



TAKU RIVER TLINGIT
First Nation



NEGOTIATIONS

NEWSLETTER FALL 2023

Table Of Contents

1	TRTFN Negotiations Department <i>Message from Senior Negotiator & Team</i> <i>Orientation to Negotiation</i> <i>Negotiations Departmental Structure</i> <i>Crown Lands or TRTFN Lands</i>	Page 2
2	Northern Territory Negotiations <i>Meet Our Team</i> <i>TRTFN-YG G2G Agreement</i> <i>Yukon Negotiations – Land Transfer Agreement (LTA)</i> <i>Whitehorse Office</i>	Page 7
3	Southern Territory Negotiations <i>Understading ST Negotiations</i> <i>BC-TC Main Table</i> <i>TIPCA</i> <i>Wenah Update</i>	Page 14
4	Multilateral (TRTFN-Canada-Yukon) <i>Child and Family Wellness Coordination</i>	Page 23
5	Treaty Related Measure Projects (TRM) <i>Traditional Governance & Clan Histories</i> <i>Oral Histories Project</i> <i>Constitution Amendment Project</i>	Page 29
6	TRTFN-BC-G2G Activities & Updates <i>TRTFN Visioning Process update</i> <i>Atlin Hydro Project Review Group (PRG)</i> <i>Moose Hunting Updates</i>	Page 37
8	Nation to Nation Engagement <i>Haa Kusteeyi 2023 Highlights</i> <i>TRTFN Spokespersons Message</i> <i>3Nation Society</i>	Page 47
9	Haa Shuká, hagú, hagú!	Page 54

Credits & Acknowledgements

Produced by Shaax'akée (Chantelle Schultz (Simpson) TRTFN)

Layout, Design & Copy-edited by Rebecca Law TRTFN Communications

Photography by Manu Keggenhoff & Rebecca Law. (Cover Photos by Manu Keggenhoff)



Message from Senior Negotiator

Chantelle Schultz TRTFN

Senior Negotiator (Manager) of the Department of Negotiations

Dearest readers, beautiful Tlingit souls, and wonderful supporters of TRT goals:

The fall season is upon us, and the Negotiations Department is back in full swing after soaking up as much of the goodness of summer as we could. Since the last Negotiations Magazine update, we have been making the most of our growing capacity by immersing ourselves in planning processes, keeping projects and negotiations initiatives speeding along, and collecting materials to showcase to our communities. There have been some staffing changes, additions, and farewells, and all in all, our team is growing steadily.

I know it hasn't been an easy season. The Negotiations Department has been hearing how challenging it is to keep up with what Taku is up to as we are busily working away in departments through managers who are directing teams of staff and contractors. This can sometimes create a disconnect with members as the organization grows and expands at an unprecedented rate. The fears that arise in dedicated Tlingit members are common when extreme growth occurs that can make people feel left out, and these expressed fears are motivating factors that help keep staff and managers on their toes in ensuring the delivery of solid information through community processes. Thank you for your continued interest and expectations of accountability for the administration, staff, and leadership – your voices and questions have been valuable.

To that end, we have been delivering on the extensive plans for citizen engagement that we have been promising! With thanks to the volumes of staff members who help organize, coordinate, cook feasts, and prepare us for intensive meetings with complicated agendas, we are now able to release confirmed dates of citizen engagement meetings right through until May 2024. We are getting used to the hybrid in-person, virtual meetings and have now confirmed monthly meetings with Elders and citizens, as well as several other set project dates to engage with citizens and community members.

This information flow will help support the lead-up to decision-making by the Community on substantial issues, such as the options for readiness of self-government agreements. Our end goal is to be fully self-governing over our lands and people wherever they may live, however, there are a lot of important steps over several years to take before we get there. The big question of what self-governance means to the Taku Tlingit Nation will be answered – but first, we must focus on the restorative healing needs of our people. The theme of Negotiations is Wellness, so this value must be front and center as a foundational element of governance, starting from

within the organization and flowing back out to every single person who identifies as Taaku Kwaan. Self-governance is not attainable when we aren't starting with a well and healthy community.

Although it might seem like we haven't made real progress in a lot of areas, and in some places that we are moving too quickly for comfort, the natural evolution of organizational growth and healing that the Nation's peoples have to undertake after deep trauma is messy – uncomfortable realizations and conversations must be had when deciding the future of your children's children. Through the work I have been doing for the Nation for more than six years, I have the benefit of seeing the immense dedication of the staff of TRTFN, the passion and strength of the citizens, and the commitment of the partners we work with on a daily basis. In just a few short years, we have emerged from a world where we had only one venue for strategic dialogue with the Province through the BC-G2G Forum, and a Negotiations Department that was without a mandate to continue work, undeveloped, and understaffed. This has now expanded into a network of linkages and coordination discussions amongst each department, seeking new ways to creatively meet TRT's goals.

We are building on the reconciliation that everyone in our collective Communities is calling for. We uphold our Atlin resident population as local interests in important conversations happening at all levels of government, while maintaining the rights-based needs of our Nation as priority. Never fear that TRT is exclusively focused on only our own desires. We know that in any world, modern or not, nations do not have the luxury of being singularly self-serving. In the approach to self-governance, our goals are to create a stronger future for all.

It may be true that what was really lost can never be reclaimed. However, we can create something new with the glimmer of the 'old'. The threads of the history of our peoples can weave a blanket that drapes upon our shoulders, the fringes swaying in the winds of change, and the warmth of our shared purpose held close to our hearts. As Taaku continues its journey leaping up a river newly reopened, we have our vision emblazoned in our minds as a roadmap to help us swim over obstacles. As culture is revitalized to heal us, and Wellness is lodged into the foundation of the new "houses" we will build, the people and their dreams will fill the rooms.

We may not be where we want to be right now. After all, all of us want the best of everything for our nation, our families, and our futures. However, we are right where we should be. We have the widest range of options available to us, more promise and opportunity than ever existed in the scope of government mandates and capabilities, and more capacity and resources than ever before.

Taku is ready to go, are you?

MEET THE TEAM



Anisha Carlick
Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Administrative Assistant
Whitehorse Office

My name is Anisha Carlick, an Administrative Assistant and Receptionist at the Negotiations Department's Whitehorse Office. A proud member of the Taltan Tlingit First Nation Wolf Clan, I'm originally from Atlin BC, but primarily brought up in Whitehorse Yukon. Beading, sewing, and crafting new artwork are some of my cherished leisure activities.

Working with TRTFN has offered me vast learning opportunities, allowing me to connect with extraordinary individuals. The role not only brings me closer to my family, but also empowers me to assist the community in various ways. It's gratifying to help everyone, and I anticipate an exciting journey ahead with TRTFN.



Vincent Esquiro
Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Assistant Negotiator

I am honored to be part of the powerhouse team, working on TRT interests and negotiating for our members' benefit. Our work is dynamic, rooted in ancestral values. My grandmother taught me our responsibility as Tlingit to care for the land, water, and all beings. We belong to the land, not the other way around. Our Nation pioneers new paths, building relationships with colonial governments. With my business background, I'm grateful to contribute to Economic Development. As a Tlingit, environmental protection is paramount. I carry this responsibility with utmost seriousness. Together, we create a better future for our people and our land.



John D. Ward
Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Negotiator

Kúnek, John Ward, has been a long-time service provider to the Nation in a variety of ways. Most notably, John has been the Spokesperson for TRTFN for more than four terms of previous leadership, beginning back when the Elders used to appoint the position before the Nation moved to colonial elections. He has been the Specific Claim Negotiator in the past and is continuing in that role currently. John is now a valued member of the existing Negotiations Department, providing advice, cultural oversight, and vision. He is also a full-time staff member of the TRTFN Corporations where he continues to provide service to the Nation from the operations shop.

Orientation to Negotiations

Glossary

MCFD	The Ministry of Children and Family Development is a ministry of the government of British Columbia in Canada. The MCFD is responsible for the child protection service across the province.
Trans Boundary First Nation	Is one whose traditional or settlement territories overlap existing political borders.
RIRSD	Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self Determination
Self Determination	the process by which a group of people, usually possessing a certain degree of national consciousness, form their own state and choose their own government.
BCTC Commission	BC Treaty Commission -The Treaty Commission's primary role is to oversee the negotiation process to make sure that the parties are being effective and making progress in negotiations.
Sovereign Nation	A sovereign nation has a defined territory with just one government.
ITRA's	Treaty and Reconciliation Agreements- focusing on closing socio-economic gaps that separate Indigenous people from other British Columbians, and building a province where all citizens can participate in a prosperous economy.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
G2G	Government-to-Government - is a term used to describe interactions between governments
G2G Forum	We have G2G Agreements, namely the BC G2G and the Northern Territory (NT) G2G. Each has its own forum in which TRT holds a seat at the table, partaking in discussions and decisions concerning our rights and territory.
OIC	Order in Council- Orders in Council are notices of appointments, regulations, or legislative orders related to and authorized by existing legislation
LTA	Land Transfer Agreement - is a legal contract that transfers the ownership of real estate
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Bilateral Negotiations	Negotiations which involve only two parties
Intergovernmental Relations	focus on the relations among Governments. These relationships serve a number of purposes. They provide forums for the exchange of information, for bargaining, negotiation, and consensus-building.
TRM	Treaty-related measures are a type of interim measure that is tied directly to treaty topics under negotiation - they are designed to facilitate treaty negotiations and bring certainty and economic resource development to First Nation and neighbouring local economies.
CDWAI	In 2021-22, launched the Community Development Wrap-Around Initiative (CDWAI), to support First Nations partners in building the capacities required to implement their community development priorities. It offers a wrap-around model to help leverage existing funding streams, develop trust-based partnerships, and address gaps in existing programs with new investments and flexible funding.
JVP	Joint Visioning Process



The process of TRTFN Negotiations involves a reciprocal exchange of information, where information is consistently shared and received in both directions.

JCM

Joint Clan Meeting



As a reminder, Negotiations is not a decision making body, so the most critical function of the department is information flow that helps support the decision making functions of the Nation.

CDC

Clan Directors Council

Elders Meetings



All Citizens Meetings

Management Teams

Lands

HSS

Capital

TFLC Education

Finance

Corporations

Technical Assignment of Information

CROWN GOVERNMENT



CROWN GOVERNMENT



CROWN GOVERNMENT





CROWN LANDS OR TRTFN LANDS

Yes, we're going there – the big question that looms over all others whenever negotiations are raised. We know everyone wants to talk about land! Who owns the land, who will own it, and what can the land do to serve the purpose of housing and community benefit, for individual families and for the long-term benefit of this and future generations?

Questions of land are central to the treaty negotiations between TRTFN, Canada, and BC at the BC Treaty Commission (BCTC) Main Table. The Treaty Negotiating team is aware of the need to develop a community-driven **Land Security Strategy** to inform reconciliation negotiations at the BCTC Main Table. TRTFN and the Crown Governments are 'holding the space' to have these discussions in a timeline that respects the community process that will need to occur to ensure good outcomes for our people.

There is a lot of thought and planning that goes into considering what to do with the lands that have been taken from the Nation, how to narrow down the conversation, and most of all, how to meet the needs of a diverse and growing modern population. Zoning concerns, lack of bylaws and coordinated vision, timing and sequencing of proposals and building plans, costs of historical harms and building supplies, interest rates, staffing changes, government mandates, policy and legislation changes, prolonged negotiations...these are just a few considerations that impact discussions between nations and colonial governments.

The Negotiations Team, in collaboration with other departments, and guided by community input, will be initiating negotiations to secure initial parcels of land for community use in the Atlin area as a land component of a 'Community Wellness Interim Treaty and Reconciliation Agreement' (ITRA). We are at the very early stages of exploring this with BC and Canada. Parcels identified through this process could become available for family and community use as an "addition to reserve" (ATR). Over the longer term, we anticipate negotiating a more comprehensive "Land Interim Treaty and Reconciliation Agreement" to secure land parcels throughout TRT Territory. There is a lot of work to do in the community before we can be ready for those more ambitious negotiations with BC and Canada.

In addition to negotiations at the BCTC main table, there are also efforts underway by the Nation right now to acquire parcels and build up a portfolio of lands for community use. For more information on this initiative, please reach out to the TRTFN Clan Director's Council (CDC) or Rodger Thorlakson, Lands Manager, at lands.mgr@gov.trtfn.com.

What does this mean for your application, for your need to build a home and make a good life for you and your family in the Atlin region? You should not have to wait for treaty negotiations to provide

certainly that you can pursue a positive future for yourself and your family, or to start a business. Parallel to what the nation is doing on behalf of Tlingit people to secure lands for our community and future, you should take advantage of current opportunities to acquire land and property rights, which for now, would be through Crown tenures such as licenses of occupation, leases, or purchase of fee simple land where this option is available. Where possible through early engagement, the Nation will support your efforts to acquire property rights and land certainty while we negotiate these larger agreements. In some cases, modern law of the Crown governments must be supportive to the Nation in taking the time to determine its land-based options so that further alienation of the lands doesn't continue to occur while these conversations are happening, thereby making it more challenging and likely costly in the future to have discussions about lands that the nation believes are unlawfully stolen while the Crown believes they belong to the colonial governments.

Whew! What does all that mean?

That's complex, isn't it? We agree. We can safely say that we don't have all the answers, and we don't have a road map of what TRT's land strategy will be yet. We are committed to developing this together with direction from the community. We also acknowledge that this work takes time and we are very limited in our human resources capacity to support the scope of complex negotiations underway at the moment.

We know that the information from existing and previous visioning processes will be built in wherever we already have access to that information. We also will develop more detailed assessments of specific areas that require updating or more modernized information such as how new legislation and policy changes might affect the available options, or how new generations of Tlingits consider mining and other activities across the traditional territory.

And, of course, we are certainly seeking common areas of interest that are of mutual benefit to the entirety of the Atlin area, for multiple purposes that enhance the quality of living for all who wish to participate fully in the developing economy of Wenah and the TRTFN. We are all here to stay – and we are so grateful that you are here. Each and every one of us is an important part of our society, and we all add to the unique strength of our remote Northern home.

While we don't have all the answers, we can commit to an approach in partnership with the people who call Atlin home. We can continue to share information transparently, report back on the status of ongoing discussions, and collaborate to share the resources of the Province and Canada in a way that sustains us all.

For more information on these topics or any other important questions that you can think of, please contact the Senior Negotiator at senior.negotiator@gov.trtfn.com.

Northern Territories Negotiations

Shaax'akée (Chantelle Schultz (Simpson)) is a Taku River Tlingit First Nation member who began life in Atlin before moving to Whitehorse, maintaining strong connections to the Nation and the Traditional Territory throughout the decades. Proudly an upcoming Matriarch of the Yanyeidi Wolf clan, Shaax'akée draws her greatest strength from time spent at the Nakinaa river at her family fish camp, and at her own hunting cabin within the communal family hunting grounds of the Atlin East mountains. Chantelle is the Senior Negotiator and has been working for TRTFN since 2017, when she began as the Forum Co-Chair for TRT's BC-G2G Agreement. In 2018, she stepped into the role of Lead Negotiator of the negotiations with Canada and Yukon, under the Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD) table. Her role has expanded considerably since that time, and she now represents Taku as the Manager of the Negotiations Department and Whitehorse Office.



Shaax'akée, Manager of Negotiations Department and Whitehorse Office



Bryan Evans, Strategic Adviser to Negotiations Department

Bryan Evans, Strategic Advisor to the Negotiations Department

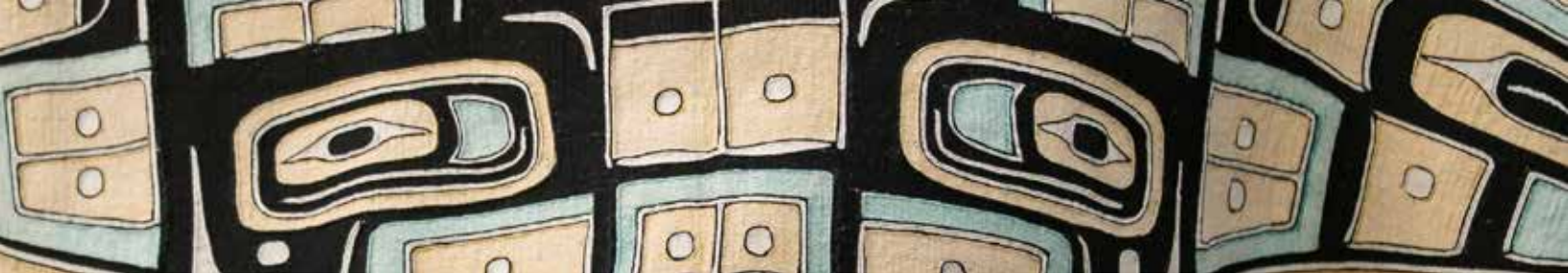
Bryan is a Principal at Dovetail Consulting and is based in Squamish, B.C. He has worked for TRTFN for over 22 years, starting in 2001 with preparations for Land Use Planning and support to negotiate the development of TRTFN's BC-G2G Agreement and Land Use Plan. Bryan collaborated with the former Treaty team under Susan Carlick, then shifted his focus to supporting the Northern Territories Negotiations in 2015 under John Ward. Bryan currently assists the Senior Negotiator across the traditional territory of the Taku Tlingit in negotiations with B.C., Canada, and Yukon.

Julian Griggs, Adviser and Implementation Support to the Lands and Resources Department, and Adviser to the Negotiations Department.

Julian is a Principal at Dovetail Consulting and is based in Vancouver, B.C. He has also worked for Taku for over 22 years, with the negotiations leading to the BC-G2G Agreement and the accompanying Land Use Plan. Once the agreements were signed in 2011, Julian remained involved as ongoing Implementation support to the L&R department, under the direction of Lands Managers and the Co-chairs of the Forum. Julian continues his support to the existing G2G Agreement in B.C., but has also been supporting the Northern Territories Negotiations since 2020.



Julian Griggs, Adviser and implementation Support



Northern Territory Negotiations


TRTFN-YG G2G Agreement

As outlined in the Winter 2023 Negotiations Newsletter and explained in detail at the February 2023 JCM, the TRTFN's journey to complete this G2G Agreement with the Yukon Government has been a long one. Ever since the Yukon Territory was formally established in 1898, the Taku River Tlingits have fought an uphill battle to have our rights and title recognized in our "Northern Territory", the portion of our traditional territory north of 60°.

Most recently, a bilateral negotiation with the Yukon Government was initiated following the TRTFN's 2016 court case against the Yukon, which was related to an infringement of Aboriginal rights in our Northern Territory. The court ruling required Yukon to engage in negotiations to develop new arrangements for consultation and engagement with the TRTFN, and to accommodate as required. After many years of effort, we have finally concluded the negotiation of the Northern Territory (G2G) Agreement.

The NT Government-to-Government (G2G) Agreement is an incremental reconciliation agreement, not a treaty agreement, and it will be the first agreement of its kind in the Yukon. To make implementation more straightforward and as directed by the TRTFN Leadership, the NT-G2G Agreement is modeled after the TRTFN-BC Agreement (2011) but comes with several 'upgrades' based on more than a decade of experience.

Some of the key features of the G2G Agreement include:

 A commitment by both governments to establish an enduring, respectful, and collaborative government-to-government relationship, based on an improved understanding of their respective and shared interests.

 The establishment of an NT Government to Government Forum (G2GF). This forum will provide a focus for strategic dialogue and interaction, employing a consensus-based decision-making model as it develops recommendations for consideration by both governments.



The introduction of two different G2G Engagement Processes delineating the methods TRTFN and Yukon will use to review all proposed Yukon authorizations, and considering changes to legislation and policy that might impact TRTFN.

The inception of three "Joint Initiatives" or collaborative projects.



Áashú Revitalization: To develop a community vision for how the Áashú Lands will be used.



Capacity & Economic Measures: To explore how the Yukon Government can provide access to services and economic opportunities for the TRTFN and Tlingit members, comparable to other Yukon First Nations.



Transboundary Lake Management Planning: To ensure our freshwater species in Atlin and other transboundary lakes are protected and properly managed.



A commitment to seek to establish a land-use planning process for the Northern Territory within two years. This effort will involve collaborative work with C/TFN and TTC.



A commitment to develop recommendations for interim caribou habitat protection in the Jakes Corner/Judas Creek area within two years. These measures will remain in effect until replaced by permanent protections through Southern Lakes Land Use Planning.

The NT G2G Agreement also includes dedicated funding to support implementation, dispute resolution mechanisms, and a defined process for periodic review and renewal, enabling the details of the agreement to be updated over time.



Legal Review & Final Negotiations

As requested at the February 2023 JCM, the TRTFN Negotiations Team arranged for a second legal opinion of the G2G Agreement, which was completed in June 2023. That review has confirmed that the G2G Agreement will not prejudice or limit the TRTFN's rights in the Yukon or in any other way detract from the recognition of our rights in the Yukon. Further modest changes were made to the NT-G2G Agreement to address the second legal review comments, which will be presented to members upon request in bimonthly update meetings throughout the winter and spring.





Yukon Negotiations – Land Transfer Agreement (LTA)

This is an update from our Winter 2023 Newsletter, and we have good news! We have concluded the negotiation of the Áashú Land Transfer Agreement (LTA) with the Yukon Government. Once this agreement is ratified by TRTFN and Yukon, the title will be raised to the 1150-hectare parcel at the north end of Atlin Lake in the name of a TRTFN-controlled designated company, for the long-term use and benefit of the TRT community!

Further to the approved February 26, 2023, JCM Mandate, the NT Negotiations Team will provide comprehensive information on options and recommendations for the legal structure of the designated company, including a proposed robust conflict resolution process that ensures accountability to the Taku River Tlingits.

We had hoped to bring the LTA Agreement and the Northern Territory G2G Agreement to a September JCM for ratification, but the Yukon Government requires more time to do consultation with Carcross Tagish First Nation, so we have deferred the JCM to allow time for that process to conclude.

Given we have now concluded negotiations, and can anticipate the title being raised, the Negotiations Department is working

to secure resources to start the Áashú Revitalization process, a TRT community process to understand how YOU would like to see these lands used for the community's benefit. Some of the ways that the Áashú Lands could be used include traditional use, such as camps and cabins; community infrastructure, such as a healing and language retreat; eco-tourism and culturally-based tourism facilities, and potentially, community housing.

The Áashú Lands will fully encompass Camp Yukon and two other private land parcels. These landowners will continue to hold and have access to their properties. TRT anticipates entering into a Partnership Agreement with Skookum Jim Friendship Centre to allow continued access to the property for on-the-land cultural programming. Carcross Tagish members will continue to have access to the Áashú Lands to exercise their Treaty Rights, and the public will also be able to use the existing road to access the lakefront for temporary, casual use, as is the case for all waterfront in the Yukon.

In the meantime, please stay up-to-date with confirmed Negotiations Information Sessions with bi-monthly meetings for Elders and All-Citizens. Notices will be sent to members in advance of each meeting.



Whitehorse Office

The TRTFN remote office located at 307 Strickland Street in the core of downtown Whitehorse is the main hub for Negotiations.

If you or someone you know would like to start an after-hours sewing or beading group, support networks for mothers and women, or encourage our Tlingit men through support groups, or have some other great idea for social and cultural needs of the Taku River Tlingit people, please contact :
admin.assist.wh@gov.trtfn.com







Southern Territory Negotiations

Understanding ST Negotiations

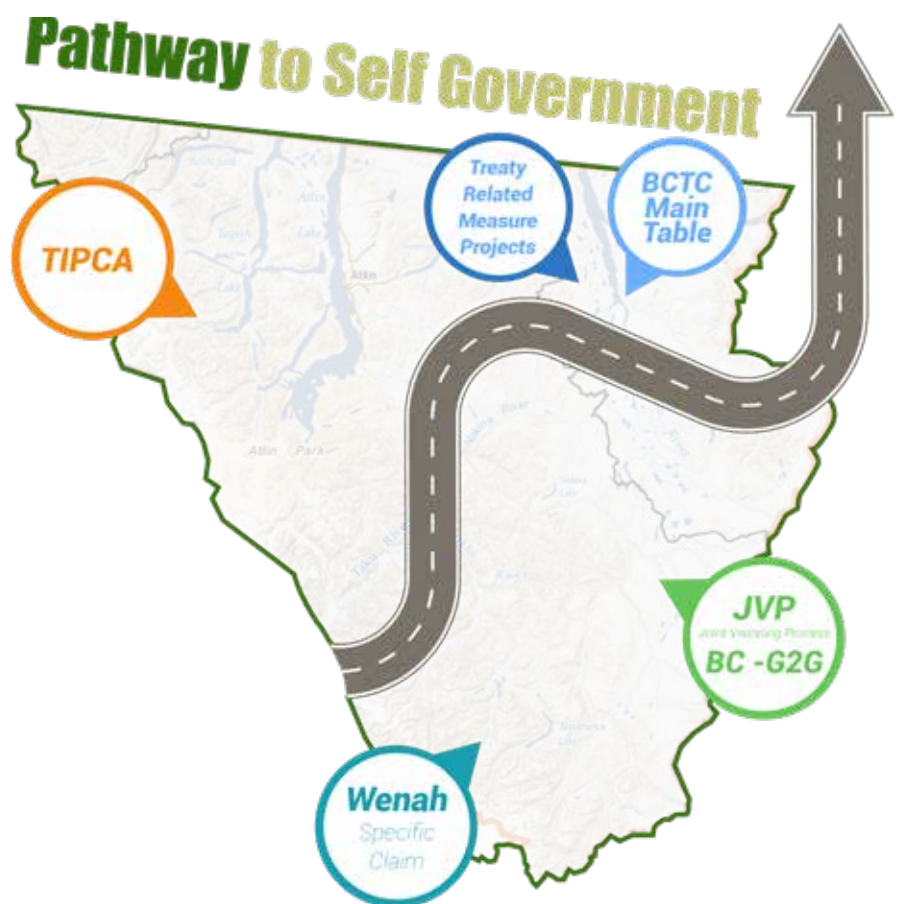
There are a few broad buckets of separate processes supporting discussions with TRTFN and the Province. All these buckets, the BCTC main table, TIPCA, BC-G2G, JVP, and TRM's are aimed at contributing to the overall goals of the entire traditional territory. Each contains a different negotiation or conversation that informs negotiations.

They all serve the ultimate goal of making TRT decision-making stronger and enhance the recognition of our Indigenous rights. The BC-G2G will eventually move from a Shared Engagement Model to something that is more reflective of shared sovereignty. These are discussions about land and resources that everyone cares about.

The TIPCA file is working on consent-based decision making in the mining regime, but these conversations on shared governance will take many years. The JVP is not a negotiation, but is a collaborative visioning platform that feeds information into the other negotiations and helps assess the best sequenced timeline of future projects and goals in the short term.

Our BCTC Main table is the largest negotiations table where the rights-based conversations occur. This is where all the progress from the separate discussions gets brought together. It helps steer the overall direction to self-governance by prioritizing our approach, deciding the way forward, and understanding the possibilities.

The TRMs are specific projects that help add strength to the other negotiations by focusing on special interests. These contribute to the approach to self-governance and are integral to laying the foundation of how to get there.



BCTC Main Table

Negotiations with BC and Canada

Since our last update in the Winter 2023 Negotiations Newsletter, the Negotiations Department has continued to work closely with BC and Canada to reinvigorate the tripartite main table negotiations and we are seeing real progress on issues of concern and priority to the community.

Our conversations with Canada and BC have focused on acknowledging the pain and suffering that our people have experienced since colonial contact, sharing stories that were transformative, vulnerable, and very raw. Negotiator and Elder John D. Ward asked, "What makes our people well? What gives them joy?" And, he shared his vision of achieving wellness and healing.

"You have to go back to the scene of the crime. To know what you want in the future, you have to understand what you've lost, what's missing." He went on to talk of reconciliation and accountability, how each person has a responsibility, and how valuable and needed everyone in the communities is to reversing the tide when it comes to repairing from historical harms.

John spoke passionately about focusing on individuals and families, to begin the process of healing that will hold up our clans, our community and our nation.

This pivotal moment of deep sharing in stories of loss and optimistic pride and love for the Taku Tlingit people, for how much the Nation's members have lost and hoped for, altered the negotiations discussions completely.

The theme of Wellness has emerged as the foundational bedrock on which we will work together to improve conditions for our community, and the basis on which we negotiate agreements and build towards a common vision of shared sovereignty through the main table.

Self-Governance: Wellness as a Core Theme

Consistent with the theme of **Wellness** in people, systems, and communities, the Main Table negotiations team has identified a **two-track approach** to creating foundations leading to **self-governance**.

On the first track, Vince Esquiro leads a Wellness Working Group (WWG) focused on delivering immediate benefits for our community, building off priorities that have been identified through processes such as land use planning, comprehensive community planning, and the most recent Joint Visioning Project (JVP). The WWG has developed preliminary proposals for 7 Quick Start Projects (see next page) that will provide tangible and visible results to the community in Atlin in the short term.

The second track involves the negotiation of a 5-year interim treaty and reconciliation agreement (ITRA). This wellness-focused ITRA will build on the Quick Start Projects to put in place enduring solutions to address community wellness priorities, including through the establishment of a Wellness Fund that will be available to support a range of community projects and priorities.

The Negotiations Department is working hard to advance negotiations in four main priority areas:

Culture & Language

The **Quick Start Projects** and **Wellness ITRA** will provide significant new opportunities to advance Tlingit culture and language through new cultural infrastructure, signage, funding, cultural programming and other revitalization efforts.



Economic Development

Significant opportunities are emerging to promote life skills development, support job training and provide high quality jobs for our people. The Negotiation teams are assisting the Lands Department, Mining Division and TRT Corporations to take advantage of training opportunities and potential employment from the Canagold New Polaris project.

(For more information on Canagold, please contact the L&R Department and Mining Division.)

In collaboration with other departments, work is being done to develop community tools such as surveys and a social media campaign to make sure our members are aware of upcoming opportunities.



Justice

Canada's Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Children, youth and families, has finally created space for indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.

The "Child and Family Wellness" initiative as it is called is well coordinated across the other departments involved, which are Capital (O&M), Education and Social and Health. Teams meet regularly to advance this work, and citizen engagement will continue through the winter to share the progress, showcase how the departments and programs are currently working together, as well as receive feedback and input about how to move forward once proposal submissions are approved and money begins to flow into the community for new services.

All Negotiations Department initiatives are complex, and some involve multiple departments. As a result, citizen engagement has been challenging with so many projects and initiatives seeking community guidance. We hope that this coming winter will improve coordination across this priority in the negotiations, as well as other projects in the department.



Ongoing Citizen Engagement

In an effort to improve community engagement and keep you informed of the positive work we are engaged in, the Negotiations Department will be hosting monthly meetings, alternating between Elders meetings and community meetings. The next Elders Meetings will be on September 22nd and the next All-Citizens Community Meeting will be on October 18th, 2023. Details will follow and we hope you will join us.





Southern Territory Negotiations

TIPCA TLATSINI IPCA

It's All About the Salmon

The Negotiations Department formally joined the Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (TIPCA) Initiative in January 2023, but the project began several years ago through the Lands Department. The Project is responsible to the Lands Manager, Rodger Thorlakson, and his team of dedicated Lands staff and consultants with various skills necessary to the ongoing progress of this critical and groundbreaking project.

The work focuses on the Taku Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (Taku IPCA) which includes protective and specially managed areas covering the full 1.85 million hectare Taku River Watershed. The Taku IPCA was declared by TRTFN in January of this year and builds upon decades of work and generations of knowledge that have been used to identify important places to protect – including all the major salmon spawning rivers. Indeed, the Taku IPCA identifies about 60% of the watershed for protection.

Other areas of the watershed covering the remaining 40% are considered Specially Managed Areas where some kinds of industrial development can be

considered if they are undertaken in a manner that protects environmental and cultural values and the development recognizes and respects the authority of the TRTFN as decision-makers in the traditional territory.

“THE TAKU IPCA IS BASED ON THE TLATSINI VISION DEVELOPED BY OUR COMMUNITY BACK IN THE 2000s. WE COULD NOT ACHIEVE THE PROTECTIONS OF OUR SALMON RIVERS BACK THEN BUT NOW I THINK THERE IS A REAL OPPORTUNITY THROUGH THE TIPCA. THIS IS AN EXCITING PROJECT. IT FOLLOWS THE DIRECTION OF OUR ELDERS AND CITIZENS.”

– LANDS MANAGER RODGER THORLACKSON

The TIPCA team is negotiating agreements with British Columbia and neighboring nations that recognize the Taku IPCA Protected Areas and also the TRTFN requirements for development in the Specially Managed Areas.

The work to get agreements with other governments is on a tight schedule. We are hoping to get these agreements in place by Summer 2024 before the next BC election. There is a lot to do between now and then! In August the team had the first face-to-face meeting with BC since they agreed to work with us on the Taku planning effort, and the meeting went well, highlighting values that are important to the Taku people. Some of the issues we need to work through include gaining BC agreement on the IPCA Protected Areas and types of Crown designations that would be put into place for these areas, as well as the governance of Specially Managed Areas.

It is important to get Crown recognition of the IPCA Protected Areas to avoid being in conflict with BC and with stakeholders over what kinds of activities are allowable in our important salmon spawning watersheds – like the Trapper Lake, Tatsamenie Lake and Sheslay River watersheds – that provide critical spawning and rearing habitat for the Taku salmon. The values of the Taku Tlingit people uphold the salmon species and their habitat as our gold, our highest value resource, the richest potential for our children.

The TRT have long had a vision to protect our important places for salmon and wildlife in the Taku. The TIPCA team has already collected our traditional knowledge and the research and monitoring that we have done on salmon and wildlife in past decades as well as using current models and information to make a strong case for why these areas need to be protected. We hope to reach agreement with BC soon. We know our salmon and their habitats are important not only to us, but they are provincially important – in fact, globally important!

There are areas within the Taku watershed that are more highly mineralized, particularly in the more western areas like the Tulsequah watershed. Our Taku IPCA provides for the opportunity for mining or other

industrial developments in some of these landscapes, but only with TRTFN consent and if the development can meet TRTFN standards that will ensure impacts are low to the values we cherish like salmon, wildlife, clean water, and cultural sites.

The TIPCA team is working to ensure we have the best governance and stewardship regimes in place for the Specially Managed Areas and that BC recognizes our authority so that any development proposed in these areas meets our standards.

We are also working towards agreements with the Tahltan Nation who also claim portions of the southern Taku watershed. The Tahltan also cherish and value the Taku salmon and wildlife. We are hoping to build upon the foundation of shared cultural and environmental values with our Tahltan neighbors and families. This work is NOT about whose land it is, it is NOT about jurisdiction. Just like we work with the Crown, whom we also do not agree with regarding whose land it is, we know that we can work with our First Nation neighbors when our interests are aligned. As with the Crown, we 'agree to disagree' on whose land it is.

We believe that we are stronger together and much more likely to achieve the salmon, land and water protection needed for the Taku watershed.

The Taku IPCA is the vision the TRT citizens created 20 years ago and our people today have shown continuing strong support for this vision.

**"YOU LEARNING THIS STORY,
IS LIKE A FISH SWIMMING
BACK TO WHERE IT WAS BORN.
WITH THIS STORY YOU WILL
BE SWIMMING BACK TO YOUR
ANCESTORS' WAYS."** - ELDER JACKIE WILLIAMS

This work is for our future, for our children and their children. Come with us as we tell our story, inspired by Grandfather Salmon to lead us all home.



Southern Territory Negotiations

Kunek, John D Ward Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Negotiator & Elder

Wenah (Weinaa) Update

Specific Claim Process

Our Ancestors, enjoyed Wenah (Weinaa) as their home, now it is still our home and it will be home for our future generations. Our ancestors were well connected to our land rich and plentiful, and they became very prosperous without government aid.

Wenah means 'Alkali'. When our ancestors harvested caribou from the fence, they would bring it to the Alkali Flats to process. They would cut up the meat and let the wind from the lake dry it. Our people have always been astute and resourceful, they built caribou fences to funnel the caribou down to the lakeshore, where it was easier to process. Harvesting other foods from Wenah would sustain our people and generously provide what we needed for potlatches and other important events. They welcomed others to our home, and we shared the richness of our lands.

Many things changed with the onslaught of the gold rush. People came to Wenah and tried to push us out. Our ancestors loved this land and they did everything they could to protect it.

The Federal Government at the time had a fiduciary responsibility to protect Haa Kusteeyi (Our way of life). Canada should have protected Wenah as a reserve, but they didn't. During and after the goldrush, all of Wenah was taken from us. Canada finally recognized that it breached its legal duties to us when its failure to establish a reserve to protect Haa Kusteeyi, in 1898 and thereafter.

After many attempts, Canada has accepted our Wenah Village Site Specific Claims for negotiations, and we are at the table with the Federal Government. Canada can offer a financial settlement for the loss of Wenah. (There are separate processes available to negotiate the return of lands.)

There are four key phases in the Wenah Negotiations.

1. Location: The first step is to reach agreement on where and how big the Wenah Village Complex was around the time of the goldrush, and where Canada should have created a reserve to protect our village complex.

2. Calculating Fair Compensation: The second step is to reach agreement on fair financial compensation. Canada's specific claims policy sets out compensation criteria. Professional appraisers will estimate the value of the land and loss of revenues.

3. Community Review and Ratification: Once Canada makes a settlement offer, the third step is to present this offer to TRTFN citizens. Citizens will vote on whether to accept Canada's settlement offer and the Settlement Agreement.

4. Execute a Settlement Agreement and the Federal Financial Transfer: If citizens ratify Canada's settlement offer, the final step is for Leadership to enter into a full and final settlement agreement with Canada. Then, Canada will transfer the settlement funds to TRTFN. These funds are for the benefit of all our members

We are focused on confirming the size and location of Wenah. We have gathered all available information, prepared maps and are presenting our strongest case to Canada. We argue that Wenah is much larger than the other reserves Canada set aside for our people, which has been hard for Canada to accept. We will continue to resolve this key negotiating issue.

If you have any comments or questions, contact wenah.negotiator@gov.trtfn.com.

Child and Family Wellness Coordination Framework

Keeping the Circle Strong Bill C-92 Resuming Jurisdiction

Advancing the work of Taku River Tlingit First Nation Resuming Jurisdiction file regarding the well-being of our children, youth and families continues to be led by Senior Negotiator Chantelle Schultz and Assistant Negotiator Vincent Esquiro. It is critical that this work is led by Nation members. We will continue to approach this work through engagement with both leadership and citizens through gatherings, listening, focusing on well-being, and keeping strong (**Figure 1**).



We are supported in this work through consultants at Note Bene (Marilyn, Carol, and Deb) and Two Bears Consulting (Bart).

The focus of the work (**Figure 2**) over the past months has included the completion of a Training Needs Assessment, the development of a Framework for Practice, the development of a Capital Needs Assessment, and ongoing negotiations with Canada to secure the

funding required to support our resuming jurisdiction work. It is our intention to have this work completed by 2027. Marilyn, Carol and Deb from Note Bene have been hosting ongoing conversations with you as the citizens of Taku River Tlingit.

Children and youth must be at the centre of this work that is being guided by TRT core values and principles (**Figure 3**).



What Note Bene has heard from Taku River Tlingit citizens is:

- Our connection to Tlingit culture brings strength, resilience and healing;
- Our relationship to our children is lifelong;
- Caring for children starts with family;
- Our connection to the land is core to our Tlingit identity;
- Our love of the land and our love of our children are intertwined;
- Bring traditional Tlingit laws back to reality; and

In addition to these conversations with Taku River Tlingits citizens, Note Bene have undertaken a review of other approaches to child and family well-being in First Nations across Canada and throughout the world. Through this work and in combination with the conversations with citizens and Community, Note Bene has suggested some wise practices for Taku River Tlingit to consider in its resuming jurisdiction work (Figure 4).

The development of a framework for practice is critical information in formalizing TRT laws and informing our jurisdiction and budget negotiations with Canada, Yukon, and British Columbia. Gunalchéesh/Thank you to all citizens for your important input into this work. We look forward to updating you on this work over the upcoming months through more engagement sessions and focus groups throughout the winter and spring.





Treaty Related Measure Projects (TRM)

TRTFN has three (3) Treaty Related Measure Projects that are either ongoing or just beginning with the submission of a proposal in this current fiscal. The projects are worked on until completion of the work plan deliverables is successfully achieved, or the project may need a new funding submission to see it through to completion.

The projects TRTFN is currently engaged in at the TRM level are considered as valuable information for the Negotiations team and will directly influence negotiating strategy and approach, as well as provide critical information for the community and future generations.

One TRM is now complete! Our Oral Histories Project!







History of TRTFN

Traditional Clan Governance

Treaty Related Measure (TRM)

Project Lead: Tamis Cochrane (*Heritage Archivist*), Ben Louter (*Heritage Archeologist*)

In early July the Negotiation Department received confirmation of funding through Treaty Related Measures (TRM's) for a project which builds upon work of the Oral Histories Project, the RELAW Project, and the Constitution Review project. This project will bring together a really dynamic group of people which includes familiar faces such as myself (Tamis), Ben Louter, Roberta Shepherd, as well as long-time researcher Jeannie Kanakos.

We also have some newer faces including Vanessa Udy & Russell Nesbitt as Legal researchers. Vanessa has been to the community this year in January and February of 2023 as well as joining us for Haa Kusteeyi Celebration 2023 in Atlin! Russell will be introduced to the community in early September to continue onboarding the team.

This project is new and will surface historical knowledge, insights and advice from knowledge holders from all Clans to ensure the design of Taku River Tlingit's self-government structures and processes are informed by our traditional Tlingit laws and protocols.

In Jackie Williams book *Lingít Kusteeyí*, he emphasizes "It is very important that as Tlingit people we believe in our traditional ways and our clan system of government."

The ReLaw project brings forward elements of Tlingit laws which sustain the land, air and waterways within Lingít aaní. This project seeks to build upon those foundational teachings to guide our understandings of our traditional

system of Clan governance, particularly as pertaining to ourselves and our interactions with others.

This project will research and seek to define elements of TRTFN Clan history, our traditions of governance, historical protocols in agreement making, of conflict resolution, and traditional territory land use and stewardship. These elements will be brought together to provide the basis from which Taku River Tlingit can begin to design a Core Self-Government Agreement.

Self-government agreements address (among other things) the following key aspects:

- the structure of the new government and its relationship with other governments
- the relationship of laws between jurisdictions, such as how different laws will work together
- ways to promote improved community well-being, with a focus on Indigenous languages, heritage and culture and socio-economic initiatives
- how programs and services will be delivered to community members

By understanding Lingít Clan protocols, we can work to ensure that future generations have the opportunity to grow up in the safety of our heritage & culture, rather than in colonially imposed and harmful policies and practices.

If you are an Elder or Youth who is interested in being involved in this project or observing, please contact [**archives@gov.trtfn.com**](mailto:archives@gov.trtfn.com)

Oral Histories Project



Tamis Cochrane Heritage Archives

Dleit kaa x'éináx Tamis yoo xat duwasáakw T'aakú Kwáan áwé uháan Yanyeidí Shaawátx xat sitee. Unceded xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, səliłwətał, ka Skwxwú7mesh aani-x' yéi xat koowdzitee, Stz'uminus ka Snuneymuxw aanix' kei xat uwawát Semiahmoo ka Kwantlen áani-x' yei xat yatee Haa Léelk'u Hás Sh kalneegí daat yéi jixané.

My name is Tamis I am a Taku River Tlingit Citizen, Yanyeidí. I was born on the Unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) nations. I was adopted and grew up on Stz'uminus and Snuneymuxw territory, and now live on Semiahmoo and Kwantlen lands, in South Surrey. I work as a contractor with Taku River Tlingit's Heritage team.

In August of 2021, I came home to Atlin for the very first time. I was working on the Oral Histories Project at the time and I like to think it was my Ancestors voices that called me home.

The Oral Histories Project has gone through two yearly funding cycles beginning in fiscal year 2021-2022, focused on transcribing audio recordings, and is now at the end stages of completing the project in its current form. It is work that forms the Oral

Histories Repository, and the valuable voices of our past will be utilized in all areas of the emerging Self-Government approach and departmental growth that the Nation is undertaking.

I have had the privilege of applying my professional background and training to the projects I am working on with TRT, and the work which took place on the Oral Histories project has created a strong foundation for other research projects underway. Taku River Tlingit Nation is incredibly lucky that those who came before us took the time to record their knowledge for future generations. The work undertaken by the Transcription Team surfaced 43 traditional place names, not previously recorded. The knowledge was always there, carefully held like precious treasure within these recordings and the collective memory of the TRT. Credit for many of these place names can be attributed to Mrs. Elizabeth Nyman, and Jackie Williams.





Along with the realization of how valuable the knowledge on these tapes are was the knowledge that many families have private collections of audio cassettes which also contain recorded knowledge. Most audio cassettes are nearing the end of their lifespan, meaning that depending on the storage conditions in which they were kept, they may or may not be able to be digitized.

Taku received funding to acquire the equipment to Digitize audio cassettes and, if families have personal collections undigitized, this is a service that can be offered to Taku River Tlingit Citizens now through the Heritage Department. Families are encouraged to connect with Roberta Shepherd in Heritage if they wish to have their personal collections preserved through digitization.

Our ancestors worked to preserve the knowledge by making these recordings so that they could be available for future generations. I honour those I never got a chance to meet or know, through working to uphold the knowledge and traditions they preserved by ensuring it is available for present and future generations.

What's next? In the months ahead I will be working with a great team of people on a research project which draws from and builds upon the work of the Oral Histories Project, the RELAW project and the currently underway Constitution Review project.

The project will surface historical knowledge, insights and advice from Knowledge holders that will inform the design of TRTFN's self-government structures and processes. In Jackie Williams book *Lingít Kusteeyí*, there is a quote "It is very important that as Tlingit people we believe in our traditional ways and our clan system of government."

The purpose of the project is to research and define elements of TRTFN Clan history, traditions of governance, of agreement making, of conflict resolution, and of traditional territory land use. These elements will be woven together to provide the basis from which the TRTFN can proceed to design and negotiate a TRTFN Core Self-Government Agreement with Canada and the province of British Columbia.

Contact Heritage at
archives@gov.trtn.com





Treaty Related Measure Projects (TRM)

Constitutional Amendment Project

This is a project that is identified as a Treaty Related Measure (TRM) which is specifically designed to help Nation's in their pathway of readiness for self-governance. This Constitution TRM process is overseen by the Manager of the Negotiations Department, but is unique in that it is responsible to the people through the Joint Clan Meeting for decision making. The Manager is responsible for the process of ensuring administrative support is available, that citizens are receiving information in community language founded on cultural values, and ensuring good governance practices are being followed.

This project will require a Committee of Citizens to help the administrators and technicians gather, assess, and sort through options to present to the decision making structures of the TRTFN. Without a citizen-led committee, the project cannot proceed.

The Constitution project applied for funding under the TRM process in January 2022, and received funding in June 2022. At the December 2022 JCM, after reviewing the Process Map presented on the work ahead, Members gave their thoughts on the Constitution process and asked for more time to consider how all the various parts of this process would fit together. As Members pointed out, there is a lot of detail in the Constitution, and there is a lot of material that is a reflection of what our Ancestors

brought to the discussion on a TRT Constitution dating all the way back to 1984.

Although the work started in 1984, it took nine years before it resulted in the historic JCM that adopted the first modern Constitution in 1993. This is a good reminder that thinking through change to your Constitution deserves taking the time to get it right. This new process we're now on could take many more years and should be aligned with the ongoing Self-Governance negotiations currently underway.

The Project team thought that a JCM this year would be the time to get the Constitution Committee established to oversee the work of the team with responsibility to bring good thinking and research to the Members on where Members might wish to go with Constitution amendments.

Unfortunately, there is no scheduled JCM in the very near future where this Committee would be established so we are reaching out in advance to get expressions of interest from Members on whether they would like to be appointed to the Committee. Establishing the Committee will be brought to the Clan Meetings so the Clans may appoint members in the absence of a JCM. We envision a seven-person Committee with two Elders, four Members at large (two from each Clan) and a Chair person to "stick-handle" the work along with the Governance team and

Constitutional Amendment Project

support contracted to take on this important work.

A draft Terms of Reference will go to the Clans and upcoming JCM when scheduled, along with some details on how we see the process going forward, expectations on level of commitment by Committee members and such things as compensation for their time.

One thing we will want to talk about, as part of the Terms of Reference, is the sequence of subject matters for this Constitution process; what goes first, and so on. We know that the Constitution benefits from being discussed in smaller parts. The first, we will recommend, is that the Membership Code should be the first topic for intensive engagement among Members leading to a package of changes going to the 2024 JCM. This may be too optimistic a timeframe so this work might go longer, leading to a later JCM.

It will be the role of the Constitution Committee to bring to the JCM its thinking on the sequence and how much time it will take to fully explore the topics in each stage.

A final note is that the work on the Constitution needs to fit seamlessly with the Self-government Negotiations which we are also embarking on. The Constitution is the ultimate legal tool to implement the Self-government agreement (or agreements) reached in those negotiations! The Constitution and Self-government must work together, which is why the Negotiations Department is the right place to give support to all of this work from inside the Administration.

If you are interested in a role on the much-needed Constitutional Committee, please contact the Negotiations office at **admin.asst.wh@gov.trtfn.com**





Ha Tlatki Ha Kustiysi

(Our Land – Our Way of Life)



TRTFN

Joint Visioning Process



TRTFN JOINT VISIONING PROCESS

The TRTFN Joint Visioning Process (JVP) brings TRTFN and BC together to strengthen their relationship in an effort to take meaningful steps toward reconciliation over the long term. The JVP began following an assessment of 10 years of shared Government to Government work between TRTFN and BC, and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in August 2021.

The TRTFN JVP is being led by Vincent Esquiro, with oversight by Chantelle Schultz, advisory support from Julian Griggs, and coordination and facilitation support from Kate Davis, Ali White, and Jessie Hemphill from Sanala Planning Inc.

The desired outcomes for the JVP are to:

- ✓ Clarify TRT's vision and strategic priorities.
- ✓ Align priorities and strengthen intergovernmental relationships with BC (and Canada, when applicable).
- ✓ Develop recommendations for consideration by the Parties (TRTFN, BC, and Canada).

Over the past two years, the TRTFN JVP team has been hard at work drafting the TRT Vision for 20+ years into the future. The team reviewed past TRTFN planning work, community engagement notes, and other related documents, several of which, including the TRTFN Comprehensive Community Plan, were developed through intense community engagement processes that captured TRTFN members' ideas and vision for the future.

The JVP team also held numerous virtual and in-person engagements with Nations' staff, leadership, advisors, and community members, including the TRTFN community dinner in June 2022 and a BBQ in June 2023. The team has also hosted two Atlin-wide community dinners, one in September 2022 and one in June 2023.



TRTFN – Joint Visioning Process (JVP)

In September 2022 representatives from TRTFN, BC, and Canada participated in a three-day workshop in Atlin to strengthen relationships between the parties, build a shared vision, and clarify how they can work together to achieve it. One representative from the Yukon Territorial Government joined the session as an observer. Five Atlin residents participated as interest holders, providing valuable reflection and input from a community perspective to be considered by TRTFN and BC, recognizing that their government-to-government work is inclusive and promotes positive outcomes for the whole community.

At each community engagement and during the first JVP workshop with the Parties, there was a strong desire to strengthen the relationship between the Tlingit and the non-Tlingit community of Atlin. As a result, local reconciliation has been woven into the JVP as a priority for the parties moving forward.

Following months of internal work and community engagement, a draft TRTFN vision was developed. As of the September 2022 JVP session in Atlin, the TRTFN Draft Vision contained 10 themed areas, referred to as “pillars.” Since then, the TRTFN JVP team has combined some pillars where it makes sense to reduce the number of meetings required, and to begin thinking about alignment with BC.

To date, in 2023, the TRTFN JVP team has been working both in-person and virtually with TRTFN staff to identify outcomes that will indicate the vision is achieved in the long term, in addition to solidifying a long list of milestones that will support the achievement of the Nation's vision. These milestones are now being discussed with TRTFN staff and BC representatives at a series of “pillar workshops” to identify where the work can take place across a number of different pathways. This work is still underway and will continue throughout the summer. As we move into the fall, the TRTFN JVP team is excited to compile this information and begin drafting recommendations for shared work in pursuit of the TRTFN vision.



IN THE FALL OF 2023,
TRTFN AND BC WILL
RECONVENE FOR THE
SECOND AND FINAL
IN-PERSON JVP SESSION
WITH THE GOAL OF
FINALIZING A SET OF
RECOMMENDATIONS
THAT THE PARTIES
CAN PURSUE TOGETHER
IN SUPPORT OF THE
TRTFN VISION.





**Building a future that works
for everyone is a central
part of this work.**



Project Review Group

PRG *The Proposed Hydro Expansion Project*

Taku River Tlingit Project Review Group (PRG): Sustainability assessment for the Atlin Hydro Expansion Project (AHEP) – **Update**

What is the Project Review Group?

The Project Review Group (PRG) was established by TRTFN to review the Atlin Hydro Expansion Project and has included members representing Elders, TRTFN citizens and TRTFN Lands staff.

The PRG will assist TRTFN to make a decision to approve or not approve the project using the sustainability assessment.

The Project Review Group is composed of Taku River Tlingit members Sandra-Jack Mirhashem and Vincent Esquiro, and is supported by a consultant, Carrie Breneman from PlanIt North. Chantelle Schultz has been supporting the PRG as an ex-officio member.

The Clean Energy Development Plan for the Atlin Hydro Expansion Project (AHEP) was submitted to British Columbia in December 2022. The Project Review Group spent five (5) weeks reviewing the AHEP Project. This review included technical presentations on: fisheries, wildlife, water quality, hydrology, archaeological and cultural sites, traditional land use, recreation, employment and business, training, community wellness, project benefits, and climate change.

We reviewed technical information on the project, reviewed comments on the Project from past Elders Meetings and public consultation, and communicated with TRTFN staff on potential

impacts to fish, wildlife, and archaeology as a result of the AHEP project.

The PRG assessed the project using a Sustainability Assessment tool. The sustainability assessment weighs the benefits, adverse impacts, and trade-offs between them of the Atlin Hydro Expansion Project from the perspective of TRTFN's values.

The assessment helps answer the question: Is a community or region better off or not as a result of the project when the trade-offs between benefits and adverse impacts are considered?

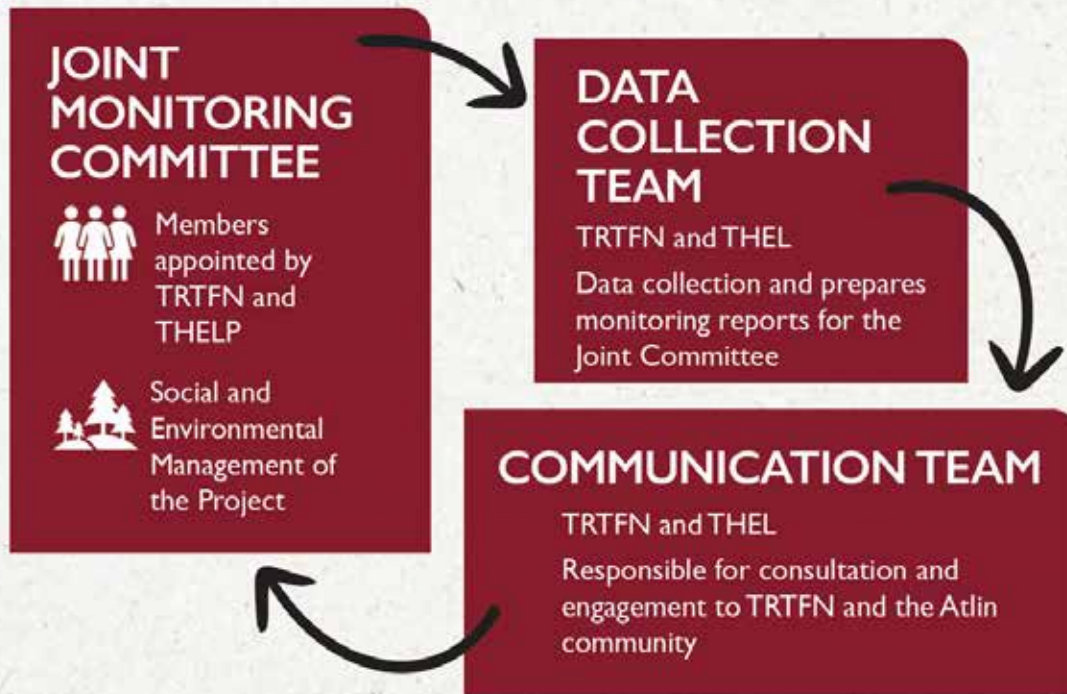
The PRG developed recommendations to improve the sustainability of the Project from the perspective of TRTFN.

**How did the
Project
Review Group
review the
project?**

What are the PRG's Recommendations for the Atlin Hydro Expansion Project?

The PRG has prepared a series of recommendations on the Atlin Hydro Expansion Project. Key recommendations include (but are not limited to) the co-development of monitoring programs, a Joint Monitoring Committee, and the development of a Cultural Plan and an Engagement Plan for the life of the project.

HOW THIS WORKS:



The next steps for the PRG are to provide information on review of the Atlin Hydro Expansion Project.

The PRG met with the Clan Directors Council in April and held an open house on June 8th to get feedback on the review of the project. With the open house invitation,

information handouts on the Project Review Group and the Project Review were sent via email to TRTFN members.

The PRG will be continuing to get feedback on the project and will be meeting with the Elders Group and the CDC over the summer.

What are the next steps for the Project Review Group?



Moose Hunting 2023

On August 10, 2023 TRTFN sent out the following media release regarding hunting in the Wëinaa (Atlin), BC territory.

As the hunting season opens in British Columbia, the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) is expressing deep frustration and anger with the Government of British Columbia (BC) for their 'business as usual' decision to proceed with an open hunting season on an extremely vulnerable moose population in the Atlin area.

This decision runs afoul of BC's commitments to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, such as TRTFN, and unjustifiably infringes TRTFN's inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights. Given BC's failure to responsibly manage the Atlin moose population, the area is no longer a good place to hunt. TRTFN is therefore asking moose hunters to act responsibly to prevent further declines and allow this vulnerable population to recover, even though BC has failed to do so both in the past, and again through its recent decision.

BC's decision came as a shock after TRTFN and BC representatives had been in discussions for several months to identify hunting restrictions given substantive scientific evidence and traditional knowledge showing the population's continued

decline, with extremely low bull moose numbers and low calf productivity. During those discussions, BC officials acknowledged conservation concerns and the negative impacts of the current hunting permissions on TRT food, social, and ceremonial harvests. Concurrently, TRTFN explained to BC how its laws, customs, and protocols require stewardship of lands and wildlife to ensure current and future generations continue to maintain these connections and have access to healthy traditional foods such as moose.

TRTFN was led to believe that these talks would result in regulatory changes to ensure responsible management of the Atlin moose population.

76% of the bull moose in the local, accessible hunting area east of Atlin were harvested by BC-licensed hunters in 2022, when 10% harvest rates are the provincial standard.

However, today, BC informed TRTFN that they would not change 2023 hunting regulations to protect the last bulls in this area. This, notwithstanding BC's public acknowledgment that, "Moose are iconic animals in British Columbia and play a vital role in the well-being of many communities and individuals."

TRTFN is now forced to ask respectfully for the cooperation of moose hunters to support the Nation's stewardship and conservation efforts in the Atlin Lake Moose Area by staying out of the area this (Fall 2023) hunting season.





Continuation of August 10, 2023, TRTFN Media Release Regarding Moose Hunting in the Wèinaa (Atlin), BC territory

TRTFN citizens and other residents in this remote region of the province maintain deep connections to the land and wildlife, and rely upon moose and other natural resources for subsistence and the exercise of their constitutionally protected rights.

TRTFN's concern regarding permissive hunting regulations for the Atlin area moose population dates back several decades, and these concerns have now become acute. Furthermore, as other regions in BC have seen more stringent hunting regulations imposed, the open hunting permissions on the Atlin moose have drawn increasing numbers of hunters from across BC, the country, and internationally. The impacts of this increased hunting activity directly impact TRTFN and other local harvesters.

While BC claims to work in partnership with First Nations on wildlife issues, the TRTFN experience in this case can be characterized as 'all talk, no action'.

For the 2023 hunting season, TRTFN is asking non-local hunters to avoid the Atlin Lake Moose Area, as defined in the BC 2022–2024 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Synopsis. Residents of Atlin who depend upon local harvest are asked to use their knowledge to hunt in areas known to hold healthier moose populations.

Finally, we ask other Indigenous Nations who are also struggling to address wildlife declines in their territories, to please reach out to our Nation and support us.



Consent-Based Decision-Making

The Moose Strategy aligns with TRTFN's consent-based decision-making approach, striving to ensure the recognition of our voice, decision-making capabilities, and traditional knowledge coupled with real-time insights from our Land Guardian program.

These initiatives aim to boost our authority, recognize our rights, and gradually attain the ultimate say over our traditional territory. Consequently, all major decisions affecting our traditional territory should reflect TRTFN's consent-based decision-making.

This explains why the province's fish and wildlife decision-making and legislation are critical and sensitive issues. TRTFN seeks influence on these outcomes.



Nation to Nations Engagement Dahk Ka Nation

Haa Kusteeyi 2023

At the end of July, our nation proudly hosted Haa Kusteeyi in Áa Tlein (Atlin) for the very first time. The significance of this celebration, which translates to "Our Way," cannot be overstated. It brought Tlingit people from across their traditional territory together to honor and share our rich cultural heritage, language, and history.

Our culture keeper, Wayne Carlick, along with his team, organized Haa Kusteeyi 2023. He expressed the challenges and rewards of us hosting such a momentous event. He highlighted the importance of patience and innovative ideas in successfully organizing the gathering. However, he also emphasized that our community was fortunate to have a framework to guide us.



Canoe races, salmon filleting contests, traditional singing and dancing, and the exchange of language and culture were all integral parts of Haa Kusteeyí. These elements were embraced and incorporated into the event in our home of Áa Tlein. Adhering to our traditional practices, our community also had the opportunity to highlight and showcase our unique cultural identity.



**Shout out to all our fabulous
Volunteers, dedicated
Youth, committed Staff,
and wise Elders who have
been instrumental in making
our Haa Kusteeyi event a
resounding success!**



The atmosphere surrounding Haa Kusteeyi in Áa Tlein was one of unity, pride, and a deep sense of connection. People from diverse backgrounds came together, bridging geographical and generational gaps, to celebrate our shared heritage. It was a time of rejuvenation and renewal as stories were shared, dancers performed, and our Tlingit language resonated throughout the gathering, reinforcing the strength and resilience of our people.

This willingness to open our community to others exemplifies the spirit of Haa Kusteeyi. This historic event will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact, fostering continued unity, cultural pride, and intergenerational knowledge transfer within our community and beyond.





Towards Rights, Recognition & Healing

This has been a big year for our Nation! This summer, we welcomed the Tlingit community to our territory to celebrate Haa Kusteeyi in Wèinaa (Atlin). It has been more than 20 years since the Taku hosted this event.

We all know there have been challenges within our community, the Opioid Crisis, the impacts of Covid-19 and the finding of the 215 Children in Kamloops. In the words of our Cultural Coordinator Wayne Carlick "Culture is healing." This celebration was good medicine.

It was important for our leadership and our people to celebrate our robe coming home. It was also significant that the Government of British Columbia joined us in our celebration — we thank Minister of Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation, Murray Rankin, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, Josie Osborne and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change George Heyman, along with their staff and families who joined us in celebration.

Throughout my term, I have had the opportunity to meet with many Ministers, Premiers, and the Honourable Lieutenant Governor Janet Austin, each representing Crown Governments. We are making good progress on significant issues.

The work of our Negotiations Department is critical to turning this progress into tangible outcomes for our people and for future generations. The collaborative processes and agreements being established with Crown Governments, are focussed on creating generational systems of wealth for our people.

Canada, as the Federal government understands the value and

significance of cultural revitalization combined with reparative growth and community reconciliation, and the work of the partners at the negotiations tables reflects those values.

Our work with the Yukon Government is also significant. In 2021, then Premier Silver formally accepted TRTFN to the "Yukon form" in Old Crow. Since then, we have benefitted from a very constructive working relationships with political leaders and the administration.

The past summer at Klukshu fish camp, the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) agreed to amend their constitution to include transboundary nations. This amendment was made based on the request of the TRTFN!

The promise and intent of recognition of TRT rights in the North has been a long time coming. These are huge steps that our Nation has taken to protect our Rights & Title.

There is more work to do. We look forward to bringing these opportunities to a future JCM for ratification and support to join CYFN to become full voting members. This also opens a path towards larger, long-term rights-based conversations that go beyond simple accommodations.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment the Negotiations Department puts forward –and the good progress being made for the Taku River Tlingit First Nation.

Gunalchéesh,

Charmaine Thom

TRTFN Spokesperson





3Nation Society

3Nations, B.C. regional partnership renewed, strengthened

Well, it has been a busy year so far. As we settle in for the cooler months, you may want to look at what we have been up to at the 3Nations Society!

3Nations is in regular conversations with our partners in the BC government to negotiate new ways of bringing education and training to our communities. We are so pleased to announce that our Human Services Diploma program is almost full!

This diploma course, which can extend up to 3 years, is offered through Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) <https://www.nvit.ca/> with options throughout to 'off-ramp' into a number of exciting career paths. I am excited to announce that at least one of our community members has taken up this opportunity!

This course was advertised over the last few

months as a tuition-paid opportunity with upgrading options included. Keep your eyes and ears open for upcoming opportunities for more training and skill-building opportunities!

One of the goals 3Nations is working towards is improving health services for everyone throughout the Northwestern region of BC. To do this, we need to engage the people of the 7 communities of the 3Nations.

This work will be happening within the next few months with the intention of evaluating and eventually improving our health services. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was recently released for planning companies that have experience in this type of work.

Thank you to all the outstanding nurses and staff at the Northern Health facility. We can hardly wait to work with you!



And finally, 3Nations and TRTFN have collaborated to make emergency funding available to Atlin community members (TRTFN citizens and non-TRTFN community members) experiencing acute hardship this year. This is an broad initiative intended to fill in some of the gaps in the services that we do not have easy access to in our small, remote community.

This is intended to help anyone in our community experiencing food or housing insecurity, or a medical/dental emergency that they would not otherwise be able to afford. This is available only through a referral from the Health and Wellness Manager – Megan Wenschlag or the Nursing station. This is a pilot project that we hope will lead to enhanced services or continued emergency funding for those who are most in need.

The intention is to identify gaps in necessary services that negatively impact our community members health and wellness outcomes and attempt to improve those outcomes by improving access. If you think you may quality, please contact the HSS Manager at hss.mgr@gov.trtfn.com.

If you have questions about anything in this update, please reach out to me at vincentesquiro@gmail.com for more information!

**Check out our website and Facebook page
for News and updates!**

www.3nations.org
<https://3nations.org/>



WE ARE HIRING!



Financial Analyst

A pivotal role responsible for conducting financial assessments, preparing budget reports, and making suggestions for cost-effective solutions. Utilises financial insights to influence decisions on government negotiations. Requires a strong understanding of finance, economics or a related field is necessary..



Negotiations Department Administrator

Manages daily activities in the Department, including policy implementation, staff management, and coordination of meetings; facilitates open communication internally and externally. Organizational and multitasking skills needed.



Communications coordinator

Oversees the creation and execution of communication strategies, produces outreach materials, and coordinates PR activities. Enhances visibility and transparency across all channels. Verbal and written communication skills required.

Find full descriptions of these opportunities
at www.trtfn.com/careers

Haa Shuká, hagú, hagú!

Come strong, the song!
Come out and sing to us
in the old tongue,
that old one, almost lost
but not! Not yet.
Hagú! Haa Shuká, hagú!
Come here, sing with us,
tell us stories, old ways,
the ways we used to be.
Make the drumbeat, please,
make the new world retreat.
Come strong, old ones,
Haa Shuká, hagú, hagú!
Tell us what we should say,
come close, Grandmother, guide us
back to the River,
water's edge, mountain place.
Come here, Grandfather, tell us
where to go from here.
Open hearts, hagú!!
Hold honor, tell it true.
Speak out, silent ones,
those voices of shore, water, and air.
Come out, come here, come to us,
for now is the time,
the time of the new
to sing, to speak,
the words of the old ones.

Written by Chantelle Schultz
2023



Produced by Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Whitehorse Negotiation Office 2023