



TAKU RIVER TLINGIT
First Nation



JOINT VISIONING PROCESS

Citizens' Summary Booklet
2024





Taku River Tlingit Joint Visioning Process

Citizens' Summary Booklet

March, 2024

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This summary document outlines the key information and highlights from the full final report of the process, outcomes, successes and lessons learned from the JVP. To receive a copy of the full JVP final report, please contact the TRTFN Negotiations Department at senior.negotiator@gov.trfn.com, 1-250-651-7900 extension 602.



Taku Watershed Photographed by Rebecca Law

Letter from Chantelle Schultz & Vincent Esquiro

After several years of work, and a long journey towards completing an intensive process with all community in the beautiful Wenah/Atlin region, we are pleased to share this report that details the Taku River Tlingit Joint Visioning Process (JVP). In this report, we outline the process that unfolded, the outcomes that were achieved, as well as the challenges we faced throughout.

Through the JVP, the TRTFN articulated a comprehensive vision of the future. This visioning work includes a 20+ year vision, organized into 10 pillars that each represent a theme. Within each of the 10 pillars there is a vision statement and a series of outcomes that demonstrate how the vision will be achieved.

A series of milestones articulate the many steps to be taken over the short (0-5 years), medium (5-15 years), and long-term (15+ years). Throughout the process of developing this visioning work, the information gathered has been used to support numerous other TRTFN initiatives in

pursuit of our Nation's ultimate goal: Self-Government.

For the TRTFN, this process provided an important opportunity to articulate our vision as a Nation. It allowed our staff departments to plan, prioritize, and gain a deeper understanding of the vast scope of work ongoing across the organization. Our Citizens were engaged; making their voices heard through in-person engagements, virtual meetings, and surveys. We created unprecedented space for community members in Atlin to delve into challenging and rewarding conversations about what reconciliation and unity could look like.

This outcome has been a personally rewarding venture as two of many community members who live with one foot in "each world" and strive to strengthen vital relationships through improved collaboration in all the work we do. This process also supported the strengthening relationships with our Crown Government

partners: BC and Canada. Through the JVP and parallel negotiations processes, TRTFN, BC, and Canada negotiations teams developed a deeper understanding of the TRT vision, realities, and priorities, and of Crown government processes, opportunities and limitations. While there remains a lot more work to do, the JVP served many positive purposes, moving us further along the road towards the achievement of our vision.

While this process supported our Nation in many ways, it also brought many challenges that required us to engage in hard conversations and adapt to changing circumstances. We hope that the lessons learned section included at the end of this report is helpful for other Nations seeking to undertake a similar process. We hope that this will be an example that Nations can learn from to avoid some of the pitfalls that our own Nation fell into.

We want to express our immense gratitude to TRTFN leadership and staff who spent countless hours engaged in this process, TRTFN citizens who shared your visions for our Nation's future, and the community of Atlin for your participation and input throughout.

Most importantly, we want to thank our ancestors and elders for the incredible vision they placed in us through the

shared history of the place we call home. Their words and stories live on in us and help navigate the colonial work we undertake for our people. The wisdom and compassion that emerged through this process was truly humbling and inspiring for us both.

We are at the beginning of this vision - while at the same time, so far down the path that our forebearers left for us to walk in their footsteps and continue forward. We are honoured to walk this journey alongside all of those who live, love, and play in Taku River Tlingit territory, and support our vision into the future.

Gunalchéesh,



Shaax'akee
Chantelle (Simpson) Schultz
Senior Negotiator, Manager

Desgi Ká
Vincent Esquiro
Assistant Negotiator



Atlin community members participate in a JVP Dinner in June 2023.

INTRODUCTION

The Taku River Tlingit First Nation Joint Visioning Process (JVP) was a trilateral process undertaken collaboratively by the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN), British Columbia (BC), and Canada (collectively referred to as 'the Parties'). Through this initiative, the Parties strengthened and deepened existing government-to-government relationships and expanded the scope of their joint work, while the TRTFN carried out an extensive planning process to clarify the Nation's vision for 20+ years in the future.

The TRTFN JVP Team

The JVP Team was made up of:

- Vincent Esquiro, Assistant Negotiator & JVP Project Lead
- Chantelle Schultz, Senior Negotiator & Senior Project Advisor to the JVP
- Julian Griggs, Dovetail Consulting, Advisory Support
- Jessie Hemphill, Kate Davis, and Ali White of Sanala Planning - Process design, coordination, facilitation, analysis, writing, and the development of communications material and reports.

Rodger Thorlakson, Manager of the TRTFN Lands and Resources Department and **Bryan Evans**, TRTFN Negotiations Advisor participated as needed to ensure alignment with ongoing Negotiations work, and Lands and Resources matters.

Throughout the JVP, TRTFN leadership, managers and staff participated in meetings and workshops, and contributed

countless hours to the development and review of TRTFN's vision, outcomes, and milestones.

As the TRTFN JVP required involvement, input, and effort from a large number of people across governments, the JVP team worked closely with negotiators and staff from BC, Canada and the Yukon.



TRTFN Staff at the JVP Staff workshop, June 2023

Involvement of Atlin Community Members

Throughout the JVP, Atlin community members were invited to participate as interest holders. **Annette Giesbrecht, Robert Smallwood, Jeremy Lancaster, Glen Harper, and Connie Morris** participated in their roles of Atlin Community Improvement District Trustees. **Åsa Berg** participated in her role as the Atlin G2G representative.

ABOUT THE JOINT VISIONING PROCESS

Intended Outcomes

The JVP began following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between TRTFN and BC. As per the MOU, and through early scoping conversations between BC and TRTFN, the intended outcomes of the JVP as articulated throughout Phase 1 were threefold:

1. *To clarify the TRTFN Vision and strategic priorities;*
2. *To seek alignment of priorities and strengthening of intergovernmental relationships with BC (and Canada as needed); and*
3. *To develop recommendations for*

consideration by TRTFN, BC, and Canada (including immediate measures, and milestones, plus the identification of any new mandates needed, additional

How the Process Evolved & Actual Outcomes

The JVP process evolved many times over the course of two years. After many conversations between the Parties, Canada joined the process as a full participant in the summer of 2022. Following some misalignment between the parties following the first Joint Visioning Session in September 2022, TRTFN prioritized internal planning work, with the goal of further clarifying the Nation's vision, outcomes and milestones. This work took place in collaboration with TRTFN managers, staff, citizens and community members between March and August, 2023.

At the same time, it became clear that there were different understandings of the MOU and what the outcomes of the JVP were intended to be. Negotiators from BC and Canada made it clear that their understanding of the outcomes would be for TRTFN to develop recommendations to be shared with the Crown governments for their consideration.

This differed from TRTFN's understanding that the recommendations would be jointly developed and shared for consideration by the governments. Despite this misalignment, the TRTFN JVP 6 Team moved forward with planning for an in-person session with the parties to bring closure to the JVP and determine next steps. At the end of the JVP, the following outcomes were achieved:

- Development of TRTFN's vision for 25+ years in the future, outcomes, and milestones towards its achievement
- Next steps for continued collaborative work

Planning Approach

The JVP process was large and complex in scope, requiring continued coordination between the Parties and numerous participants to ensure they remained informed and involved throughout.

With the Parties in agreement that the JVP must be led and informed by TRTFN and their vision, **Sanala** worked closely with TRTFN negotiators to engage with leadership, staff, and citizens. This engagement was carried out primarily through virtual meetings hosted

via zoom, with 3-4 in person meetings or workshops in both phases 1 and 2. As the scope of the TRT vision expanded to include every facet of TRT life, the need for community engagement and involvement became a priority.

Sanala supported TRTFN negotiators in the design and facilitation of participatory engagement opportunities to ensure citizens' voices contributed to the development of the TRTFN vision, outcomes, and milestones.



Participants of the first Joint Visioning Session in Atlin, September 2022.



Vincent Esquiro works with staff to review JVP pillar milestones at the Staff Workshop in June 2023.



PROCESS

TRTFN staff participate in an on-the-land visioning exercise at the Staff Workshop in June 2022.

PHASE ONE



Scoping and Establishing the JVP:
Following the signing of the MOU in August 2021, TRTFN Negotiators and BC staff engaged in the G2G Forum spent time scoping and designing the process.

Phase 1 Planning Work: In preparation for the first Joint Visioning Session in September 2022, the TRTFN JVP team completed the following activities:

- A review of existing TRTFN reports and planning documents

- A half-day visioning session with the TRTFN Clan Directors Council
- One-on-one and small group meetings with TRTFN staff, leadership, advisors, and local stakeholders,
- A two-day visioning session with TRTFN staff
- Engagement dinners for TRTFN citizens to learn about the JVP and contribute to the vision.

All of these activities contributed to the drafting of a vision statement and a series of milestones organized into ten pillars (themes).



Participants of the first Joint Visioning Session, September 2022. Credit: Jamaine Campbell Videography

Joint Visioning Session #1: In September 2022, representatives from TRTFN, BC, Canada, and the Yukon Government participated in a three-day Joint Visioning Session in Atlin with the goals of strengthening relationships between the parties, building a shared vision, and clarifying how they can work together to achieve it. Five Atlin residents, including four Atlin Community Improvement District trustees, participated as interest holders. As part of the three-day workshop, an Atlin Community Dinner was hosted to invite residents to learn and ask questions about the JVP. This was an important moment of coming together and with a commitment for more communication, an acknowledgement of a lot more work ahead, there was growing optimism that a collaborative process can help bridge the gap between TRT and Atlin.

Phase 1 Reflections and Phase 2 Planning:

After the September Joint Visioning Session, TRTFN, BC, and Canada shared reflections on the session and discussed what next steps, roles and responsibilities should look like moving forward. Despite the excitement that came with a larger than anticipated scope of work, the JVP planning work stalled for a number of months as the Parties worked through disagreements on the level of effort, project scope, and work planning process moving forward.

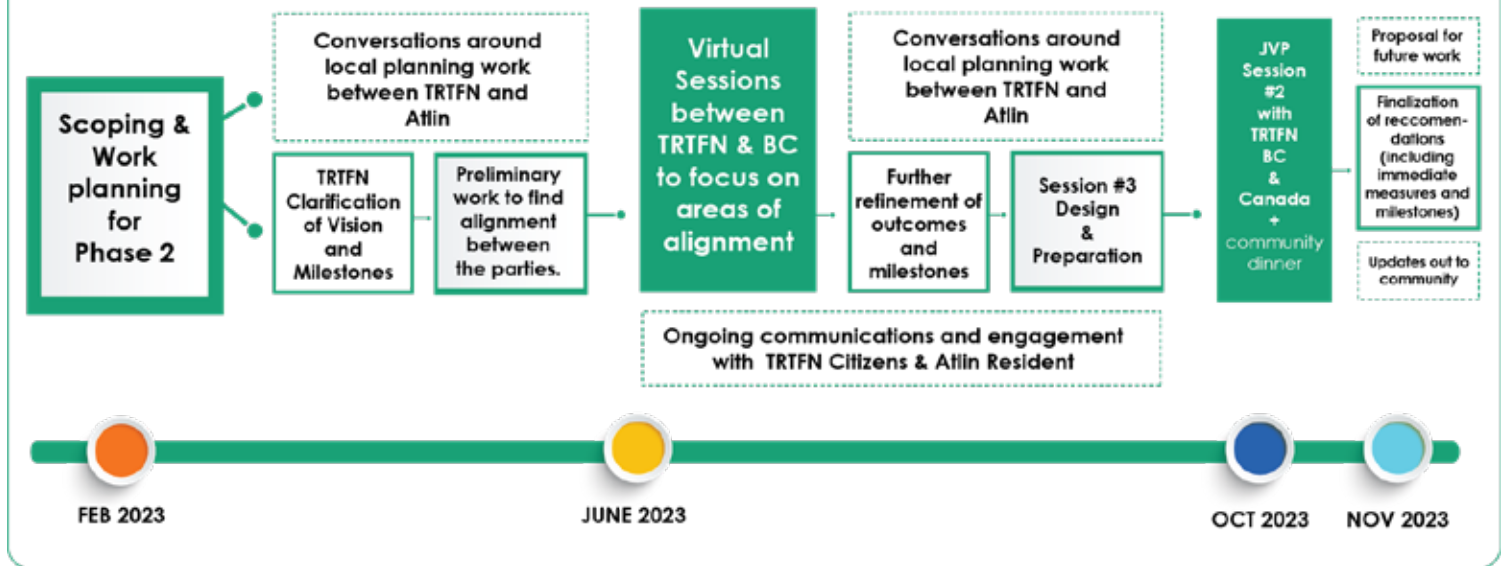


Kate Davis and Vincent Esquiro present on the JVP process at the second JVP Session in October 2023.



Participants of the first Joint Visioning Session in Atlin, September 2022.

PHASE TWO



Phase 2 Planning Work: In Winter 2023, the Parties agreed that TRTFN should continue the work to clarify the Nation's vision and that BC and Canada would support and participate as desired. This occurred through:

- Virtual meetings with TRTFN staff departments and relevant stakeholders to begin to identify priority milestones.
- An in-person TRTFN staff workshop in Atlin in June 2023 to further refine pillar milestones, identify priorities, and support cross-pollination between departments and teams.
- A TRTFN Citizen's engagement to provide input on the 10 pillars of the vision
- An Atlin community dinner in June 2023 to harvest further input on the goal of unity in Atlin.

Virtual Pillar Workshops: In As BC representatives were unable to allocate time in June 2023 for an in-person Joint Visioning Session as previously intended, the TRTFN JVP team pivoted the planned discussions to take place in a virtual format. At these virtual pillar workshops, participants reviewed each priority milestone to confirm mutual understanding of the milestone's intent, scope, and desired outcomes, and sought to identify how the work might move forward.

Joint Visioning Session #2: From October 17-19th, 2023, the second Joint Visioning Session was held in-person in Atlin with representatives from TRTFN, BC, Canada, and the Yukon. The goals for this final session were to celebrate TRTFN's vision, clarify the shared strategic priorities of the parties and options for advancing joint work,

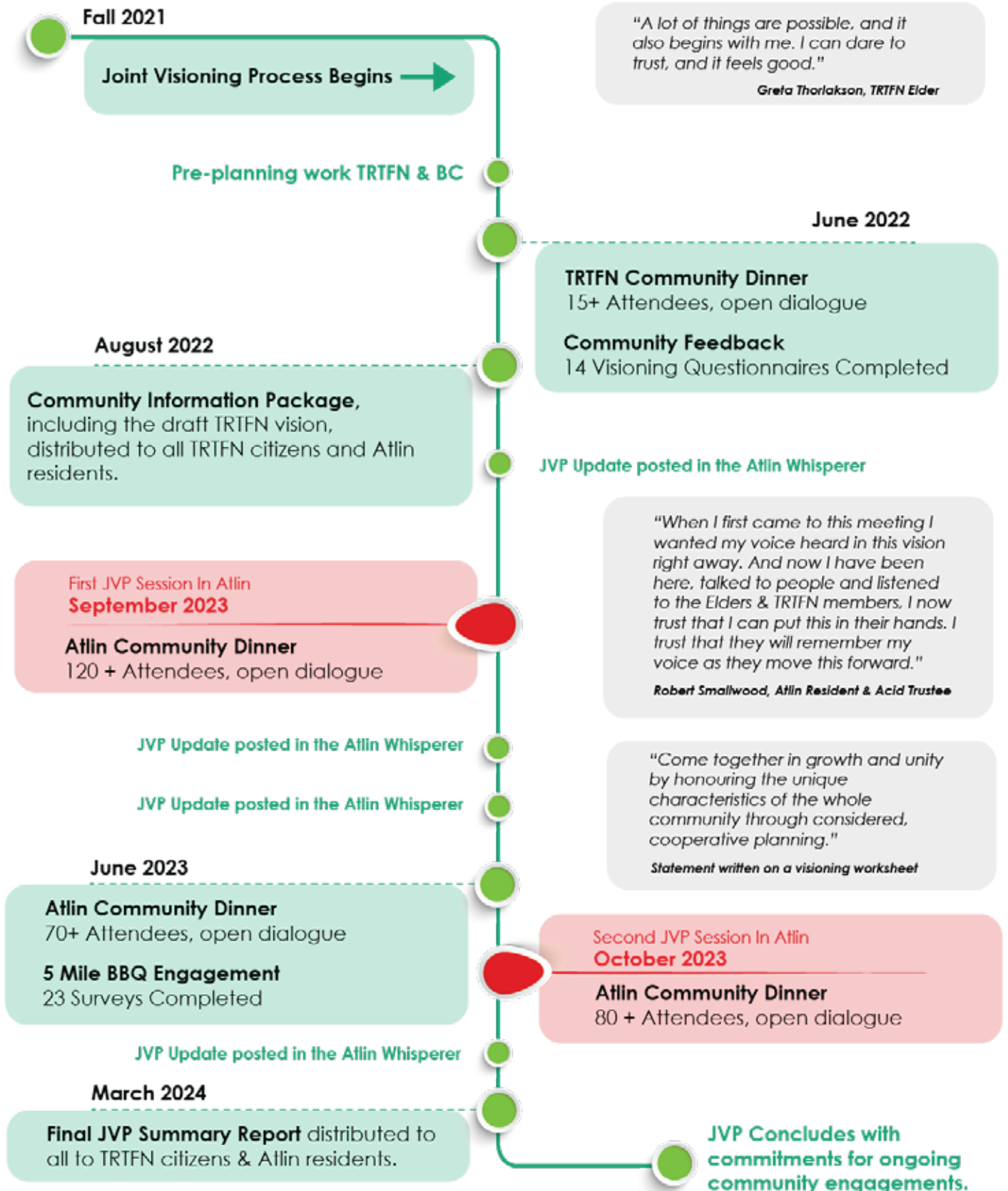


Vincent Esquiro talks with guests at the JVP Atlin Community Dinner in October, 2023.

and determine next steps and timelines for collaborative work. Day 1 focused on advancing the unity and local reconciliation in Atlin, and included representatives from ACID as well as the Atlin G2G representative. A community dinner was hosted and Atlin residents and TRTFN citizens had the opportunity to voice concerns and ask questions to TRTFN, BC, and Canada. This process brought to light a need for BC and Canada to provide additional support to TRTFN through information sharing and education for Atlin residents. The remainder of the JVP session focused on identifying next steps for collaborative work between the Parties that would address priority milestones in support of the TRTFN Vision.

In November 2023, TRTFN and BC met to discuss BC's response and are now in the process of determining next steps.

Community Engagement Process





JOINT VISIONING PROCESS OUTCOMES

About the Taku River Tlingit Vision

The TRTFN visioning work consists of a vision for 20+ years into the future, organized into ten pillars that each represent a theme. Within each of the ten pillars there is a vision statement and a series of outcomes that demonstrate how the vision will be achieved.

A series of milestones articulate the many steps to be taken over the short (0-5 years), medium (5-15 years), and long-term (15+ years). Priority milestones have been identified by leadership,

staff, advisors, and citizens as those that are the most urgent, impactful, and feasible as of Fall 2023.

This report outlines each of the ten pillars with the vision statement, outcomes, and an overarching description of the milestones. The complete set of milestones, including priority milestones, is included in the TRTFN Vision document, which is continuously being updated by TRTFN staff.



Vincent Esquiro and Max Wesley after working at the JVP Atlin dinner in October 2023

Taku River Tlingit's Vision

Taku River Tlingit's history is widely understood, and the culture is alive and thriving, strong enough to share freely with others.

All Taku River Tlingit people exist in the language of our ancestors, and are effectively transferring the Lingít Language on to our future generations.

Taku River Tlingit Citizens receive holistic education throughout their whole lives, in school and outside of it.

Ecosystems in Taku River Tlingit territories are thriving under the Nation's good stewardship, planning, and connection to the land.

Taku River Tlingit First Nation has sustainable infrastructure to support the wellbeing of community members, including adequate good housing, public buildings, and communal spaces, with infrastructure throughout the territories to support cultural activities, healing, safety, stewardship, and economic development including tourism and recreation areas.

Taku River Tlingit Citizens and community members are supported and encouraged to be secure, and are physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually well; connected to the land and nurtured by Tlingit Kusteeyí (way of life).

Taku River Tlingit has a culture of unity, mutual support, and collaboration. All citizens and community members feel well supported by the Nation, community organizations, their friends and families who all work together to create a strong community network. TRT enjoys positive, trusting, collaborative relationships with other Tlingit and neighbouring First Nations.

Atlin is a place where all community members feel connected, where differences are respected and honoured, and the benefits of shared work and strong relationships are understood and celebrated by Tlingit and non-Tlingit alike.

Taku River Tlingit exercises self-determination, sovereignty, and jurisdiction in accordance with TRT culture and laws. TRT consent is the basis of decision-making for TRT lands, territory, and resources.

Taku River Tlingit First Nation is a financially independent and responsible nation, able to operate with a high degree of fiscal autonomy to pursue the Nation's vision and provide its members with a comprehensive scope of programs, services and opportunities, from multiple, diverse, and sustainable revenue streams. The Nation continues to balance economic development needs with the responsibility to care for their lands and waters.

Thriving Culture

Vision:

Taku River Tlingit's history is widely understood, and the culture is alive and thriving, strong enough to share freely with others.

The commitment to preserving and promoting Tlingit culture and language stands as a cornerstone of Tlingit life, our Tlingit Kusteeyí, intricately woven through each pillar within the Nation's vision. It is a commitment that transcends time, forming the very foundation upon which our Nation is built.

Understanding Tlingit history and being immersed in the stories shared by the Elders and ancestors becomes not only a cultural practice but a vital element in the construction of resilient family systems. These narratives serve as a guiding light, instilling a deep sense of identity and belonging, and fostering a shared understanding of protocol and values.

Creating dedicated spaces and opportunities for the practice of Tlingit Kusteeyí, whether on the land or through resource-sharing and educational programs, becomes a profound act of cultural preservation, sovereignty, and environmental sustainability. These endeavors are not merely about sustaining heritage; they are about nurturing the strength required for the holistic well-being of the community and environment that supports us all.

This commitment to culture and language seamlessly aligns with concurrent efforts in governance and self-determination. It is a holistic approach that recognizes the interdependence of cultural vibrancy, self-governance, and overall community well-being. By intertwining these elements, the Tlingit people are forging a comprehensive path towards a prosperous and culturally enriched future—one where traditions thrive, languages flourish, local reconciliation is seen in everyday life, and the community stands resilient in the face of an ever-evolving landscape.

Wayne Carlick and Jenoch Esquiro greet guests at the Surprise Lake Culture Camp. September 2022





Wayne Carlick speaks with Susan Kelly at Surprise Lake, September 2022. Credit: Jamaine Campbell Videography

Outcomes:

- ✔ Community members and others can easily access archives and information about the Nation and recognize the faces and voices of our ancestors
- ✔ There are multiple places dedicated to practicing our culture including language and culture camps out on the land and a Long House in Atlin.
- ✔ Youth are strong in their culture and identity, and look to the clan leaders when guidance is needed.
- ✔ Family systems and protocols are strong.
- ✔ Elders past and present are honoured and celebrated.



How do we make Tlingit culture and the way of life Haa Kusteeyí become part of the fabric of this community and way of thinking?



- Wayne Carlick, Culture Centre Coordinator TRTFN, JVP Session 2 - October 2023



“What is possible?”

How do we heal those people that are suffering in our community? Art is one part, some people think it's just art, but it tells a story, it's a document, it's our laws, our history, our clan stories. Those are really special to us and we don't have enough of them."

- Wayne Carlick, Culture Centre Coordinator TRTFN, JVP Session 2 - October 2023

Lingít Language

Vision:

All Taku River Lingít people exist in the language of our ancestors, and are effectively transferring the Lingít Language on to our future generations.

Our language is the most critical component of Tlingit Kusteeyí. Embedded within the language are our laws, spirituality, our relationship with our land, and Lingít ways of being and knowing. Our language comes from the land, and keeps us connected to the core of who we are as Lingít.

The Taku River Lingít people have lost our last fluent birth speakers in the past decade, and our language has not been passed on to new fluent generations for more than 50 years. At this critical time we know that we must make wise choices towards creating new highly fluent speakers with effectiveness, timeliness, and reliability.

Learning the language of our ancestors is inherently healing for all generations of Lingít people, as it provides our foundation of belonging and teaches us how to think and interact with the world around us.

By bringing our language back to life, we ensure the continued empowerment of the generations to come in a colonial current that pulls our people towards continued assimilation. We will go beyond ensuring all citizens can become intergenerational fluent speakers, and also commit to all areas of TRTFN governance, business, programming, and services existing within and supporting the language of our ancestors.

Photo of Pine Creek Waterfall by Rebecca Law





Participants of the first JVP Session at Surprise Lake Culture Camp, September 2022.

Outcomes:

- ✓ All TRT community members have access to effective intergenerational language programs, immersion school programs, and consistent regular on the land immersion programming.
- ✓ All Tlingit citizens are fluent
- ✓ All Lingít language learners are supported financially to learn and speak the language
- ✓ Our governance and Clan Directors Council business takes place in the language
- ✓ All citizen and community engagements make ensure Lingít is treated as a first language and provide translation services for fluent speakers
- ✓ Citizens shape how language is revitalized and represented at a Nation level
- ✓ Living in Tlingit territory means you will naturally learn Lingít from hearing it every day and needing to speak it to communicate with others.
- ✓ Lingít is the mother tongue of all children growing up in the Tlingit community; a common occurrence, not the occasional speaker.
- ✓ There is an environment network of healthy families that have the supportive programs they need for language learning and language retention at all stages of their life.



**[We should]
have a Tlingit
teacher in
daycare so
our
future leaders
can learn
Tlingit at a
young age**













**- TRTFN citizen, 5 Mile BBQ,
June 2023**



TRTFN Youth At Tour of Yukon College Photo by Rebecca Law

Outcomes Con't:

-  Families are speaking intergenerationally. Lingít is the chosen language in all contexts and the language people are most comfortable speaking.
-  Tlingit individuals are able to have the language skills to leave the community and sustain language in their homes and families.
-  Every citizen is an expert in our language, law, and land-based way of knowing.
-  Our Tlingit culture is alive, thriving, and evolving with our language.
-  People are no longer anxious about our language. We want to be in a place where we have documented our language sufficiently that it won't be lost.
-  Our language becomes a forum for healing our people. Language, law and culture have become inseparable.
-  The Tlingit way of thinking and knowing have displaced Western paradigms. The concepts of respect and responsibility to the land and each other inherent to Lingít language are in everything we say and do.
-  We are not just Lingít speakers but Tlingit thinker.
-  Revitalization of our language is at the centre of a larger movement of cultural revival.
-  Transition from language survival to language that is vibrant, alive and in all our homes.



I was worried I was going to die without learning my language. I took a training workshop with my nieces, [and] ended up learning it and then teaching it. Opportunities [arise] when you begin to open yourself up to culture, healing, ceremonies. I'm a different person today because of that.



Wayne Carlick, Joint
Visioning Session 2,
October 2023

**Culture Centre
Coordinator TRTFN, JVP
Session 2 - October 2023**

Education

Vision:

Taku River Tlingit Citizens receive holistic education throughout their whole lives, in school and outside of it.

Holistic education for TRTFN citizens is a multifaceted endeavor that embraces cultural richness, traditional knowledge, and continuous learning. It is a commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who are academically competitive, culturally grounded, and equipped to contribute positively to both their personal lives and the community at large.

For TRTFN youth, education serves a dual purpose – supporting their overall well-being and fostering a strong connection to their culture. It emphasizes the teaching of Tlingit history and laws, providing a solid foundation for personal growth. Empowering youth academically becomes a key objective, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to thrive in diverse academic settings.

This commitment to holistic education extends beyond youth, encompassing Tlingits of all ages. The emphasis is on providing varied opportunities for lifelong learning and skills development. Recognizing that continuous learning strengthens both individual and community capacity, TRTFN aims to create an environment where citizens can thrive personally and contribute meaningfully to the collective well-being.





HaaKusteeyi 2023 Photo by Manu Keggenhoff

Outcomes:

- ✔ Cultural education systems including rites of passage and coming-of-age training complements school-based education, which is available from newborn ages to grade 12 in the community with Tlingit immersion and pathways to post-secondary.
- ✔ The school environment is nurturing and supports wellbeing, cultural identity, pride, and academic excellence.
- ✔ Supportive, effective training is available to all ages to help them achieve their goals as Tlingit people.
- ✔ Professional development and other adult education opportunities create a community of competent, successful community members empowered in their roles in the community.
- ✔ Tlingit people have the capacity to bring their lived experience and education to jobs within the Nation that reflect traditional Tlingit values.
- ✔ TRTFN has jurisdiction of education for Tlingit citizens.

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**Education
on the land
for all Atlin
citizens**
”

**- TRTFN citizen, 5
Mile BBQ,
June 2023**

“I would like to see more traditional practices being taught in the community”

- TRTFN citizen, 5 Mile BBQ, June 2023

Healthy Ecosystems

Vision:

Ecosystems in Taku River Tlingit territories are thriving under the Nation's good stewardship, planning, and connection to the land.

TRTFN governance authority will incrementally advance in a manner that assures the Nation's capacity to protect the health and respect of ecosystems in the territory. By taking steps toward this, the TRT will include consent-based decision making wherever appropriate opportunities arise in the short-term and long-term, in areas most important to the stewardship values, inherent to the rights and responsibilities of the Nation.

A Land Security Strategy developed in stages that is consistent, robust, and well-understood by Citizens, Managers, and leadership alike will contemplate the transfer of land parcels as well as other related matters such as reserve development and lease ownership. All people in Atlin will be welcome as TRTFN Citizens experience strengthened security in their own land rights, and certainty over economic and ecosystem advancement consistent with TRT values and stewardship laws.

Increased support for internal capacity building and cultural foundational programming will be built into all planning processes. Furthermore, through the revitalization of cultural stewardship practices, TRTFN citizens of all ages will gain increased opportunities to participate in Tlingit Kusteeyí, caring for the land and harvesting traditional foods.






Taku River Photo by Rebecca Law





Photos taken on the Taku River Mountain Ranges and glaciers by Rebecca Law

Outcomes:

-  All generations of TRT citizens grow up knowing how to care for and respect the land through traditional practice and knowledge.
-  Wildlife, fish and plant populations are healthy and resilient, and support responsible harvesting and gathering, especially for TRT food and ceremonial use and economic wellbeing.
-  TRT members are able to harvest or access a diversity of preferred traditional foods to last year-round, and participate in other activities on the land, including the Tlingit land-based way of life - Hà khustiyxh.
-  All activities are rooted in an understanding of the reciprocal connection and interdependence of all life forms.
-  TRTFN has governance authority over land uses within their territory, and there is an all-encompassing innovative land use plan that is collaborative and respected by all.



TRT has a long history of stewarding and caring for these lands and territories, and we will continue to do it well and with honour, the way our ancestors used to do. Thinking of the next 10, 20, 50 years... creating a future for our children starts here, that is what's at the heart of this work.

We're coming together so that all the people here can survive in a good way, we need to think about the different mechanisms and resources that will allow us to accomplish these things over the next decades



- TRTFN Senior Negotiator Chantelle Schultz, JVP Session 1 in September 2022

“I would like to see more traditional practices being taught in the community”

- TRTFN citizen, 5 Mile BBQ, June 2023

Infrastructure

Vision:

Taku River Tlingit First Nation has sustainable infrastructure to support the wellbeing of community members, including adequate good housing, public buildings, and communal paces, with infrastructure throughout the territories to support cultural activities, healing, safety, stewardship, and economic development including tourism and recreation areas.

Building new infrastructure and improving existing infrastructure in Atlin and 5 Mile Reserve is a large and overarching area of work that is tied to each pillar in the TRTFN Vision.

By establishing Atlin and 5 Mile as well-connected and well-resourced communities with safe and accessible infrastructure, TRTFN will be able to better support community wellbeing and offset the daily challenges that come from being a remote community.

In particular, developing infrastructure that supports health, cultural revitalization, education, and healing for TRTFN citizens was highlighted as a priority during the JVP. With so many infrastructure priorities identified, TRTFN must address internal capacity and staff housing needs within this pillar in order to support an increased rate of infrastructure development.

To support this work, TRTFN will engage in long-term planning for growth and community development to ensure economic and social benefits to all people in the region.


Taku Carving At Cove in the Long Point (5Mile) by Clayton Carlick





Ice Fishing on À Ttèn Lake by Manu Keggenhoff

Outcomes:

-  TRT Elders have access to supportive infrastructure, including an Elders Facility.
-  A healing centre is accessible to any community member in need.
-  The community is well-connected to other communities with good roads and connectivity throughout Atlin and TRT reserves.
-  Signage throughout the territories acknowledges and celebrates TRTs presence, authority, and history.
-  Atlin is a place that attracts visitors through good tourism and recreation infrastructure.
-  Tlingits who wish to move home to Atlin are able to do so.
-  Atlin has the infrastructure for students to complete their K-12 education in community.
-  TRT and the Atlin community have infrastructure that supports a high degree of safety (including larger items such as a firehall, ambulance bay, water distribution system to 5-Mile, and smaller items such as plugs).



This [infrastructure pillar] is a part of our wellness strategy to heal the divide in our community... If anyone's house in Atlin is on fire, everyone is in danger. We're a small town, so we need to come together on these things



- Vincent Esquiro, Virtual Infrastructure Pillar Workshop, August 2023

“Deal with housing, renovations, so everything works properly and make sure that houses are being taken care of. Have a bigger space for cultural practice and dance.”

- TRTFN citizen, 5 Mile BBQ, June 2023

Holistic Wellbeing

Vision:

Taku River Tlingit Citizens and community members are supported and encouraged to be secure, and are physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually well; connected to the land and nurtured by Tlingit Kusteeyí (way of life).

Community wellness is foundational to TRTFN's vision, and is inextricably linked to all of its ten pillars. With the jurisdiction and administrative capacity to provide all TRTFN citizens with quality care regardless of where they live, the Nation will be able to foster a deeper sense of wellbeing and self-sufficiency among Citizens and community members.

Having the ability to access holistic wellness services will enable TRTFN citizens to heal and reconnect to their cultural practices. This type of holistic and comprehensive wellness will be built into all levels of planning. It will be citizen-led and citizen-inclusive to ensure all are respected in their individual, family, and collective pursuits to maintain culture, community, and connection.

Citizens will be able to assess a multitude of cultural programs or services that will support a variety of preferences and needs, depending on geographic location, and family/personal interest. Citizens in roles that are not often recognized in colonial structures, such as artists, carvers, midwives, and spiritual healers, will be equally respected and acknowledged for their contributions to our Nation's wellbeing.





Frog rock À Tlèn Photo by Manu Keggenhoff

Outcomes:

- ✔ TRTFN administers a range of comprehensive community-wide health services in Atlin.
- ✔ TRTFN citizens have access to care wherever they live, including Whitehorse and Vancouver.
- ✔ TRT medicines and healing practices are known, used, and encouraged as part of a wellness practice.
- ✔ All community members have access to a primary care clinic and year-round ambulance and emergency care services in Atlin.
- ✔ Strong systems and cultural practices support community members in their healing journeys.
- ✔ Family systems are strong and healthy, with no children in care and a range of support available to families including perinatal care and at-home care for seniors.
- ✔ Everyone experiences food security and enjoys traditional and local foods year-round.
- ✔ TRTFN Health staff workload is manageable and prevention-focused.

“
**Well-being of
our citizens is first
and foremost
important - our
people have been
in survival mode
at every moment
of our lives...We
cannot thrive with
our people only
surviving.**

”

- TRTFN Citizen at 5 Mile BBQ,
June 2023



Atlin community dinner, September 2022. Credit: Jamaine Campbell Videography

Outcomes Con't:

- ✔ Citizens are self-sufficient and financially stable.
- ✔ Citizens understand what services are available to them, know where to go, and how to access the support they need.
- ✔ Citizens feel that they can talk about their health and wellbeing needs in a respectful way
- ✔ TRTFN has full jurisdiction in decision-making for TRT children in and out of the region.

“ This work won't mean very much if people aren't healthy. We got here, and we are still here somehow, our people are struggling still. How do we figure out how to make them better and stronger people? ”

- Wayne Carlick, Culture Centre Coordinator TRTFN,
JVP Session 2 - October 2023

Good Relationships

Vision:

Taku River Tlingit has a culture of unity, mutual support, and collaboration. All citizens and community members feel well supported by the Nation, community organizations, their friends and families who all work together to create a strong community network. TRT enjoys positive, trusting, collaborative relationships with other Tlingit and neighbouring First Nations.

Through the use of transparent, creative, and consistent methods of communication, TRTFN will empower citizens to be engaged in ways that feel manageable, meaningful, and impactful.

Opportunities to celebrate, honour, and support one another through both formal and informal gatherings and ceremonies will strengthen relationships between TRTFN and other Nations, as well as throughout TRTFN leadership, staff, citizens, community members, clans, families, and neighbours.

The ways in which we engage with each other in the spirit of community, culture, and connection will adapt and evolve as the communities evolve and change through the years.





Taku Watershed Photo by Rebecca Law

Outcomes:

-  Individuals are eager to share what they have and engage with each other respectfully and compassionately, from a foundation of wellbeing and abundance.
-  TRT citizens trust each other and can successfully work through disputes and challenges.
-  There are numerous opportunities to celebrate one another's achievements.
-  There are regular opportunities to participate in activities that contribute to community building and collaboration.
-  TRT proudly welcomes guests from different regions and Nations to the territory.



**Haa Kusteeyi
style practices
mean you need
the time and
space, you need
to feed people,
you need self-
care and to care
about the people
around us.**



**- TRTFN staff member,
Staff Workshop,
June 2023**

“Get the people to cook together and share stories”

- TRTFN citizens, 5 Mile BBQ, June 2023

Unity

Vision:

Atlin is a place where all community members feel connected, where differences are respected and honoured, and the benefits of shared work and strong relationships are understood and celebrated by Tlingit and non-Tlingit alike.

Strengthened relationships and reconciliation in Atlin rely upon developing a foundation of trust and understanding amongst community members.

Through the JVP engagement process, community members noted that learning and sharing both Tlingit and non-Tlingit histories of Atlin, committing to regular and consistent information-sharing, and collaborating on “Quick Start” projects for shared infrastructure and services will support increased unity in Atlin.

Although this was identified as only the starting point, the opportunities for increased collaboration will grow, their impacts rippling outwards as our intentions to connect and support shared projects and outcomes continue and evolve.





Speakers at the Atlin Community Dinner, September 2022. Credit: Jamaine Campbell Videography

Outcomes:

- ✔ Through consistent, effective communications and engagement, TRTFNs vision is supported and implemented by others who see the global benefits of working with the Nation.
- ✔ Everyone in Atlin has an understanding of the harms of colonization and intergenerational trauma in the community, the strength that carries through, and mutual accountability for healing.
- ✔ TRTFN's strong role in local governance and integration into Atlin is celebrated by all community members.
- ✔ The histories of Atlin are widely shared and understood.
- ✔ Everyone who lives in Atlin feels well-informed about community initiatives and has opportunities to share input and feedback.



Atlin people are
walking trails in
town together



- Atlin Community Dinner
Participant,
June 2023

"The comment [that] we all want the same thing is true - AND we have different lived experiences and understandings of how to reach those outcomes... The pathway to that involves a lot of understanding of each other - through sharing meals, breaking bread - not to divide us but to celebrate those differences"

- Vincent Esquiro, TRTFN Assistant Negotiator, JVP Session 2

Self-determination

Vision:

Taku River Tlingit exercises self-determination, sovereignty, and jurisdiction in accordance with TRT culture and laws. TRT consent is the basis of decision-making for TRT lands, territory, and extractive resources.

TRTFN's Constitution Act (1993) represents the TRTFN paramount laws which apply to all Taku River Tlingits and the TRTFN governing bodies. The Constitution contains a series of guiding principles that outline a set of values and beliefs that form the foundation of a clan system that is uniquely Tlingit. Today, there are efforts underway to revitalize TRT laws.








Simultaneously, TRTFN negotiators are working with the Province of BC and Canada to reach self-government. This will include processes of seeking recognition from and negotiating agreements with Crown governments, alongside efforts to educate and empower TRTFN citizens to participate and support self-governance initiatives while upholding Tlingit laws.





Surprise Lake Culture Camp, September 2022. Credit: Jamaine Campbell Videography

Outcomes:

-  TRTFN governance seeks consensus from citizens and honours our Tlingit ancestors and reflects a full expression of the clan system including its traditions, laws and responsibilities to the people and land.
-  All TRTFN citizens understand, embrace, and take full responsibility for upholding authentic Taku River culture, traditions, and community harmony and cohesion.
-  TRTFN citizens are informed and have the capabilities, capacities, and opportunities to fully participate at every level of government in the Nation, including administrative, technical, managerial, executive and political.
-  TRTFN is fully recognized by all levels of Crown government through incremental treaty and reconciliation agreements that give effect to shared sovereignty as part of an on-going process of recognition and reconciliation.
-  TRTFN have respectful, collaborative and productive relationships with neighbouring nations that advance the collective nations' common interests while respecting each nation's distinct jurisdiction and authority.
-  TRTFN is steadily securing control and ownership of key land parcels throughout the territory to support the nation's stewardship, cultural and socio-economic goals and aspirations.
-  Justice and social systems are restorative, helping people to recover, grow and be part of a proud Tlingit community.



Educate the people on all these visions on what sovereignty means. What jurisdiction we're entitled to. Practice the culture and laws as we live.



- TRTFN citizen, 5 Mile BBQ, June 2023

Financial Sustainability

Vision:

The Taku River Tlingit First Nation is a financially independent and responsible nation, able to operate with a high degree of fiscal autonomy to pursue the Nation's vision and provide its members with a comprehensive scope of programs, services and opportunities, from multiple, diverse, and sustainable revenue streams. The Nation continues to balance economic development needs with the responsibility to care for their lands and waters.

TRTFN's pathway to financial sustainability will include several components. Strong multi-year core funding will enable TRTFN to have lasting effective governance and administration with sustainable and effective programs carried out by departments. Through TRT Corporations, the Nation can foster long-term employment, economic opportunities, and sustained wealth.

By securing revenue-sharing and impact benefit agreements, as well as establishing a sovereign endowment fund, TRTFN will generate additional stable income to support a wide range of programs and services.

Bryan Evans (Dovefall Consulting) and Karen Miller (BC) at the second JVP Session, October 2023.





TRTFN Youth Izaiah Carlick on Helicopter Flight to Taku River

Outcomes:

-  TRTFN has robust, multi-year core funding to support the full governance and administration of the nation.
-  TRT Corporations create long term employment and economic opportunities for members while generating sustained wealth for the nation to pursue community goals and aspirations.
-  TRTFN has meaningful revenue sharing agreements with the Crown for all development in Tlingit Territory.
-  TRTFN has meaningful impact benefit agreements with all proponents operating in Tlingit Territory.
-  TRTFN has established a sovereign endowment fund that provides a robust and permanent source of income to support long term Tlingit land stewardship and a diversity of community social and cultural programs and services that benefit members.
-  TRTFN and all TRT Corporations operate with a high degree of fiscal prudence, accountability and transparency.
-  TRTFN and TRT Corporations have strategic alliances and partnerships with other Nations, governments, or agencies that support the Nation in achieving its goals.



**Collect our
royalties from
mining
on our
traditional
territory**



**- TRTFN citizen, 5 Mile BBQ,
June 2023**

**“Tlingit people taking on
the management jobs”**

- TRTFN citizen, 5 Mile BBQ, June 2023



JVP SUCCESSES

Llewellyn Glacier Photo by Rebecca Law

Throughout the JVP, the TRTFN JVP Team remained adaptive and resilient to a complex and ever-evolving process, resulting in a number of successes that benefit the Nation.

Strengthened Relationships between TRTFN, BC, and Canada.

By navigating difficult conversations and working collaboratively to seek a better understanding of one another, relationships between the Parties were improved throughout the JVP.

Information Gathering to serve other Negotiations Processes

Information generated through the JVP is useful to other areas of work TRTFN is undertaking, including collaborative work with the Crown governments. An example of this is the Wellness Working Group (WWG) where priority milestones identified through the JVP were brought forward as “Quick Start” projects for implementation.

Example Quick Start Projects:

The **Food Sovereignty/Greenhouse Project** aims to bolster local food production, ensuring greater self-

sufficiency and resilience in the face of external challenges.

The **Warriors Trail Crew Project** not only contributes to environmental conservation but also provides valuable opportunities for skill development and community-building for those who have struggled to find their place in the community.

The JVP has also supported the advancement of negotiations with Canada that will enable TRTFN to address some of the social impacts most keenly felt by citizens and community as a result of colonial practices.

Increase of Departmental Coordination with TRTFN

Throughout the JVP, staff shared that they benefited from learning about other departments' visions and priorities, and where they would benefit from inter-departmental partnerships. This increase of departmental coordination will support TRTFN Negotiations by providing stronger direction and will enable staff to understand how their priorities contribute to ongoing negotiations.



Atlin Community Dinner, September 2022

“Every department was doing their own thing and every department was trying to apply individually for the same things and we were overcrossing each other. This was a difficulty for the departments to get additional money [...] [Now], the governments will look at our full vision, see our priorities, and direct it to the departments where it can move forward.”
- TRTFN Department Lead

“I loved community dinners, seeing people coming together, having the opportunity, being able to capture what the communities concern, fears, hopes, and dreams, and being able to articulate that in our documents, capturing community voices from all aspects of the community.”
- Vincent Esquiro, TRTFN JVP Lead

Unity in Atlin

The importance of increased unity and reconciliation in Atlin emerged as a priority and became one of the pillars of the TRTFN Vision, with the TRTFN JVP team committing to sharing information and hosting engagement sessions open to all Atlin community members. Work within the unity pillar also took the form of increased collaboration with the Atlin Community Improvement District (ACID) and other representatives of the Atlin community through participation in the JVP Sessions.

This participation led to an increase in trust and understanding between TRTFN and ACID, leading to commitments for stronger communication, interest in learning about the functioning of government bodies in Atlin (TRTFN and ACID), and spurring excitement about future collaboration in town.



***To learn more about success, please see the full TRTFN JVP Final Report.**



Cabin along Taku River Photo by Rebecca Law

LESSONS LEARNED

Clarity on Outcomes & Level of Community Engagement

As the focus of the JVP was initially understood to be the development of a joint vision between BC and TRTFN to support the strengthening of their relationship and expansion of their shared work, community engagement was intended to be minimal. However, as a result of some misalignment with BC regarding the intended outcomes of the JVP, the TRTFN JVP team had to reassess and make changes to the process. As such, the visioning work necessarily shifted to become primarily TRTFN-focused and the scope became similar in scale to a more fulsome comprehensive community plan. Had this misalignment been understood from the start, the TRTFN JVP team would have prioritized spending time and project funding on community engagement with less effort dedicated to liaising with Crown governments.

****To learn more about lessons learned, please see the full TRTFN JVP Final Report.***

Creating Safe Space for Reconciliation Conversations in Atlin

While the community dinners in Atlin were overall considered to be successful in that they created space for open and honest conversations that have been difficult to have in the past amongst community members, there remains a concern around cultural and emotional safety for Tlingit participants. BC and Canada representatives have acknowledged this concern and have committed to playing a stronger role in education and communications within Atlin on topics such as treaty, land rights, and First Nations governance. Although this commitment has yet to be realized, its fulfillment will help to remove the burden on TRTFN negotiators and citizens who have had to shoulder the responsibility by responding to all comments and questions.

The TRTFN team has also identified a need for community champions within Atlin who are willing to work alongside TRTFN to share information and have quiet conversations with their community members in a way that removes some of the burden from Tlingit negotiators and citizens.



NEXT STEPS

Photo: TRTFN staff and participants at the first JVP Session, September 2022.

BCTC Main Table:

- TRTFN, BC, and Canada to determine a schedule at the BCTC Main Table for working groups and departmental teams to provide updates and make requests for areas of work in need of financial investments or legislative changes.
- TRTFN, BC, and Canada to establish a semi-annual meeting to review all priority milestones from the JVP and identify areas where working groups and departmental teams would benefit from negotiations support.

Other Venues for Collaborative work:

- TRTFN and BC to negotiate amendments to the existing Wóoshtin yan too.aat / Land and Resource Management and Shared Decision Making Agreement (G2G Agreement) to broaden the scope of collaborative work being undertaken by the Parties.
- TRTFN, BC, and Canada to develop a Terms of Reference that provides a structure for the Wellness Working Group to conduct work on priority milestones in the Culture, Language, Education, Unity, Infrastructure, and Holistic Wellbeing pillars through the Wellness Working Group moving forward.

Internal TRTFN Departmental Planning Work:

- TRTFN Managers to continue to work with their teams and other managers to prioritize milestones, action next steps tied to annual work plans, and ensure alignment across the organization.
- TRTFN Negotiations Department to continue hosting regular TRTFN staff and citizen engagements and workshops to assess progress towards Self-Governance and continue to report-out to citizens and community members as needed and as appropriate.

Unity and Local Reconciliation

- BC and Canada to provide increased support in Atlin by providing information and training on treaty and self-government
- TRTFN, Atlin Community Improvement District Trustees and local community champions to meet on a monthly basis to share information and engage in joint work on local quick-starts

