ready in June.

Staffing, School Operations, and Instruction

The 2025-26 school year started off on a great note. All staffing was in place, and as I began my role in June, I was able to work throughout the summer to ensure that everything was in place for our September start-up. The staffing assignments can be found below:

Princapal	**Travis Klak**
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

N'kwala School

We have had a major focus this year on recruiting students and improving our student attendance.While we have been successful in having a few students join our school this year, we have had an equal number transfer to other schools, both due to family moves, and other reasons. Our attendance has increased significantly this year from last year, partly due to the incentives we have been offering, as well as the numerous land-based learning opportunities we have been able to provide this year. This is due in part to the significant support provided by several of the UNB departments, including sqlxʷcaẃt and kʷu stəmtíma?.
Our enrollment for each cohort was:

Elementary (K-3)	4 students
Intermediate (4-7)	5 students
High School (8-12)	7 students
Homeschool	3 students





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N'kwala School

I am proud to say that we will have one graduate this year, Michel Tom.Michel has worked so hard to come to
school every day, and take a full academic courseload, including pre-calculus, physics, and chemistry.Our graduation date is this year for June 11th at 6:00 PM. Please make sure to mark that on your calendar.
Some of the land-based learning opportunities that we have been fortunate to participate in this year include buckskin processing, skinning, poking, tanning, and using the hide to make cuffs; beading; fieldtrips to the commonage area, Pictograph Rock and Coyote Rock, Glimpse Lake, and captikʷɬ activities at the Pit House.
Our high school students (grade 10-12) continue to utilize Connected Classrooms through FNESC to complete much of their coursework. Connected Classrooms allow students in smaller schools to access a wide range of academic courses (e.g. 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.
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.



N'kwala School

Operations and Maintenance

All the major repair work from the school flood had been completed prior to the beginning of the school year. We were able to start the year off back in our beautiful school. Everyone was thrilled with this, and it has led to a more cohesive school environment. I have been working with Peyton and Collette throughout the year to get all the smaller projects completed with respect to the flood repair, and we are nearly through all of those.

In January 2026, we experienced a sprinkler freeze in our gym. This was due to the gym's HVAC system requiring extensive work to maintain heat in the building. Worked to clean that up concluded in March/April 2026, and the gym is now fully open to the community again. A new HVAC system has been ordered and will be installed once it arrives. This will solve the issue of poor heat in the winter, and no AC in the summer.

This year was also the year for ACRS reporting, and a few maintenance issues were noted as needing to be completed, including replacement of urinals in the school and gym buildings, replacement of some exterior doors and exterior lighting, amongst other things. These items will be addressed throughout the remainder of the school year, and into next year.

This has been such a good school year, one that I have enjoyed so much. There has been a great deal of language and land-based learning that I have gotten to participate in alongside our students, and I look forward to continuing with this learning next school year.

kʷu kʷukʷstxʷ,
Travis Klak, Principal, N'kwala

Headstart / Snscemalatan

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



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Headstart / Snscemalatan

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, Pumpkin Patch, and Kangaroo Farm. We had our own powwow on June 5, 2024 up at Glimpse Lake with N'kwala school, Lower Nicola school, Coldwater School, NVIT daycare and Nooaitch Headstart; with a 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.





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Headstart / Snscemalatan

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.

Headstart / Snscemalatan

Summary of our achievements from this year

We haven/t did to much travelling because we don't have a driver for the 15-passenger 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 visits to Rotary Park.

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

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

We have purchased a 15-passenger 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.

We have made up Culture and Language bins, Gardening bins and Nutrition bins for the children 0-6 that will be disrupted to the family's homes when they phone the Head start.

We have starting planting corn, peas, carrots, radish, and the children are very excited to see the plants popping up from the dirt.

We want to fence the whole field of and get the field back into shape so our children can have a big yard to play and run freely with out getting hurt, and or big dream is to turn the ball field in to a Arbour so we can host powwow and events in our community and feel safer.

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Health & Social Development

In times of change, when Health and Social systems are unpredictable and difficult to navigate, our role has remained the same which is to ensure members have somewhere to turn when they require assistance. This past year has shown just how vital that role is.

The challenges members face is increasingly complex. Rising costs continue to stretch household budgets, housing remains scarce and expensive, and health care systems are under enormous strain. Newer situations from the aftermath of COVID 19 and the shift to remote work, to the increase of AI and automated processes are each adding instability and uncertainty to the public systems members rely on every day. Too often our members are left navigating unclear ministry services at moments when they are most in need of help. 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. This strategy utilizes positive approaches to health that emphasize holistic wellbeing and the cultivation of strengths to enhance overall quality of health.

With the goal of raising awareness of our Health Services, and building relationships, it was important for us to promote social and emotional wellbeing as it is as they are the foundation of physical and mental health for our members.This holistic concept educates members and offers insights about the importance of connection to the land, culture, spirituality, ancestry and how these affect the wellbeing of our members and community.

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Health & Social Development

At one level, our 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 has been evident by the family physician coming to our Health Center every two weeks. This continues to provide 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.

At another level, nation work (ONA), continued as 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.

Health & Social Development

Air and water quality are important environmental drivers of health. Water testing continues weekly in both of our communities. Discussions have surfaced about looking at alternative home heating methods that may reduce smoke in the air and minimize our need for firewood. Other environmental drivers include access or exposure to healthy foods including gardening and traditional foods.

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.

Empowering Members	Cultural Identity	Healthy Community	Sustainable Environment	Economic Opportunity	Supportive Workplace

There were many program functions delivered in each strategy to strengthen members with the essential tools of education and support. With the assistance of the Stemtima program and the determination of our staff, it is hoped that members achieve the best possible outcomes.



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Health & Social Development

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

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Health & Social Development

·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-Community clean up
·Weekly Bus services
·Kids Christmas party
·Childcare support
·Huckleberry Camp
·Glimpse Lake camp
·Dental



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Health & Social Development

Responding to the Toxic Drug Crisis

Our team has 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. I am happy to report that seven members have attended substance misuse treatment centres and are currently doing very well. As directed by members, we are currently researching and planning to create an aftercare program to support ongoing wellness.

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.

Health & Social Development

This report reflects both the challenges members are facing and the improvements in our services. 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”.





Lands, Wills & Estates

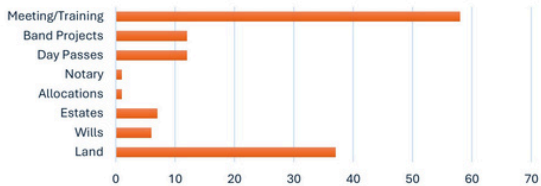
Manager:

Manager:
Susan Manuel
lands@uppernicola.com



Lands Clerk:
Iris DeMontigny
landsassist@uppernicola.com





	Land	Wills	Estates	Allocations	Notary	Day Passes	Band Projects	Meeting/ Training
Lands Activities	37	6	7	1	1	12	12	58

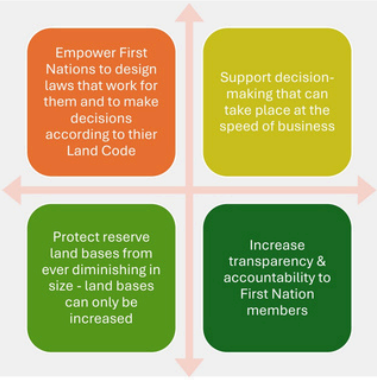
2025-2026 Highlights

- June 16, 2025 – Chief and Council approved the updated Land Use Plan and Land Allocation Policy
- November 10, 2025 – Chief and Council signed BCR to confirm UNB's desire to become a signatory to the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management
- February 20, 2026 – UNB signed the Adhesion document for the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management
- March 17, 2026 – UNB signed the Developmental Phase Funding Agreement for the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management

What is the purpose of Framework Agreement?

The purpose of the ***Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management*** is to recognize the inherent right and governmental authority of First Nations to take control of their lands and resources for the use and benefit of their members without outside interference.

To provide a basis for First Nations to replace 44 of the land management related provisions of the *Indian Act* with a First Nation's own land law – typically called a **Land Code**.



Housing

Council's Mission & Vision:
Mission: Upper Nicola is a proud, inclusive Syilx community working together to promote suxtxtEm, tech our captikwl,and committed to building foundations through En'owkin'wixw.
Vision: A strong flourishing community in harmony with our tmix^{w}

Department Vision, Mission & Values:
To plan, deliver, and maintain quality housing in a fair, transparent, and responsible manner, ensuring safe living environments while protecting community assets and supporting long-term housing sustainability for our members.

Programs Vision, Mission & Values:

- Respect
- Accountability
- Well-being
- Equality & Fairness
- Stewardship
- Empowerment





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Housing

Electronic Records & Laserfiche Implementation	• Transition from partial to full adoption of Laserfiche for all housing-related documents including tenant files, inspections, work orders, and funding agreements. • Establish standardized file naming conventions and retention schedules to ensure compliance, continuity, and audit readiness. • Reduce reliance on paper files by at least 75% by May 2026.
Electronic Records & Laserfiche Implementation Emergency & Climate Resilience Planning	• Develop a Housing Emergency Response Protocol for fires, floods, power outages, and extreme weather. • Incorporate wildfire mitigation, drainage improvements, and weatherization into capital projects.
Housing Condition & Risk Assessments	• Conduct annual housing condition assessments aligned with BC Housing Asset Management standards. • Identify high-risk units for capital planning and funding applications.
Arrears Prevention & Financial Stability Program	• Implement early-warning arrears tracking with automated reminders. • Offer structured payment plans and referrals to financial counselling. • Reduce chronic arrears cases year-over-year.
Energy Programs & Asset Sustainability	• Move from research-only engagement to phased implementation of energy efficiency upgrades (heat pumps, insulation improvements, smart thermostats). • Prioritize homes with high energy consumption and vulnerable occupants. • Align energy initiatives with long-term asset management and climate resilience planning.

Housing

Provide septic box Cover to all rental units	• 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. • Strategic Goal healthy community.
Preventative Maintenance Focus	• Shift emphasis from reactive repairs to preventative maintenance scheduling (furnaces, septic, roofing, woodstoves. • Track maintenance history digitally to support asset lifecycle planning.
Host Info Sessions from partner programs	• Housing department staff will host info sessions requested by UNB members, UNB Housing Society, UNB Chief and Council, and UNB Band Administrator. • Housing department staff will host Hub Insurance info session with Chad Belbin in February 2025. • Strategic Goal healthy community & Supportive Workplace..
To attend Council and General Band Meetings	• Community engagement is essential, and the housing department will start to set aside time to attend functions. • Strategic Goal healthy community & economic opportunity.
Participating in Managers Meeting	• Communication between departments is essential and the housing department will set q aside time for UNB Housing employees to attend sessions. • Strategic Goal supportive workplace & healthy community.

Housing

Provide Chalets (store wood) to all residents of UNB within budgetary means	• 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. • Strategic Goal healthy community, cultural identity & economic opportunity.
Applying to funded programs: ISC, CMHC, and NAS	• Housing department search and apply for multiple funding from governing partners such as CMHC, ISC, and NHAS. • Housing department has engaged in funding program for CMHC Co invest implemented in November 2023. • CMHC contributed 40% toward reno repair program and UNB contributed 60%.
Participate in Band Organized Community Events.	• 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. • Strategic goal supportive workplace and healthy community
Tenant Counselling	• 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. • Strategic goal empowering members, supportive workplace, and healthy community.
Housing Applications (new or resubmission)	• Housing department accepts housing application ongoing basis and filled housing applications can be stored in the housing department for up to 2 years. • To ensure fair and equitable manners there is only 1 housing employee appointed to collect and maintain housing applications. • Strategic goal supportive workplace

Communications

Communications Department started in October 2020 – Chief and Council at the time wanted a communications department so we can be more open and transparent with our membership so in October of 2020 the communications department was formed. In the beginning, we were Facebook, a Website and started an App. In time we have added more platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, X (Twitter), TikTok, and BlueSky. Over the years we have grown a lot in terms of followers and viewer analytics.

Some changes over the years: In the beginning we started with minimal platforms and low followers. We have grown and adapted to have many more platforms and avenues to get a hold of more of our membership of all ages. As you will read later you will see all of the upgrades. This is just one reason why we keep doing a printed newspaper so our elders and non computer users can access the newspaper every other Wednesday. We have also introduced an audio version, “So You Know”, of the newspaper so membership can listen to the newspaper quickly or in a fly. Not only did we add platform’s but we have also added in a podcast; UNB Live. As of April 30th, 2026, we have recorded 37 episodes of UNB Live. We publish a show roughly every 3 weeks. UNB Live focusses on important updates, upcoming major events, and many other topics as they come up. It has been a valuable asset for our members.

Over the years we have received good feedback from all departments. We do our best to assist each department with anything they might need from creating a post to attending events to document. We have also changed the format of the newspaper to a more enjoyable read.

Events attended: Mother’s Day Gathering, Indigenous People’s Day, Youth Summer Camp, UNB AGA, Orange Shirt Day, Christmas Tree Enchantment, Pink Shirt Day, Spring Break events, Ground Breakings, Ribbon Cuttings, Harvesting of the tree that will be used as a boardroom table, Unity Runs, N’kwala School Time Capsule, Burrowing Owls, Luncheons, and many planning meetings.

Communications

QCC updates: Communications has been documenting everything from site choice, planning, groundbreaking, finding ancestorial remains, layout of building, start of the building and all of the little advances since then. We will share more final details in the next annual report. Completion of the entire centre will be complete in the fall but we are looking forward to all of the opportunities and events that will take place in our amazing community centre.

Commonage: This has been a long battle, but Communications has been there to help and not only learn but to share the need to have this finalized. We have worked along side the committee for many years and have documented meetings and gatherings. We will continue to assist with this major milestone.

Title & Rights: Attending workshops and gatherings to learn more about Title & Rights and Stewardship of our land and what we are aiming to get. We attend gatherings with our people to share and suggest ideas of what we are wanting.



UNB Website



Diana Moffat 250-280-3772 communications@uppernicola.com
Shannon Ninham 250-280-3709 assist.comm@uppernicola.com

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Finance

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 pursed professional development courses and workshops during the fiscal year.

Finance

··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.

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.

Finance

John Adebanjo (CFO) Chief Financial Officer:
John Adebanjo-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.



Some staff members have changed.

Human Resources

In 2026, the Human Resources (HR) Department made substantial progress in advancing key strategic priorities, including recruitment, retention, employee development, and organizational effectiveness. Through a combination of policy enhancements, new programming, and operational improvements, HR continued to strengthen workforce capacity while supporting a positive and sustainable organizational culture.

Workforce Attraction and Retention

A series of targeted initiatives were introduced to enhance the organization's ability to attract and retain talent in a competitive labor market. These included:

- Subsidized housing support to improve accessibility for employees
- Flexible work arrangements to promote work-life balance
- Expanded short-term contract opportunities
- Competitive compensation adjustments
- Enhanced employee benefits offerings

In addition, the organization maintained a strong commitment to community-based hiring practices. Engagement with post-secondary institutions and youth employment initiatives remained a priority, supporting both workforce development and long-term succession planning.

Compensation and Benefits

A comprehensive review of the UNB salary grid was completed to ensure alignment with current labor market conditions. Resulting wage adjustments were implemented to maintain equitable and competitive compensation practices across all roles.

An employee benefits audit was also conducted to identify discrepancies and opportunities for improvement. To support employee awareness and engagement, both on-site and virtual information sessions were delivered, with a focus on benefits utilization, including Registered Savings Plans (RSPs).

Human Resources

Employee Development and Capacity Building

The HR Department continued to invest in employee growth and organizational capacity through several key initiatives:

- Development of a Career Readiness Workshop, designed as a two-day program covering resume writing, interview preparation, professional networking, and job readiness skills
- Establishment of a Grant Writer position to support departments in identifying and securing funding opportunities
- Launch of the Sylix Language Apprenticeship Program, supporting language preservation and cultural revitalization

These efforts contribute to both individual employee development and broader organizational sustainability.

Recruitment Modernization

Recruitment strategies are being modernized to improve outreach and engagement. A key initiative underway is the development of an HR recruitment video, which will enhance the organization's visibility and strengthen its employer brand.

Operational Improvements

Significant operational enhancements were implemented throughout the year to improve efficiency and accuracy:

- Introduction of a new organizational chart to better reflect structure and reporting relationships
- Ongoing improvements to the payroll system to enhance usability, accuracy, and processing efficiency

These changes support stronger internal processes and improved service delivery to employees.

Human Resources

Since last fiscal year we have added below full time employees to our UNB team:

Stk'masqt	Manuel-Meltingtallow	Language Apprentice
Baileigh	Holmes	Language Apprentice
Harleen	Kaur	Payroll & Benefits Coordinator
Troy	Holmes	Cultural Monitor
Cheryl	Gropp	Health Program Coordinator
Juanita	Lindley	Cultural Safety Lead
Travis	Klak	Principal
Ben	Clarke	Maintenance/Housing
Dylan	Dunn	Maintenance-DCS
Catherine	Tom	Accounts Payable
Natalie	Holmes	Title & Rights Assistant

Human Resources

Kaushik	Raman	Tenants Relations Officer
Shona	Sparrow	Education Manager
Amanda	Lamothe	Language Apprentice
Krista Belle	Stewart	Language Apprentice
Jonathan	Tom	Language Apprentice
Gloria	Sheena	Language Apprentice
Samantha	Tom	Language Apprentice
Shannon	Ninham	Communications Liaison
Leteesh	Archachan	Sr. Resource Technician
Justine	Manuel	Lead Language Instructor
Elaine	Spinks	Assistant Housing Manager

To further support operational requirements, the organization engaged six external contractors in key roles and implemented eleven short-term contracts over the course of the year to address evolving departmental needs.
Apart from that, we had 12 terminations within the last fiscal year.

Language

NSYILXCEN DEPARTMENT
ANNUAL REPORT2025/26
kʷu cʔullus uł kʷu sqʷaqʷaʔalx
Let’s gatherand 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.

One major highlight and accomplishment withinthe last year has been the creation of our own UNB LanguageHouse program. This program is designed to create new language speakers within out own community. We have hired two Language Instructors, and six Language Apprentices. We have secured a space to house the Language House. The name given to our Language House is “iʔ sqiʔstət”,
meaning “Our Dream”. The Language House idea came from the community Language Revitalization engagement sessions. It was identified as a main priority.

We are very excited to celebrate the success of iʔ sqiʔstət Language House. We are truly grateful for the community and leadership’s supportof this very vital initiative for bringing our language back to our community.

Language

In additionto the creation of the iʔ sqiʔstətLanguage House, the Nsyilxcn department have been able to continue 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 learnin that area. Language resourcecreation 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 financialsupport and advocation, community backing, patience,healing, and dedication, nsyilxcən (Okanagan language) will become our primary means of communication.

EMPOWERING MEMBERS

§ Advocating and Supporting Language Learners

i. Nsyilxcen language classesin Kamloops

ii. Various community membersare participating in language learning initiatives.

iii. Promoting community engagement in language learningby offering opportunities for members to learn the language.

kʷu mrimstn #UNBSTRONG

way ti? xilx
Just Do It!

iʔ sqiʔstət
Upper Nicola Language House

Language

CULTURAL IDENTITY

§ Sharing of language materials and resources with community

i. Social media, newsletter submissions, access to materials via website

ii. Sign Project: nkʷritkʷ(Glimpse Lake) Language/signage

iii. Tea Talks

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

§ Supporting the community in revitalizing our language

§ Establishing a language-promoting environment

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

§ Nsyilxcen LanguageProgram Team

i. Nsyilxcen Language Manager

ii. Community Language Engagement Coordinator

iii.Two Language House Instructors

iv. Six LanguageHouse Apprentices

§ Language ProgramGrant Funding

i. The Four PillarsSociety

ii. First Peoples CulturalCouncil – LanguagePrograms (LP) grant

iii. First Peoples CulturalCouncil – CulturalPractices Grant (CPG) grant

SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE

§ Collaborating and assisting the Upper NicolaOrganization in their language utilization and language revitalization initiatives

§ Collaborating with other UNB Departments on hosting communityevents

Upper Nicola
Nsyilxcən Department

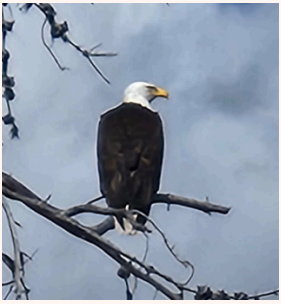
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Stewardship

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)





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Stewardship

Some highlights throughout the year:

Hiring of New Staff
The Stewardship Department was pleased to welcome Natalie Holmes to our department as the new Title and Rights Assistant in October 2025.

Species at Risk Program
10th Year Anniversary Burrowing Owl Release Celebration Planning
Planning began with the Burrowing Owl Team in January 2026 to host the 10th Anniversary. Invitations for 100 people to attend were sent out with catering, fundraising, and suitable locations identified and secured.
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.
Douglas Lake Signage Finalization
The years' long IBA Signage Project work continued with Stewardship department's own Loretta Holmes ensuring that the Lewis's Woodpecker, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Burrowing Owl, and Spadefoot Toad were identified with the Nsyilxcən word for badger listed as yəx̌ʷyəx̌ʷutxn', Frog as sw'ar'ák'xən, and Willow Grouse as saʕsáʕs, and sq̓əq̓axʷ for Burrowing Owl. The signage will also include a QR code to hear the language spoken by UNB Elders. Thanks go to Maynard McRae and Justine Manuel from UNB's Language department confirming we had the correct names. Please be sure to look for the signs located at the Old Mom's Store and the cattleguard – Area of Interest before Douglas Lake Ranch.

Stewardship

Wind and Solar Projects

The Stewardship department has been very busy supporting UNHLP in exploring whether to move forward with various wind projects that are in UNB Areas of Interest. This includes either boots on the ground or desktop reviews. To date over 37 proponents have approached UNB and the Stewardship department.

Monitoring and Small/short-term projects

- Ongoing monitoring TransMountain pipeline construction
- Ongoing negotiations and reviews for the Enbridge Twinning Pipeline Project
- 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 construction monitoring for the new ńłq̓iłəmĺx Quilchena Community Centre
- 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

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Burrowing Owl Anniversary

The Tenth Anniversary of the Upper Nicola Burrowing Owl Program

The UNB Stewardship Department's dedicated BUOW team (Dawn Brodie, Chris Gill, Loretta Holmes) welcomed elders, community members, and guests to share the vision behind the Burrowing Owl Recovery Program. Attendees learned about the ongoing efforts and importance of reintroducing this important Species at Risk back to our grasslands.

Loretta Holmes shared meaningful words: "From many Indigenous perspectives it is about holding relationships, responsibilities and balance within the living world. Conservation, therefore, becomes an act of restoring harmony and respect within the system".

N'kwala School drummers welcomed us all with song.

Eleven captive owls were released and eleven very honoured guests were thrilled to hold and release an owl into a burrow. Many photographs were taken!

Meeting "Pluto" the education Burrowing Owl with handler Lauren Meads was an opportunity for many to see a burrowing owl up close.

At the end of the owl release everyone enjoyed the terrific bag lunches provided by Charlotte McRae.

The field staff appreciated community participation to celebrate together this amazing and successful program for critically endangered burrowing owls. So far we have had 30 offspring.

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Burrowing Owl Anniversary

A Banner Year for Upper Nicola Burrowing Owls

The field season started off with a surprise. Five returning wild owls! It is normal to have 1 or 2 owls return from migration each year but 5 is a celebration in itself.

The owls quickly paired with chosen mates and after 28 days of incubating precious eggs, they produced 30 offspring! This is another record. Artificial burrows are readily accepted by the owls for nesting opportunities. The horses and cattle in the area provide the owls ample manure with which to line their nests. The field researchers and staff supplement feed farm-raised mice to maximize adult survival and nesting success. The owls learn how to forage over the summer and food caches show the owls hunting ability to catch pocket gophers, deer mice and meadow voles. One juvenile owl needs 2-3 mice per day to thrive! This program has shown the value of quality grassland habitat and how owl productivity has significantly augmented British Columbia populations.

Upper Nicola Burrowing Owl Program 2016-2026

Released Captive raised birds	Wild born juveniles	Returning Owls
95	167	17

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Stuwix Resources Joint Venture

Upper Nicola Band Harvest Report for April 1,2025- March 31,2026
Stuwix delivered 61,752m3 from Upper Nicola Bands Forest License A88927 and Non-replaceable A91693 in 2025/26
-4,679m3 - DZ5007 – Whiterock Lake
-42,089m3 - DZ5011 – Sabin Road
-14,983m3 – FX2012 (NRFL A91693) and associated right of way – Spahomin Creek)

2025/26 operations focused on the southern slopes of the Douglas Lake Valley with operations coordinated with Douglas Lake Cattle Company (DLCC) as all volume in 2025/26 crossed deeded DLCC lands. Harvest plans in 2025/26 focused on utilizing Non-replaceable Forest License A91963 allotment (84,565m3) that expires December 31, 2026. NRFL A91693 accounts for uplift Innovative Forest Practices volume accepted by UNB in 2021. Upon completion of NRFL A91693 in 2026, license volume will decrease to the long-term 47,272m3 of RFL A88927.

Stuwix continues to implement forest practices based on standards derived from Upper Nicola Bands Suxwtxtem Principles which focus on sustaining the diversity of species and their habitats in perpetuity for the well-being of future generations. A harvest review was of operations in Spahomin Creek with Brian Holmes and Maxime Lepin, RPF in February 2026 noted good practices along with areas of improvement on wetter site associations that have been incorporated into 2026 operations.

Total revenues received by UNIB for the fiscal year were $1,000,455.

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Ecological Anchor(TUZ) dispersed leave trees in FX2012 SD2055 (Spahomin Creek) during February 2026 UNB/Stuwix field review



Grinding operations, implemented by Klassen Group with Stuwix supervision, continue to be implemented on all harvest blocks in the Douglas Lake area.Operations will continue in 2027 to reduce the amount of burning completed on Upper Nicola Bands license volume.

Respectfully,

Lindsay Tighe,
General Manager Stuwix Resources JV.

Christmas Tree Enchntment

Living Room Set	Carolyn Farrell
Tool Tree	Joyce Harry
Gamers Tree	Evelyn Charters
Mini Vacay	Angela McIvre-Tighe
Boys Tree	Nate Tom
Woman's Tree	Sunshine Andrew
Ice Fishing Tree	Omegga Auclair
Girls Tree	Christine Provost
NV Adventure	Rivera Harry
Gift Card Tree	Kathleen Joe
Money Tree	Beatrice Anthony
Lotto Tree	Belinda Peters
Kwu stemtima? Tree	Tammy Pierre
Grocery Tree	Michelle Hall

Christmas Tree Enchntment

Golf Tree	Jody Antoine
Book Tree	Dorothy Clarke
BC Adventure Tree	Marvin Blankenship
Deep Freeze Tree	Annette Alexander
Washer & Dryer Tree	Lloyd Webowsky
Lucky 7	-Linda Gilchrist -Gwen Flett -Faren Steinhaver -Tyler Sterling -Debra Tweedy -Paul Torrence -Jan Robichaud





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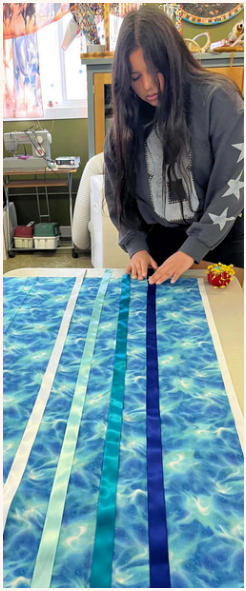
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Photos

















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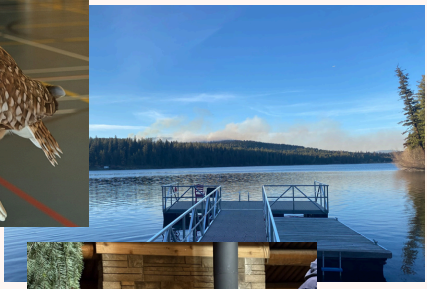
















Photos

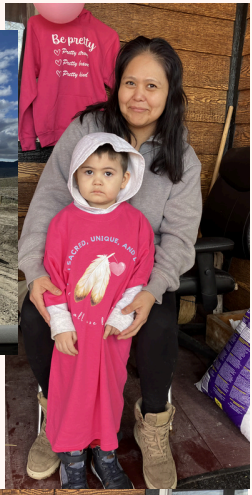





Upper Meota
Burrowing Owl Reintroduction Program






Be pretty





Photos











Photos











Contact Information



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