

# TAKU

WINTER & SPRING 2023



TAKU RIVER TLINGIT  
First Nation



Honoring Our Ancestors  
**VISION**

## T'aakú Téix'i The Heart of the Taku

### Editor's Note:

Welcome to the Winter/Spring 2023 edition of the TRTFN Taaku Newsletter. We are delighted to share the latest issue with you, and we hope you enjoy it. As always, we encourage our community members to provide feedback, share ideas, and suggest content that they would like to see in future newsletters.

Please feel free to share this publication with your friends and family. Our aim is to share uplifting stories, gain insights into our community, and foster a sense of connection amongst us all.

Please visit our website at [www.trtfn.com](http://www.trtfn.com) for more information about TRTFN, and to download this and other issues to read and share virtually and to join our mailing TRTFN mailing list.



**Rebecca Law**  
TRTFN Communications  
Coordinator & Taaku Editor  
[communications@gov.trtfn.com](mailto:communications@gov.trtfn.com)

**PO Box 132 - Atlin BC, V0W  
1A0 Phone: +1 250-651-7900  
Fax: +1 250-651-7909  
Email: [trtfn@gov.trtfn.com](mailto:trtfn@gov.trtfn.com)**



**TAKU RIVER TLINGIT**  
First Nation



### Article Contributors

Charmaine Thom, Rodger Thorlakson,  
Wayne Carlick, Jorge Llaca Buznego,  
Chantelle Schultz, Robyn Moore, Larissa Rueckenbach  
Trevor Williams, Shauna Yeomans, Andy Carlick,  
Shirley Jack, Taku Harris, June Jack,  
Connie Morris, Moses Track, Daniel Kemppling

### Photography Provided by

Wayne Carlick, Debra Michel  
Manu Keggenhoff, Rebecca Law, Brent Law,  
Jason Williams, Jerry Jack, Archbould Photography

### Content Committee

Kaushee O'shea, Brittnee Wesley, Andy Carlick

### Interviews, Layout & Design

Rebecca Law  
TRTFN Communications



Front Cover: Photography by Rebecca Law Back Cover: Photography by Manu Keggenhoff





# *Jinik*

Charmaine Thom  
**TRTFN SPOKESPERSON**

There is strength and purpose within our Tlingit people. Each and every one of us has been gifted with something unique that contributes to our great Nation. Our ancestors, leaders, hunters, sewers, wood gatherers, elders, and medicine men and women, all had a piece of what it meant to be a strong and thriving community. And so do we.

It has not been an easy journey for us, these past few seasons. The changes we have faced, both internally and externally, have challenged us in ways we never thought possible. But through it all, we have found a resilience and inner strength that we didn't know existed within us. Our Creator and ancestors watch over us, guiding us through the moments of uncertainty and doubt.

Change is never easy, but it is necessary for growth and adaptation. Our people have always been able to adapt and

thrive, even in the face of adversity. And we will continue to do so. Our leadership, Wolf and Crow clan leaders and directors, and our management and staff work together toward a common goal of advancing our Nation and uplifting our people. We are all paddling in the same direction, with good intentions and a deep sense of purpose.

***"There is  
strength and  
purpose within  
our Tlingit  
people"***

We have accomplished so much in the past year, despite the challenges we have faced. And I am filled with gratitude for our strong and supportive leadership, who hold each other up and work diligently toward our shared vision. Our Nation is becoming stronger with each passing day, and we will continue to thrive and adapt to the changes that lie ahead.





## *Thank You Charles Pugh*

We want to say thank you to Charles Pugh for his hard work and dedication during his time at the Taku River Tlingit First Nation. He has made a positive impact on our community and accomplished many goals. Charles is a kind, positive, and compassionate person who will be deeply missed. We achieved a lot under his leadership, and his legacy will be felt for years to come. We wish Charles all the best in his new position and are grateful for the time we worked with him.

Gunalchéesh,  
Charmaine Thom  
TRTFN Spokesperson







# Children of Tomorrow

On Sunday, February 12th, 2023, Taku River Tlingit First Nation joined other First Nations in the Yukon to celebrate a significant milestone in Indigenous land claims history at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre in Whitehorse, Yukon. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was also in attendance as they commemorated the 50th anniversary of Together Today for our Children Tomorrow, a document presented in 1973 by a group of Yukon First Nations chiefs to then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau. The document paved the way for modern land claim negotiations and self-government agreements across the Yukon.

"We are the children of tomorrow," said Maria Benoit, the chief of Carcross/Tagish First Nation who attended the event, "and we're still standing, and we're still celebrating." The celebration was a momentous occasion for Taku River Tlingit First Nation and all Yukon First Nations as they reflected on their progress and looked towards a future of continued growth and prosperity.

***"we're still standing,  
and we're  
still celebrating"***



Photo by Manu Keggenhoiff





# Land Water Air

## **Rodger Thorlakson** **TRTFN Lands & Resources Manager**

At TRTFN Lands Department, we are proud of our exceptional team of dedicated land stewards. With specialized divisions focused on responsible and respectful management of wildlife and ecosystems in TRTFN traditional Territory, we have a lot to share and report on.

Our Fisheries Newsletter highlights the incredible work done by that division, while further information can be found on the Land section of the TRTFN website. There, visitors can access a wealth of resources, including downloadable PDFs, videos, and more. With so much to offer, it's difficult to do justice to all that we do in just one paragraph.

We would like to encourage everyone to stay updated on our work by emailing or calling our offices, as well as attending our meetings and gatherings. Your input is important to us, as it helps us focus our efforts on the work that is most needed on our territory.

Our surveys are particularly valuable in this regard. We are committed to serving the land that sustains us and are proud of the work we do to honor this commitment. We are grateful for the abundance and life that the land provides us, and we strive to be good caretakers of this precious resource.





# TRTFN *Guardians History*

by Trevor Williams  
TRTFN Land Guardian

I started as a volunteer in the TRTFN lands department when I was 14 years old, wanting to experience being on the land with Elder's like Harry Carlick. I began working in fisheries for 7 years before transitioning away from the work to become a carpenter and pursue other interests.

In 2016, I was asked to support the newly funded Guardian program. We didn't have enough funding for full time work, but for a few hours each week, we worked, applied for more funding, and kept busy looking for opportunities to progress the program. We took jobs guiding inspectors, biologists, researchers, and university students who came into the territory needing support on the land.

As funding and relationships were established, we were able to buy capital for the program. The land guardian program was beginning to be seen as successful and we were asked to support our First Nation neighbors in starting their own guardian programs. We have evolved from a 3 to 4 person team to an almost 20-person lands team thanks to much of the early foundational work of a dedicated few.

The experience has been transformative for me. I have evolved with the program, learning much about the land and the power it holds for me as a Tlingit and for all people who choose to live and work and play here.

We are the eyes and ears of the first Nation on the land, keeping people accountable to Mother Earth and our First Nation territory. It's an honor to be a part of something so important and meaningful.







The Land Advisory Board (LAB) Presentation Jan 27th, 2003; Special Guests were Former Chief of Muskoday FN Austin Bear (Director LAB and Finance Committee Chairman), Patty Wright (Manger of FN Support Services BC) and LAB Chairman Chief Robert Louie Westbank FN attended via Zoom Photo by Rebecca Law



TRT YTG Government to Government forum March 2023



Photo by Manu Keggenhoff

## Community Advisor

**The First Nation Health Authority recognized our Community Liaison Louise Gordon at their forum. Congratulations Aunty Louise for this Health Focus Recognition!**

(February 2023)

" We Are definately reclaiming some of our pieces of our Cultural ways, that were lost through Residential School and decolonization. Today as a community we believe that culture and dance is healing. When we dance it is a way of communicating to the people." *Louise Gordon 2023*







# Meet Bird

Meet Bird, the stuffed raven who has become a beloved companion of Jerry Jack on his work in the Taku Territory. Jerry honors his ancestors by exploring and working on the land, and Bird has been by his side for every step of the journey.

Despite being a stuffed animal, Bird has made many appearances on social media and has become a fan favorite among Jerry's followers. His silly jokes and playful personality never fail to bring a smile to our faces, and we can't help but feel a little bit envious of his adventures with Jerry.

Jerry's work on the land is fulfilling and rewarding, and he takes pride in carrying on the traditions of his ancestors. He knows that he is walking in the footsteps of those who came before him, and he feels a deep connection to the land that sustains him.

But it's not all serious work for Jerry and Bird. They take the time to enjoy the beauty of their surroundings, to laugh and play, and to soak up the joy of being alive. For Jerry, this journey is about more than just work; it's about living fully and honoring his heritage.

And for Bird, it's about being a joyful companion on this journey of life. We may never know where their adventures will take them next, but we can be sure that wherever they go, they will do so with a spirit of joy and wonder that inspires us all.









# A Lifetime of Learning

## Reflections from Nais Dai U

by Andy Carlick  
TRTFN O&M Coordinator

As an elder in our community, I have seen many seasons come and go, but I wanted to share with you all my story. My Tlingit name is Nais Dai U, my English name is Andy Carlick, and I come from a family of strong and loving people. My grandfather was Judson Ward, and my mother was a Ward who married a Tahltan named Harry Carlick. Together, they had a dozen kids, and I am the youngest of my siblings.

My older siblings would say, when headed out on the land to hunt, "You are too young, you stay home, you make too much noise, you will scare the animals!" So, growing up I spent a lot of time with my mother, picking mushrooms and berries in the seasons. She taught me how to cook, clean fish, trap and do chores. She was my guide and mentor, teaching me how to survive in the wild and take care of myself. Although it was hard being the youngest and watching my siblings pass away, spending time with my beautiful mom was a gift that I treasure to this day.

My Biological father passed away of a heart attack on his way to work. I ended up with a stepdad who was a veteran, and he did the best he could, he was brave to take on our big family. As our older siblings grew up and moved away, my brother Joey and I were together. He had down syndrome. He and I were close. We sent him off to a school to learn some life skills and independence, and he lived in WH in a group home for a while. We were told that his life would be a short one, but he lived to be in his 40's before he passed away.

I left for Whitehorse to pursue an education but ended up in Residential School for a few years. After that experience, I stayed in the Yukon, became a red seal carpenter and headed to Calgary for my apprenticeship. I worked on many projects, including the Olympics construction projects, hotels, dams, bridges, and other heavy construction. I met my beautiful wife Lola, and we started our family in Calgary and raised our children there. My wife and I separated for a time, and I moved back to Atlin to build a house and help my people and the Nation. We eventually came back together, and have been together for over 40 years now.

One of my dreams for our community is to build a gymnasium, a safe and healthy space where our kids, elders, and people can grow, play, and be healthy together. I believe in the power of exercise, team

play, and learning life skills as we laugh and have fun together. Even though I may not be alive to see it, I will always hold onto this dream and work toward it for the future of our community.

In my early days, I struggled with drinking, but I chose to become sober over 30 years ago. It was not an easy journey, but I knew that life is tough enough as it is, and I did not want to create more mess by drinking or drugging. Instead, I chose to spend more time with my family and create true relationships that have lasted a lifetime.

As I get older, I have learned that things get better, and every day is an opportunity to do something towards our dreams. I played baseball with my kids, went swimming with my girls, and I love my wife. Life is a beautiful journey, and I am grateful for all I have learned and all the blessings from the Creator.



Photo Credit: Manu Keggenhoff



# Latséeni 'House of Strength & Wellness' Daakahidi

## Recalling our HARM REDUCTION EVENT

March's harm reduction event put on by the TRTFN House of Strength & Wellness was truly unforgettable! There was so much to enjoy, from the helpful information and door prizes, to the fun Traditional Hand games. And let's not forget the delicious community lunch and supper.

The day included sharing of incredible stories and teachings. It was such an uplifting and heartwarming experience, with everyone holding each other up. Gunalcheesh to all who came and supported the event, whether you stayed for a little while or until the very end at 9 pm. Thanks for making it such a special day!



**Gunalcheesh to our dedicated staff & volunteers!**





## *Tlingit Law Revitalization* *Update*

# **RELAW**

Since the last newsletter update in early 2021, our project has achieved several milestones. Between February and June 2021, we completed 22 interviews with community members. We also co-hosted the Nakina Hike Law and Language event with COTTS and the Land Guardian Program. Over four days, we hiked the Nakina trail with 20 people, spent four days at Nakina camps with 22 people, and delivered law and language programming during the hike and at the camps. This process was especially meaningful because it reached community members who had not previously been engaged in the project.

In 2022, we restructured the project and created a Steering Committee to ensure that Tlingit voices are central. Despite many attempts to hire a Tlingit person to lead the program, we decided to pivot our strategy. We put out a call for expressions of interest to the community in April 2021, and all five community members who applied were given positions on the Committee. The Steering Committee will ensure that Tlingit direction is at the forefront of the project. Since early May 2022, the Committee members have been getting up to speed on the project and have developed a Terms of Reference. They will serve a two-year term.

Keep your eyes out for more updates as the Steering Committee will be reaching out to the community! We will be looking for Tlingit people to work with us to identify Tlingit laws that are held in our stories.

**For more information, please contact Aimee Schmidt, TAC Executive Director, at 867-336-2170.**





# *Rising from the Ashes*

## **A Story of Resilience and Gratitude**

by Connie Morris

We bought our home in 2011, and in 2022 it was engulfed in flames. It's hard to describe the feeling of losing everything you own, but even in the midst of the chaos, I had a sense of clarity that I can't explain. I knew exactly what needed to be done, I went in and out of the house seven times to save my husband, our pets, and our phones.

We ended up in the hospital for smoke inhalation, but we are grateful to be alive. Losing our home was a humbling experience, we lost many treasures, things of my grandmother, physical pictures, and other things, but we are determined to move forward.

Throughout this difficult time, I was constantly asked the question, "What do you need?" and I found myself at a loss for words. It was a new experience for me to be on the receiving end of help and support. However, this experience has taught me a valuable lesson in how to better assist others in need.

Moving forward, my focus will be on paying it forward and being there for those who may find themselves in a similar situation. I now have a deeper understanding of the

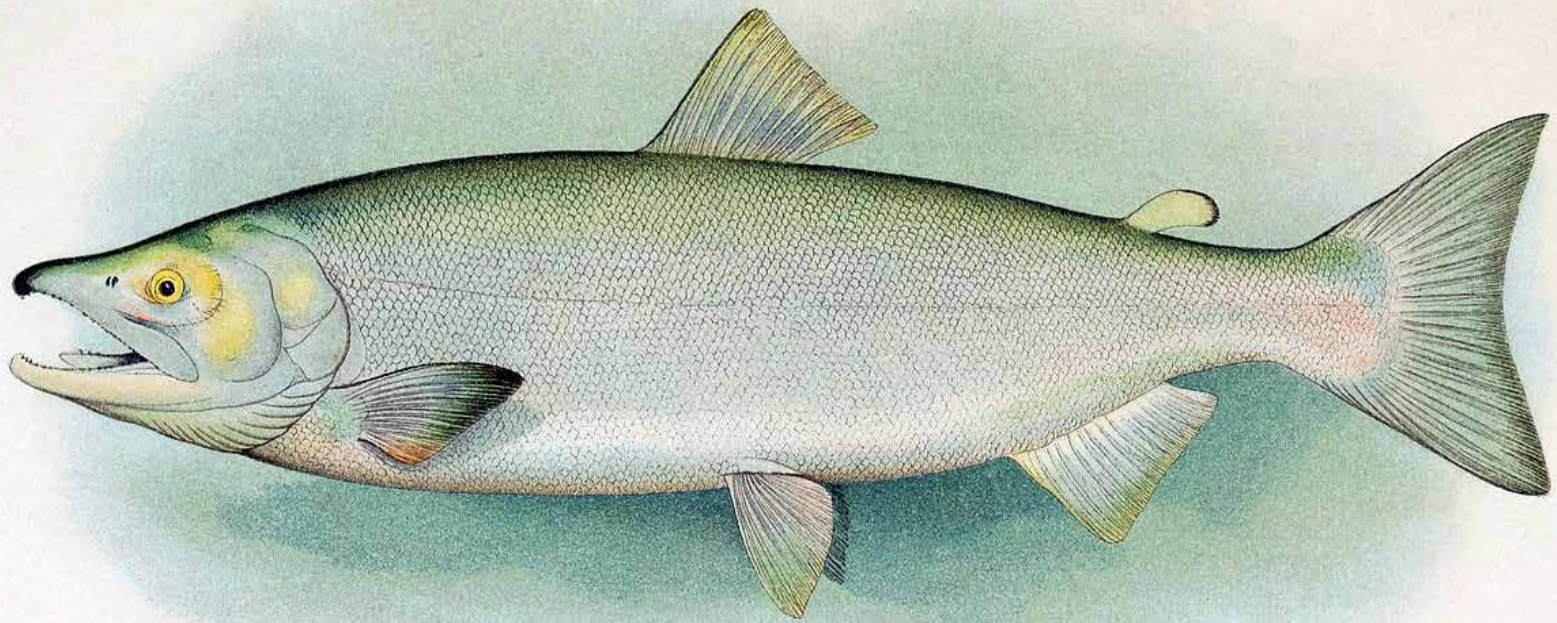
importance of community and support during times of hardship. It is my goal to use this experience to make a positive impact on the lives of others.

We have toyed with a few ideas of how we will rebuild, using existing sheds and other ideas to create a new home for us. My grandbabies want to help and build, and we will rebuild together. Even though I have fibromyalgia, I don't let it rule me. My motto is that I rule it, and I choose to live a life of joy and gratefulness.

***Choose to live a life  
of joy and  
gratefulness.***

This community has been wonderful to us, and we are grateful. We are here, we are safe, and we are moving onward and upward. As the saying goes, "The human spirit is stronger than anything that can happen to it." We will continue to choose joy and creativity, even after fire.





# People of the Tides

## A Tribute to the work of Clayton Carlick



People of the Tides

Private group · 458 members

Joined ▼

...

The Tlingit people have a deep connection to the land and sea, and their culture and traditions have been passed down through generations. Clayton Carlick, a Tlingit man from the Taku River Tlingit First Nation, has been a champion of his people's culture and a driving force in creating spaces for free-minded conversation and community building.

In March of 2022, Clayton created a Facebook page called People of the Tides. This non-public page was intended to be a space for free discussion and conversation, centered around politics, community, the world in general, and, of course, Tlingit culture and lifestyle. With over 450 followers to date this page has become a go-to source for those seeking to stay informed and connected with fellow Tlingit people.

Clayton's vision for the page was simple - he wanted to create a space where people could come together and share their thoughts and ideas in a safe and respectful environment. He chose a fish as the page's design element because his people are from the coast and fish is considered a symbol of good luck in Tlingit culture.

He credits Ameila Carlick for the name.

As the Communications Officer for TRT at the time, Clayton saw the creation of this page as a progressive move for the Taku River Tlingit First Nation to be present on social media. His experience as a copy editor and work with leadership in communications made him the perfect person to lead this effort.

Clayton's dedication to his people's culture and traditions has not gone unnoticed. He was instrumental in creating one of the first TRTFN newsletters, paving the way for others that have been published since. His work has been a beacon of hope for those seeking to preserve and celebrate Tlingit culture.

Today, we celebrate Clayton Carlick and the incredible work he has done over the years. People of the Tides is a testament to his vision and dedication to his people. We are proud of the community space he has created and grateful for the opportunity to stay informed and connected with our Tlingit culture and heritage. Thank you, Clayton, for your unwavering commitment to the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and the Tlingit people as a whole.





# Breaking Free

## A Journey of Healing and Transformation

by June Jack

Defeated.

That's the word that described how I was feeling. Mixed up. My life was a mess. I knew this without even going to the treatment center. One of the things that really helped me to get up and make a move to healing, was asking myself in an honest way, "Am I part of the problem, or am I part of the solution?" There was no denying that I was part of the problem. I wanted to be part of the solution. I was looking at myself and wanted so badly to change what I could and strive for that.

The treatment center was an hour outside of Nanaimo, called Cabo Hill. The grounds were so beautiful with large Cedars all around. It was a seven-week commitment, and it was one of the greatest opportunities I have ever had. I was scared. I am not usually a person who gets scared of things, but I was. I envisioned reliving my traumas and failing, but the experience was not as difficult as I thought it would be. It helped me to find myself and accept myself.

The waves of healing information I received were refreshing. From the benefits of movement and good nutrition to safety and self-awareness. I developed way more patience with myself because I was able to scope in.

I was reading a book about a shoemaker. The shoemaker had gone through so much trauma in his life that his brain was going crazy. Because of all the disfunction in his life, it was as if his mind was constantly spinning. I thought of how fortunate I was to not lose my mind with all that I endured in my life. People would ask me; "Why are you reading this stuff?" I would say, "Because it's interesting." To understand how people live with trauma and come out with a full understanding of what it does to people. Understanding that it's not your fault when terrible things happen to you, but it is your responsibility to take all the tools available and steps necessary to heal and live the best life you can.

I am a very logical and intellectual person; I know that I am a lot of great things when I am sober. Alcohol took away my self-esteem, it made me feel like I didn't belong. I'd cry when I get drunk and say, "I don't belong here," I'd know I didn't belong in that dark sunken place, but I kept on going back because I just didn't know how to deal with my trauma. How sad and scary it is, not knowing where to begin.

With a lifelong addiction, I always thought that drinking was a way to release my pain and constant mental chatter and pressure from the emotional pain I was carrying. It wasn't just the alcohol; it was also speaking truth to power. Rather than confronting people, I would shut my mouth and not say anything to them. It was difficult to speak the truth about my feelings and thoughts to people and that also caused me great pain. I would start hating the people that triggered me, and they didn't even know what they did. Indirect communication! Everything I thought I was doing right, was all wrong.

**Things happen all the time that is not good. You must go with the flow let things go, and take ownership of your life.**

Even before Covid, people wore masks, invisible ones. Everyone has a story, and we are afraid to take our invisible masks off, because we are afraid that people will not understand or accept us for who we are. A story is so powerful, even the painful and sad parts, it can change not just your heart for saying it out loud, but it can change the hearts of others. Giving them permission to take their invisible masks off and feel relaxed in the presence of themselves and others.

The greatest thing I got out of the treatment was going through my trauma. Recalling my trauma helped me look at my backpack and see what was in there. And say, "What do you expect June?"





My trauma started when I was just a child. I wasn't meant to mother myself, but we all had to, as our parents went through the pain of their own trauma of Residential School. And then we did as well. The men and the women both were sexually abused in Residential School, by both males and females. We brought all that trauma back home with us.

Being separated from your family, even at the schools, you were separated from your siblings. It broke us down and kept us alone and uncertain of what was going to happen next. Both my parents were raised in Residential school. Beaten for speaking her language, my mother would come home and be beaten by her own people because she didn't speak Tlingit. Take a moment and think about the confusing and traumatizing mental torture that is created in a young mind. "Who am I, where do I belong?" It's enough to split a beautiful soul in two.

I want to speak for my brother, my closest brother who passed away at 21 years old. They wanted to train him in the Olympics, he was such a great runner. He would run from Jakes corner to home. Broke every record from Whitehorse to Prince George in track. A man from Victoria came down and wanted to train him when he was 13 for the Olympics, but my mother was too scared to let him go. My mother was trying to save him, so afraid to let her son go. He became withdrawn and became an alcoholic. He went to Residential School and was abused. And his story was only shared with me after he passed away.

I have forgiven my parents and myself. If you don't, you hang on to it and begin feeding the monster in your head. You don't want to keep that monster alive. We have to reach out and ask for help and talk about what is going on. We have to be aware of what our cycles are and identify where we are on the wheel.

It is so easy to slip back into bad habits, but we need to remember who we are. We are a generous, compassionate people capable of healing and finding the strength to overcome our addictions. Take care of your needs and speak the truth, first to yourself and then to others.

I'm not saying I am perfect, but I am sure getting a lot better every day.



# *Our Land is our Future*

Written by Chantelle Schultz 2023  
Senior Negotiator, Manager of Negotiations Department

Our land is our future, our land is our legacy  
for the next generations,  
the traditional territory is ours to keep  
the elders have spoken, the elders had visions  
Old knowledge and connection  
to land is spirit-deep  
stories of past generations  
and ancestors' whispers  
ground us to the place now  
and forever called Wenah  
our culture is Tlingit, but love  
for the land is gifted to all.

Our land is our future, our land is our legacy  
the places that make us strong are called Tlatsini  
wherever we go or choose to reside  
we call ourselves inland Tlingit Clans  
and do not see borders that seek to divide  
the Elders keep us connected, holding up hands  
so we always remember where we came from  
the rivers to the South, the mighty Taku mother  
the land of cottonwoods and endless summer sun  
the ancestral home grounds  
of the salmon-bearing waters  
riverbank huts filled with good green wood smoke  
orange fish backs hang like  
gold in strong summer wind  
listen to the voices of those  
passed who once spoke  
hear through the clamor of  
modern chaos and pretend  
nothing exists but the shriek of wild land  
where the footprints of our  
forebearers disappear under glaciers  
we promise to uphold the ways of our Clan  
and forever honor the memory of our ancestors.

Our land is our future, our land is our legacy  
the places that make us strong are called Tlatsini  
Our land is our future, our land is our legacy  
for future generations, this land is ours to keep.

















# Collaborative Solutions for Community Safety

by **Daniel Kempling** Manager Community Safety

Emergency management is an essential aspect of ensuring the safety and well-being of any community. TRTFN has been working diligently to develop and implement emergency management strategies that support both our First Nation citizens and the Atlin community. These efforts aim to create a connected plan that ensures safety among all residents in the event of a wildfire or other emergency. To this end, a Community Emergency Preparedness Forum is scheduled for May 4th 2023, which will serve as a platform to connect the community around the subject of emergency management. The forum will create an opportunity for TRTFN to share resources and collaborate with community members to start the conversations needed to learn and plan together.

Our goal is to realize a collective, unified, educated, and prepared community where all persons are served, and everyone is accounted for. This will require the participation of all of our Atlin community members in developing an updated comprehensive emergency management plan. TRTFN has been working closely with Yukon First Nation Wildfire, both for FireSmart initiatives as well as for wildland firefighter training. One of their Directors and Emergency Management specialists, Nick Mauro, will be sharing his expertise and lessons learned at this event.

The Community Emergency Preparedness Forum scheduled for May 4th presents an opportunity for all community members young and old to come together and work collaboratively towards the development of a comprehensive emergency management plan. Let us all be committed to working together as we prepare for any emergency that may arise in this beautiful place we all call home



# O & M and Capital

by Moses Track  
Principal Administrative Officer of Capital Infrastructure,  
Housing, and Public Works

The Taku River Tlingit First Nation Capital, O&M and Housing Department had a successful and rewarding year. It was an honor to be a part of a team that prioritized creating safe living environments for our members. The team completed remarkable minor and major capital projects.

Our projects provide safety to the members but also promote a Wellness environment in both living and working spaces. Our short-term focus is renovating existing units to improve living conditions and this year we will be rebuilding an existing lost unit and a new unit for our citizens. Looking ahead, we have exciting projects that will benefit our members greatly.

We plan on constructing more infrastructure for those in need and launching a community development program that will enrich cultural activities for all TRTFN citizens. Our goal is to accomplish the needs of the community such as Center/Gymnasium, Multi purpose outdoor

community space, the Access road, Firesmart for safety, and additional assets for transportation and maintenance in the near future.

Our Connectivity Study is ongoing, and we have community engagement efforts underway this year, ensuring that our community stays informed about our work with that project for the purpose of the health and safety of everyone.

We are proud of our new purchases, including the bright red sewer truck and our mobility van, recreational equipment which will serve the needs of our citizens and youth with program requirements.

As we enter the spring season, we encourage TRTFN citizens to share their ideas and work with us to improve the infrastructure of the Nation. We are here to serve and support in every way we can. We wish you a wonderful springtime in 2023.

***"We would like to extend a heartfelt and special thank you to all of our staff and workers for their incredible dedication and hard work."***



# The Talent of Taku Harris



When I started learning to weave I made my first hat for my daughter, with Caitlin Rose patiently teaching me. The next one I made, I kept my dad in my thoughts and dedicated that hat for him. I've been dancing that hat for a few years now and have made numerous hats since then. Special hats crafted for my two beautiful sisters Joanne and Kaushee, and one special one made as a graduation gift for my daughter Cailyn.

I am always learning something new along the way. I even had the chance to teach my amazing niece Michelle Williams. She has turned around and taught me a couple tricks in my weaving now. Every hat I have crafted has been special. I am grateful for being invited to join the Taku Kwaan and the Dakhká Khwáan Dance groups, making regalia. I love most of all dancing alongside my daughter who started me onto this beautiful journey. I weaved for my two sisters with mom in my heart. I love and miss you Kaushee Harris, many people have told me how wonderful you were. I wish I had a chance to know you.

*Love Taku*





## The gifts of *Joanne Williams*



Traditional Bentwood boxes  
Made by Joanne Williams  
Phone **250 651 7664**

## The gifts of *Marie Jack*



**Traditional Beaded Artwork**  
**Made by Marie Jack.**  
These and other pieces can be found  
for sale in Carcross at the  
HAA SHAGÓON HÍDI



## The gifts of *Pamela Jim*

Contact Pamela Jim to  
order slippers, gloves,  
dream catchers,  
earrings and more.

[pamelaspassioninaction@gmail.com](mailto:pamelaspassioninaction@gmail.com)

The gifts of

## *Amelia Carlick*

Unique beaded  
Jewelry  
made with love.  
Phone  
**250 651 0090**





# HAA KUSTEEYÍ

## CELEBRATION

Culture is Healing

## 2023

The 2023 Haa Kusteeyí Celebration is set to take place from July 28, 2023, to July 30, 2023, in the breathtaking location of Áa Tlein- Atlin at Tarahne Park. This three-day event promises to be an unforgettable experience filled with many exciting programs and activities. At the heart of the celebration will be a traditional water crossing to welcome visiting Tlingit Nations who will arrive in Tlingit canoes. A lake side greeting ceremony and the lighting of the Celebration Fire will follow, and then the grand entry parade featuring pageantry, flags, and Tlingit regalia.

Throughout the three days, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in cultural programs and workshops, including public art workshops, cultural demonstrations, storytelling, canoe events, First Nation performers, artists market, kids zone, Tlingit language lessons, and much more! Each evening will be marked by a public feast followed by performances of traditional drumming and dancing.

This event is open to the public and admission is free. For those interested in taking part in the Inland Tlingit Celebration, we welcome you to contact us at [geshorty1@gmail.com](mailto:geshorty1@gmail.com). Join us for a memorable celebration of Tlingit culture and heritage in the stunning surroundings of Áa Tlein.



Follow our Haa Kusteeyí 2023 page on facebook today at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/haakusteeyi2023>





## ***TAKU RIVER TLINGIT ENTER INTO A HISTORIC COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH CANAGOLD FOR THE NEW POLARIS SITE March 29, 2023 – Wèinaa (Atlin), BC***

We're thrilled to announce that the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Canagold Resources Ltd. have entered into a groundbreaking collaborative engagement agreement for the New Polaris gold exploration site. We are so proud of the hard work of our Land team members who were involved.

This agreement demonstrates that reconciliation, economic development, and sustainable practices can work hand in

hand within the T'akú Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area. We're proud to be leading the way with mining company relationships and setting a new standard for our partnerships with developers.

Canagold CEO Catalin Kilofiski stated that the arrangement puts our collaboration on a firm foundation and forges a path forward for our sustainable economic development in the spirit of

mutual benefits, trust, and environmental stewardship. Provincial approval will be required for the project to develop into an operational mine, but more importantly, it is contingent on the consent of the Taku River Tlingit citizens.

We look forward to working collaboratively with Canagold and crown regulators with respect to sustainable resource extraction and economic development in our territory.





A few staff members of TFLC at the EASTER EGG PARTY 2023 Photo By Manu Keggenhoff

# Tlingit Family Learning Center

by Jorge Llaca Buznego, Ph.D  
Education Manager

The Tlingit Family Learning Centre (TFLC) is a cornerstone of education for the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN).

With a focus on holistic learning, TFLC offers a range of programs designed to prepare our young ones for formal education and to support our citizens through to post-secondary education.

Our approach is rooted in self-determination and incorporates language, culture, and traditional teachings. We believe that education plays a critical role in the development of our self-governing nation, and we strive to increase both enrollment and graduation rates among our citizens.

By empowering our students to find

pride in their Indigenous identities, we hope to promote a sense of independence and strengthen our community.

TFLC is proud to serve both Tlingit and non-Tlingit community members and their families in the Taku River Tlingit Territory. Our programs are diverse and include initiatives such as the Atlin School Lunch Program, High School youth trips to Vancouver, and the development of Lingít Language.

We are also proud to offer a Continuing Studies Program in Indigenous Language Revitalization through the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. At TFLC, we are committed to promoting TRTFN culture and supporting the ongoing success of our community.





EVERY CHILD  
**MATTERS**





# Adventures at Kutthai

by Shirley Jack





I grew up on the Nakina River with my family and many other children from the community. We have my parents Joan and Bryan to thank for that. Having the opportunity to spend much time in the bush and on the land has helped shape me into the person I am today. Being on the land is a big part of my family's life, land connection is extremely important for us as Indigenous people. I recently came to the realization that not many people are getting out on the land the way we used to and should be. We should be occupying space within our traditional territory every chance we get. Getting members out in the land needs to be a top priority.

In this realization it dawned on me that without doing this and providing land connection to the children, traditional ways can be impacted, and the transfer of generational knowledge can be affected. Decolonizing and applying traditional principles to our programs can ensure that we are supporting children and families to have the exposure and connection that is needed for them and for our sovereignty.

We've been at Kuthai three seasons so far and TRT fisheries has been supporting us being there with our children and other children. The goal of transitioning fisheries camps into family camps has been a pivotal movement through the Indigenous worldview. I raise my hands up to those that participate within that lens and operate for the overall well-being of indigenous governance and community.

Primarily having Hannah and Nicholas both at Kuthai during the summers allows them to learn about salmon, the job, and the land. It has a major impact on them physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually and will make all the difference in their lives.

Seeing them thrive in the bush, on the land learning important skills and knowledge and growing is an honor. Steve and I are so happy to be able to help and teach them. Sharing these experiences with them will provide the ability for them to find themselves in the world and be proud of where they come from and most importantly to be proud of being Tlingit!

We have surprisingly had a good number of salmon over the years, which was unexpected by fisheries. Camp at Kuthai Lake is not only a great opportunity to take care of the salmon but a great opportunity to occupy space and connect with the land. It is hard work being in the bush. The initial workload may not be heavy but being out there to make the work possible and get it done is what contributes to the overall workload. We have long days, and

everything is more difficult... laundry, dishes, cooking, cleaning, getting wood, being isolated and everything in between. This is where teamwork comes in.

It makes my heart happy when I see people out on the land. We have had handfuls of visitors and have welcomed them with open arms, shared meals, laughs and stories. We try our best to emulate Uncle Harry, always happy to have a visit, always having a fire going and always ready with tea.

We believe that by sharing our knowledge and experiences, we can inspire others to appreciate the beauty and importance of our natural surroundings. As we continue to cultivate a sense of community and stewardship, we hope to honor our ancestor's memory and ensure that future generations can enjoy the same sense of wonder and connection to the land that we do.





# TRTFN'S Land Protection Path



## Elders & Our Constitution

Leadership direction and elder support to develop Taku Tlatsini IPCA, approved for public release in early 2023. Declaration & map shared externally.

### Taku IPCA Declaration

**2023** ○ .....

## Hà t átgi hà khuštìyxh sìtì

**2003** ○



Community, Elder, and leadership meetings to confirm the use of the 2009 Tlatsini Vision & update as TRT's land protection vision.

### Initiates Tlatsini IPCA Initiative

**2018-19** ○ .....

## Tlatsini IPCA

### Places That Make Us Strong

#### Interview with Shauna Geehaadaslee Yeomans

As a TRT youth, I've been fortunate to visit other parts of the country and spend time in different indigenous spaces, whether it be conferences or gatherings. Those experiences have helped me see and appreciate all that we've been able to achieve as a nation. We come from a place of great privilege, and we owe a lot of that to our ancestors and the sacrifices of indigenous leaders that have helped us get to where we are today.

Flying home from Vancouver, I watched out the window and imagined the lush forest that once thrived where skyscrapers and condos now stand. I imagined how I would feel if this landscape was our Taku Inlet. It's a luxury to be tucked away from many of the pressures of industry and development, but it's also an overwhelming responsibility to continue to take care of our little corner of the world.

But protecting the Taku watershed isn't just important for TRT citizens. Whether we like it or not, we are at a place in human history where each and every one of us must take meaningful steps toward climate action. Here are a few reasons why the Taku is important on a global scale:



## Supreme Court Decision 2004

Tlatsini Vision  
2009

- ▶ Family Mapping
- ▶ Decades of studies and research
- ▶ Generations of Traditional Knowledge



Tlatsini Vision used as basis for negotiating the ATLUP protected areas.

**LUP and G2G Agreement**  
**2011**

- ▶ The Taku is the largest watershed on the Pacific Coast of North America that doesn't have roaded access. How awesome is that?!
- ▶ Because we've said no logging to in the watershed, the Taku acts as a carbon sink, which is super important for slowing the effects of climate change.
- ▶ The Taku is considered an intact ecosystem. For the plants and animals that live in the watershed, this means that they will be more able to adapt to a changing climate. Some call this a climate-resilient landscape.
- ▶ And lastly, as rivers and oceans around the world become warmer, the relatively cool waters of the Taku means that it is expected to become an important salmon stronghold. So we want to make sure we preserve their habitat!

Indigenous cultures have a way of knowing, being and interacting with our surroundings, allowing us to be one with the land. But we're living in a time of disconnection fueled by consumerism, capitalism and individualism. And it's this disconnection that is at the root of climate change. Reconnecting with the land helps us reconnect with ourselves, and it's that connection that we need to get back to.

Before working as a land guardian, I didn't feel like I had a real indigenous connection to the land. Being able to spend time on the land through my job as a guardian really helped me keep my head above water. And it's through my time on the land that I've learnt that there can be no reconciliation without Indigenous-led conservation.

As Taku River Tlingit, we have a really exciting opportunity with our IPCA to decide what Indigenous-led conservation, Indigenous-led research and Indigenous-led policy looks like within our IPCA. We care for one of the most amazing places in the world, which is a privilege, but it's also a really big responsibility.



# Snapshot of Heritage Week



In late February 2023, Heritage Week was introduced, featuring a week-long series of events celebrating traditional practices and artifacts. Participants were treated to a variety of engaging activities, including hands-on weaving lessons from the talented Donedin Jackson.

Additionally, Benjamin Louter, our lead Archaeologist with TRTFN, presented on his work at local archaeological sites. Attendees were able to handle and examine stone tools and other fascinating artifacts.

The events took place both at our new office located at 307 Strickland in Whitehorse, as well as our Atlin offices. The success of this wonderful event can be attributed to the skillful organization of TRTFN's own Tamis Cochrane in Heritage Archives.





# *Snapshots from* Haa Kusteeyí 2019





# The Journey home of our 140-Year Old Chilkat Blanket

## From Auction to Its Return Home in Atlin, B.C.

In November 2022, TRTFN achieved a significant milestone in our efforts to reclaim our cultural heritage. A Chilkat blanket, estimated to be from the 1880s, was sold in a bidding war at Waddington's auction house for \$38,000. Wayne Carlick, our master carver and cultural coordinator, was especially overjoyed at the news. "It's part of a puzzle to help us heal," he said. Bringing the blanket home to Áa Tlein is essential.

Chilkat blankets, or Naaxein in Tlingit, are a product of one of the most complex weaving traditions developed by peoples anywhere. They are made with braided mountain goat wool and cedar bark, and dyes, with elaborate designs. They were traditionally used in ceremonies, dances, or draped in an exhibition of wealth and prestige. The blanket had been held in an unknown private collection in Ontario before coming up for auction.

The blanket is an important piece of regalia that offers a direct link to the spirit of his Tlingit ancestors. Traditional regalia, is as vital to the culture as language. "They go to museums, the museum makes money off of it, and so on. But many or most of our people have never seen these pieces. It never comes home," says Wayne. "I think a blanket like this would do wonders for our people, in so many different ways. Being able to just bring it home, have the repatriation ceremony, call our ancestors, and express the joy of having one of our pieces back home."

The blanket would be coming home for Haa Kústeeyi' which takes place this year in Áa Tlein. "It gives our culture a much-needed boost," said Wayne. We could not have achieved this milestone without Peter Wright, who discovered the blanket listed for auction and immediately contacted Wayne, who was "ecstatic" at the discovery. They started talking about how to purchase it and bring it to Atlin.

This repatriation is a significant step in reclaiming the cultural heritage for our Nation. It's a reminder that traditional regalia, like language, play a vital role in preserving and passing on cultural knowledge.



2023 Youth Trip to Vancouver - Photo by Izaiah Carlick



# SUBSCRIBE!

*Stay Updated through email!*

**ATTENTION!**  
Community Of  
**Áa Tlein**  
(Big Lake)

YOU + YOUR FAMILY ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE

**COMMUNITY  
EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS  
FORUM**

**MAY 4<sup>th</sup> 2023**  
At the ATLIN RECREATION CENTER from 5:00PM - 8:00PM

ALL IN ATTENDANCE  
WILL RECEIVE THIS  
\$150 EMERGENCY

**CRAB & GO PACK**

**FREE**

WITH GUEST SPEAKER  
**Nic Mauro**  
from  
Yukon First Nation Wildfire

**DINNER @ 6:00PM**

ORGANIZED BY  
TAKU RIVER TLINGIT  
First Nation

Latseeni Dakahidi Team

**RECOVERY  
SUPPORT NIGHT**

AA AND WELLBRIETY GROUP

WALK IN BALANCE  
WELLBRIETY

Please Join Your Latseeni Dakahidi Team Members On

**TUESDAY NIGHTS**  
For Alcoholics Anonymous & Wellbriety Group

**4:30PM-5:30PM**

COFFEE, TEA, AND SNACKS AVAILABLE!  
TUTAN HIT DROP-IN CENTRE (DOWNSTAIRS)

\*\*\*Laptop and private space available during office hours (9:30am-4:30pm) to attend meetings out of the community\*\*\*

TAKU RIVER TLINGIT  
First Nation

**DOWNLOAD OUR NEW  
LAND FISHERIES NEWSLETTER**

Spring Summer 2021

**FISHERIES NEWSLETTER**

DOWNLOAD & PRINT  
or Read on your device

SCAN ME



We have several exciting events coming up and we want to make sure you don't miss out on any of them! To stay informed and updated, please make sure we have your current email address.

You can do this by emailing us at [communications@gov.trfn.com](mailto:communications@gov.trfn.com) or by subscribing to our email list on the homepage of our website, [www.trfn.com](http://www.trfn.com).

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!



# Life in Atlin

**Robyn Moore**, Financial Controller

I have been working at TRTFN for almost two and a half years and I am thrilled to have moved into the Finance department as the Finance Controller. I love overseeing the accounts and dealing with the intricate details of the accounts system, even though it can be challenging at times. To manage the workload, I focus on one thing at a time and get into my groove.

Last summer, my partner and I embarked on a road trip to Saskatchewan for a music festival.

On our way back, during a picnic lunch in the Steamboat mountains, my partner proposed to me in a romantic show of love. I said yes! It feels amazing to be engaged and living in Atlin. I often dream

of a simple life where we can be spontaneous and have an adventure without having to plan camping trips. Fortunately, living in Atlin is much like that dream, and every day is refreshing as we live in the moment.

Living in Atlin is incredible because we are surrounded by natural beauty and do not have to plan an adventure. We can do what we want, like taking a kayak ride around First Island at sunset, and be there in just five minutes, enjoying the stillness and beauty of the setting sun.

As we wave to our neighbors passing by, we feel so connected and free. This territory is magical, and I feel fortunate to start the next chapter of my life here.



When I was just a wee thing, my family moved up to the beautiful wilderness of Atlin. My parents owned a trapline on King Salmon, and while they didn't speak a lick of English (they were German and Austrian), my dad had always dreamed of coming to the Yukon. And so, we packed up and headed north.

## Strength & Support

**Larissa Rueckenbach**

Administrative Assistant and Receptionist

I started attending elementary school in Atlin, and let me tell you, it was pure magic. Back then, there were only about 30 other kids in the school, much like there are today. I adored all of my teachers, but one in particular, Mrs. C., was a true gem. It was she who first suspected that something might be amiss with my health. Everyone around me thought I had severe asthma, but Mrs. C. had a hunch that it might be something more. She was so caring and in tune with her students that she directed my parents to get me tested professionally. And wouldn't you know it, she was right! I was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) at just 10 years old. I credit her with saving my life.

Growing up with CF and arthritis wasn't always easy. I couldn't do gym class, sit

on the floor, or do most of the things the other kids could do. But thanks to my friends and teachers who cared for me, I never felt completely separate. And of course, I had my beautiful parents and family, who were always there for me. My mother, in particular, is my best friend and knows exactly how to make the sun come out on even the cloudiest of days. No matter what I was going through, she was feeling it with me, yet she remained dedicated and always by my side.

One day, my doctors gave me the perfect combination of medications to help manage my CF and arthritis. It was a game-changer, and I was suddenly able to function in a way I never thought possible. Even when I was feeling down, my family always had horses,

which were a source of endless joy and comfort for me. They were my reason for smiling and feeling happy, and I treasure them to this day.

And of course, I hit the friend jackpot. Amanda and Robyn have been my rocks through thick and thin, and I am so grateful for them. Life isn't always easy, and for some, it's downright difficult. But when you surround yourself with the people you love, the sunshine and rainbows always seem to come out. So, treasure those people in your life - they are the reason for everything.

**Treasure  
the ones  
you love**





# JOIN OUR TEAM LIVE LOVE PLAY WORK



SCAN ME

TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR  
ALL TRTFN OPPORTUNITIES

## WITH TRTFN

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[www.TRTFN.com/career/](http://www.TRTFN.com/career/)

For all of our opportunities  
email resume to:

to Cyndi Knill

[hr.manager@gov.trtfn.com](mailto:hr.manager@gov.trtfn.com)







TAKU RIVER TLINGIT  
First Nation

