



# Newsletter

Ts'eman Za (Summer) 2023

Photo by Tammy Haller

## 33rd Annual T̕ilhqot̕in Nation Gathering



Children Potato Sack Run (August 22, 2023) Photo by Tammy Haller

The 33rd Annual T̕ilhqot̕in Nation Gathering was hosted in Gwetsilh (Siwash) from August 22 -24. The gathering began with an opening prayer and drum song and welcome speeches by Nits'il?in (Chief) Roger William and Nits'il?in (Chief) Otis Guichon. On the first day, activities included the Fishing Derby, the Moccasin Mile, the Singles Horseshoe Tournament and much more! There were tons of activities for kids and youth. TNG set up information booths and there were also external information booths, including our sister organizations, Yeqox Nilin Justice Society and Denisiqi Services Society. On the second day, we were honoured to have special guest former Nits'il?in (Chief) Art Adolph from Xaxli'p (St'át'imc Nation) attend. There were activities such as Bannock Making, a Lehal Tournament, and the Doubles Horseshoe Tournament. The day concluded with a pie eating contest and some great tunes by the Kordaroy Band. On the third day, the T̕ilhqot̕in Ts'iqi Dechen Jedilhtan held a Fashion Show/Traditional Clothing Contest and a beautiful ceremony "T̕ilhqot̕in deni ?elhghad deni midlin (*As T̕ilhqot̕in people we live equally*). There was also Powwow dancing led by T̕ilhqot̕in Elders. The gathering wrapped up with closing speeches including from TNG's Executive Director, Jenny Philbrick and a closing prayer and drum song.

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*Group photo of the Sámi Delegation visiting Title lands and doing boat tours on Chilko Lake.*

## Sámi Delegation to T̕ilhqot̕'in Territory

The T̕ilhqot̕'in and Sámi communities held a historic cultural exchange in T̕ilhqot̕'in territory from August 14-17, following a T̕ilhqot̕'in visit to Sápmi (Sámi Territory) in 2022. The Sámi delegation were hosted and toured around the territory, including the historic and cultural sites of Lady Rock, Bull Canyon, Xeni Gwet̕'in Traditional Village, Chilko Lake, Tet̕zan Biny (Fish Lake) and Nagwentled (Farwell Canyon). The T̕ilhqot̕'in and Sámi delegation exchanged stories, teachings, traditions and experiences during the visit. One noteworthy topic was the T̕ilhqot̕'in's experience regarding the Tet̕zan Biny court battle to protect it from an open-pit mine. The T̕ilhqot̕'in offered their support to the Sámi communities who face a current and similar battle at home pertaining to a mining, which threatens their reindeer herds and lands. The visit strengthened the friendship and partnership between the T̕ilhqot̕'in and Sámi communities.

*Photo of Nits'il̕'in Joe Alphonse speaking at the Housing MOU Celebration. Photo by Tammy Haller*

## Housing MOU Celebration & Open House

On August 9 – World Indigenous Peoples Day, the T̕ilhqot̕'in Nation was pleased to renew the standing Memorandum of Understanding agreement in partnership with the BC Housing Authority. This is a commitment from both parties to continue to invest and develop all areas of T̕ilhqot̕'in Housing and Asset Management. Powerful words were shared from our T̕ilhqot̕'in Nits'il̕'in Qi who celebrated the success of recent housing developments in their communities and look forward to moving forward with future housing opportunities and developments in communities.



# T̓ìlhqot̓'in Women & Girls Event & Unity Gathering



*Unity Gathering - Photo by Tammy Haller*

TNG's Governance Team held two significant gatherings at the end of July. The first was the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Ts'iqi (Women and Girls) Gathering held at Deer Creek Ranch in Yunešit'in on July 24. At the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Ts'iqi Gathering, the Ts'iqi Dechen Jedilhtan (Women's Council) held a safe space for our matriarchs and matriarchs in training to share, learn, teach, and mentor in the various areas that make up the T̓ìlhqot̓'in way of life. The gathering included discussion circles on self-esteem and self-worth, conversation around T̓ìlhqot̓'in values, dreams, and wellness, and ceremony took place throughout the day.

The second was the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Chejaghetadelh (Unity Gathering) also held at Deer Creek Ranch in Yunešit'in from July 25-26. The topics discussed at the Chejaghetadelh included the Tu (Water) Law, T̓ìlhqot̓'in citizenship, Governance structures and Constitution ratification. Additionally, as part of T̓ìlhqot̓'in Governance, the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nidlin team and T̓ìlhqot̓'in Ts'iqi Dechen Jedilhtan presented and received feedback on the Nation taking back jurisdiction over our families and T̓ìlhqot̓'in protocols related to T̓ìlhqot̓'in life stages.

It was a great few days spent out on the land sharing and connecting with the T̓ìlhqot̓'in people.

TNG's Governance Team continues to look for feedback regarding the Tu Law. T̓ìlhqot̓'in members are encouraged to sign-up on the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Deni (members only) page found on [tsilhqotin.ca/deni/](http://tsilhqotin.ca/deni/) to review the Tu Law and provide feedback. Members can also reach out to Shawnee Palmantier to ask questions, comment, or provide feedback via TNG at (778) 799-2145.



*Women & Girls Event - Photo by Lauren Carruthers*



*Women & Girls Event - Photo by Lauren Carruthers*



*Nits'il?in Francis and Peyal meeting with Niki Sharma, Attorney General of BC.*

## Tâilhqot'in Delegation to Geneva

A small Tâilhqot'in delegation consisting of Nits'il?in (Chief) Francis Laceese and TNG's Cultural Ambassador, Peyal Laceese travelled to Geneva, Switzerland to attend the 16th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) which took place from July 17 to 21, 2023.

The Expert Mechanism is a panel of experts that reports to and provides advice to the UN Human Rights Council on achieving the goals of the UN Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

This year was the 100-year anniversary of when Cayuga Chief Deskaheh of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy went to the then League of Nations seeking to address the forum regarding the rights of Indigenous peoples in North America. He was denied entry to the forum, but representatives of the city of Geneva befriended him and gave him an opportunity to speak at the City Hall. This started 100 years of friendship between the Haudenosaunee and the City of

Geneva. Nits'il?in Francis attended a reception in celebration of this friendship.

On July 15-16 the Tâilhqot'in delegation attended Indigenous Caucuses hosted by the Indigenous Peoples' Centre for Documentation, Research and Information. These were valuable days spent connecting with other Indigenous peoples from around the world and preparing collectively for the EMRIP session to come. It also included an opportunity to meet with expert members of EMRIP.

Upon the opening of 16th Session, the Tâilhqot'in delegation were pleased to congratulate Dr. Sheryl Lightfoot of the University of British Columbia on her appointment as the Chair of EMRIP this year and to invite her to join the Nation in celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the Declaration of Tâilhqot'in Aboriginal Title.

Nits'il?in Francis addressed EMRIP on two occasions. First, he spoke on EMRIP's recent study on the impact of militarization on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Nits'il?in Francis shared the Tâilhqot'in Nation's experience with the federal military training site located on Nation lands and recommended that the experts include advice in their report to the Human Rights Council stating that Canada should pay compensation for taking lands for military purposes without Indigenous consent and should also pay for the remediation and clean up of military sites on Indigenous lands.

Secondly, Nits'il?in Francis addressed EMRIP on the topic of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development and its relationship to UNDRIP. Nits'il?in Francis urged EMRIP to focus on Indigenous jurisdiction and control of natural resources as a key aspect of the Right to Development. In doing so, Nits'il?in Francis discussed how Crown management of Tâilhqot'in salmon and moose undermines Tâilhqot'in food security.

# Nine-year T̄silhqot'in Title Celebration

On June 26 the T̄silhqot'in Nation celebrated nine years since the Supreme Court of Canada declared Aboriginal Title to approximately 1900 km<sup>2</sup> of T̄silhqot'in homeland, recognizing the Nation's jurisdiction to manage, control, and govern according to T̄silhqot'in laws, values, and traditions. This decision further affirms the Nation's proven Indigenous rights to hunt, trap, and trade throughout T̄silhqot'in territory. Each year we mark this day in celebration and by paying tribute to the 26 T̄silhqot'in elders and witnesses who made this historic victory possible, by standing in court and testifying, often in our T̄silhqot'in language, to our legends, history, and deep knowledge of our lands and waters.



*Photo of the Nine-year T̄silhqot'in Title Celebration. Photo Credit: Tammy Haller*

## TNG Events Calendar

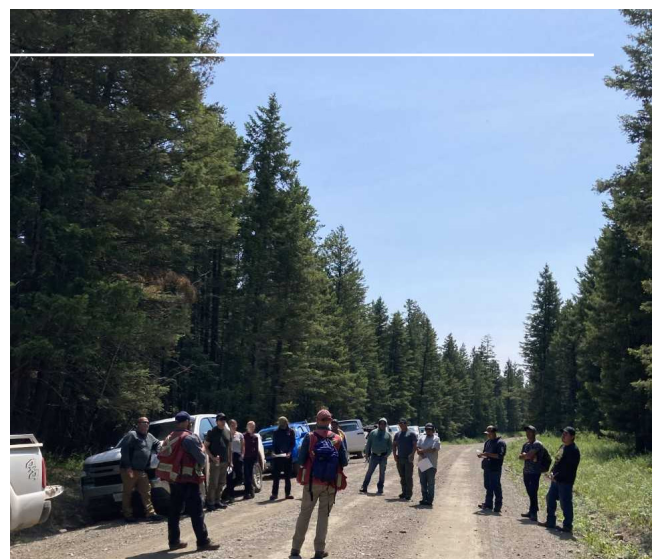
You can stay up to date on TNG events by visiting the TNG Website and viewing the TNG Events Calendar!

[www.tsilhqotin.ca](http://www.tsilhqotin.ca)



## Northern Goshawk Training

The T̄silhqot'in Rangers participated in Northern Goshawk training on June 23. It was an exciting field day and signs of Northern Goshawk; whitewash (poop), feathers, and bones were everywhere. There were also several sightings during the field day. The rangers saw and identified a juvenile Northern Goshawk and later spotted an adult Northern Goshawk, likely a female, making an alarm call. The rangers saw an old nest, located in 2022 by the Tl'esqox wildlife technicians, and a new active nest site was located that day!





## Tsilhqot'in Chiefs Meet with the Prime Minister and Ministers

Each of the six Tsilhqot'in Nits'il?in Qi were in Ottawa from June 13 -16 to represent the Tsilhqot'in Nation in a series of important meetings. Each meeting started with Chief Roger William singing a traditional Tsilhqot'in drum song.

At the first meeting, the Nits'il?in Qi met with Prime Minister Trudeau to discuss the ground-breaking, nation-building journey of the Tsilhqot'in people and highlight the urgent work ahead of us.

This meeting was followed by meetings with Minister Lametti (Justice) to advocate for the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Minister Murray (Fisheries) to primarily discuss the protection of Chilko salmon stocks, and jointly with Minister Miller (Crown-Indigenous Relations) and Minister Hajdu (Indigenous Services Canada) to inform urgent housing needs in the communities, plans for emergency management and evacuation centres, reclaiming jurisdiction for children and families, tribal police programs, and much more!

In the last meeting, Nits'il?in Qi met with Minister Anand's Parliamentary Secretary, MP Bryan May (Department of National Defence) to advance the relationship between the Department of National Defense around the Chilcotin Military Lot, and Minister Bennett (Mental Health & Addictions) to review plans for the Tsilhqot'in Wellness and Treatment Centre.

*Photo of the six Tsilhqot'in Chiefs meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau*

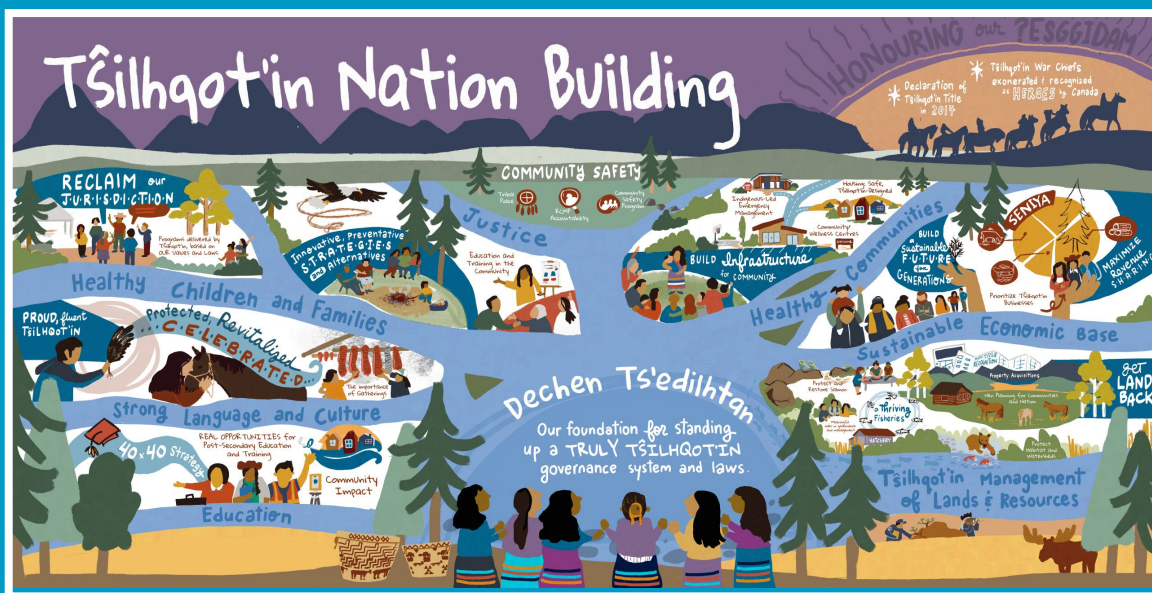
# TNG Department Updates

## Negotiations Road Show



In early July, TNG visited each of the communities and provided information on the projects being undertaken within the Gwets'en Nilti Pathway Agreement. The Agreement is coming up for renewal next year and the team is looking for feedback from citizens on current and future activities.

Below you will see an illustration created as a way to visualize the many projects happening and how they relate to the larger picture of Nation Building. This illustration can also be found at <https://www.tsilhqot'in.ca/negotiations-external-affairs/>. A Tsilhqot'in video of this illustration is coming soon as well. Many insights were gained from these sessions in communities, and as always, the communities did a great job of hosting. If you have any questions about the Pathway Agreement please feel free to contact Myanna Desaulniers at 250-302-3731 and she will connect you with the right person.



# Gwets'en Nilt'i Pathway Agreement – plan for renewal

The Gwets'en Nilt'i Pathway Agreement is a first of its kind agreement that was signed between the T̓silhqot'in Nation, Canada, and British Columbia in 2019. The overarching goal of this Agreement is to bring transformative change to the T̓silhqot'in people and communities. This work is being done through the "8 pillars," pictured on the next page. The Gwets'en Nilt'i Pathway Agreement is a 5-year agreement. This means that in March 2024, it needs to be renewed. Negotiations are underway to have this agreement renewed for 10 years with the resources secured to move the T̓silhqot'in Nation towards meeting the goals of the 8 pillars. Some of the key Achievements that the Nation has been able to accomplish through the Gwets'en Nilt'i Pathway Agreement include:

- Nation Fishery Strategy completed (2020)
- T̓silhqot'in-led fisheries monitoring and water monitoring throughout territory (2022)
- Conservation Hatchery established (2022)
- Nen Planning teams established at Nation and in communities (2020)
- T̓silhqot'in Ranger program established across the territory
- Tenure Transition Plan created for the Declared Title Area (2019)
- Nemiah Valley Lodge recognized as a world class tourism lodge
- T̓silhqot'in Solar Farm is fully operational (2019)
- T̓silhqot'in Ts'iqi Dechen Jedilhtan (Women's Council) established (2019)
- T̓silhqot'in Nulh Ghah Dechen Ts'edilhtan (Wildlife Law) enacted in the Declared Title Area (2019)
- Nation supports Elhdaqox Dechen Ts'edilhtan (Sturgeon River Law) (2020)

- Cultural Heritage strategy released (2022)
- At least one new home built in each community (2023)
- Carpentry training offered in territory with graduates working in the territory
- T̓silhqot'in Nidlin Team established and reclaiming jurisdiction for T̓silhqot'in children making progress through a Jurisdiction Agreement. (2022)
- Programs being built from the ground up in communities for cultural regrowth
- Strategic partnerships formed with education institutions, like UBC

Much of the time from 2019 until now has also been spent establishing the foundations and capacity that the Nation and communities need to move projects forward in a good way. June 26, 2024 will be the 10-year anniversary since the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that the T̓silhqot'in have full jurisdiction over their lands (a.k.a Title). The Gwets'en Nilt'i Pathway Agreement gives the Nation the resources and structure to move jurisdiction forward. Stay tuned for event plans for the 10-year anniversary and resigning of the Agreement.



# THE 8 PILLARS



## T̄SILHQOT'IN GOVERNANCE

- Full self-government for T̄silhqot'in people
- According to T̄silhqot'in laws, institutions and values



## STRONG LANGUAGE & CULTURE

- T̄silhqot'in members fluent in, and proud of, their language and culture



## T̄SILHQOT'IN MANAGEMENT OF LANDS & RESOURCES

- T̄silhqot'in management of the lands, resources and wildlife
- Sustainable for future generations



## HEALTHY CHILDREN & FAMILIES

- Health indicators on par or better than non-Aboriginal communities
- Programs delivered by T̄silhqot'in, based on T̄silhqot'in laws and values



## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Standard of Living on par or better than non-Aboriginal communities
- Adequate housing, clean water, roads, infrastructure, etc.



## JUSTICE

- Education and support for T̄silhqot'in communities
- Innovative preventative strategies and alternatives



## EDUCATION

- Funding and outcomes on par or better than non-Aboriginal schools
- Real opportunities for post-secondary education and training



## SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC BASE

- Sufficient and sustainable economic base to support the above outcomes

[www.tsilhqotin.ca](http://www.tsilhqotin.ca)

T̄silhqot'in National Government

# Economic Development Update

## *Greetings from the Economic Development Team!*

We hope that everyone had a productive summer getting out on the land and harvesting for the winter months.

Our current Economic Department team consists of Economic Development Manager, Dolly Kershaw and Economic Development Officer, Wylie Bystedt. James Evans, previously with the team, has taken a Economic Development position with Yunesit'in.

## Entrepreneurship

The Economic Department successfully obtained funding to hire an Entrepreneurship Coordinator to provide one-on-one assistance and resources to community members interested in starting a business or helping them to grow existing businesses. We anticipate that having a dedicated coordinator providing guidance and following up with members' self employment goals and dreams will lead to greater growth and successes in sustaining small businesses. Please contact Dolly or Wylie if you would like more information about this program.

## Community Visits

After a busy summer filled with holidays, camping trips, community gatherings, and harvesting activities, we are looking forward to getting back into communities and connecting with members about current initiatives and future plans, economic development considerations, and discussing the ways we can provide support and assistance.

On September 26, our team is hosting an Economic Development meeting in Williams Lake for the Nation's Economic Development workers for further discussions and to provide support where possible.

## Economic Action Plan

The Economic Department will be updating the Economic Action Plan for the Nation, which includes gathering information on various Industries and markets and assessing ways to move forward. During our community visits we plan to discuss economic topic areas such as:

- Forestry/Forestry Products
- Small/Medium Enterprises
- Clean Energy
- Agriculture
- Tourism

## Clean Energy

In 2019, a Nation Clean Energy Plan was completed by Barkley Project Group. Since then, we have acted on some of their recommendations including the feasibility of the Toosey Old School Biomass Project, Haines Creek, and Klokkan Creek Hydro.

A renewable resource assessment was completed in 2022-23 focusing on wind, biomass, and geothermal. A pre-feasibility study has also been completed for an expansion of the solar farm. Currently the solar farm has the ability to produce 1.25 MW of power and the feasibility study looked at increasing production to 5 MW.

BC Hydro will be putting out a “call for power” in the spring of 2024. The last time this occurred was in 2016. BC Hydro’s long-term planning process has shown an increased demand for energy earlier than expected as additional renewable energy projects are required to achieve BC’s emission reduction targets.

## Tourism

The Economic Development team is engaging with the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association and Indigenous Tourism BC to focus on new tourism opportunities and learn how we can best assist Nation communities in successfully participating in tourism and marketing campaigns. We are also working on finalizing the Nation’s tourism strategy and securing grants to enable us to move ahead with priorities. During our community tourism survey, many individuals expressed interest in tourism related businesses and jobs, and we hope to see their

involvement in our Entrepreneur Program to advance their great ideas.

## Agriculture

Agriculture includes food sovereignty, food sustainability, and value-added foods, and is an area of great interest to our Nation with potential projects, partnerships, and grants available to develop projects in this arena. We are currently involved in determining the projects best suited for Nation communities and are looking forward to further discussion and feedback during our upcoming community sessions to determine the most suitable course of action.

# Dandzen Development Limited Partnership Update

Dandzen Development Limited Partnership is an economic development company owned equally by each of the six communities. Dandzen currently has two active enterprises and is looking to develop additional opportunities and partnerships.

## T̓silhqot̓'in Solar Farm

The T̓silhqot̓'in solar farm, when operating, produces power and sells it to BC Hydro. Due to recent equipment failures the solar farm has not been operational since earlier this year. New parts are scheduled to arrive early in September, and we hope to be operational by mid-September. In the interim, our insurance is covering the lost revenue due to equipment failure.

## T̓silhqot̓'in Eten & Nadiltel Limited Partnership

The T̓silhqot̓'in Eten & Nadiltel L.P. (TEN) enterprise is a majority Indigenous-owned Limited Partnership between Formula Contractors Ltd. and Dandzen Development L.P. TEN arose out of a relationship formed with the T̓silhqot̓'in Nation aimed at pursuing contracts for highway infrastructure maintenance, as well as

other opportunities within the traditional territory of the T̄silhqot̄'in Nation. This Limited Partnership is the first First Nation owned firm to prequalify to compete for a governmental essential service contract consisting of highway maintenance. We placed second in the bid to win Service Area #17 - Central Cariboo, and have since been awarded several millions of dollars in contracts to perform maintenance services within T̄silhqot̄'in territory.

While we were unsuccessful in securing the contract for the Service Area, we are currently working with the Ministry of Transportation and Dawson Road Maintenance on sub-contracts. TEN's goal is to use T̄silhqot̄'in operators, such as Xenigwet̄'in Enterprises and Dechen Ventures, to conduct as much of the work as possible. Our 2023 contracts include:

### Zenzako Bridge

Zenzako bridge is located on Hwy 20, near Tl'etingox. The contract for the bridge was originally posted to BidBC. Chief Joe Alphonse and teams from TEN and Dandzen reached out to the Ministry and Transport advocating that a T̄silhqot̄'in company should be given priority to conduct work on T̄silhqot̄'in lands. As a result, TEN was directly awarded the contract, including the engineering work.



While Dawson Road Maintenance holds the main contract, TEN is performing all bridge work and both companies are utilizing Dechen Ventures as a subcontractor.

TEN's work on the bridge started on July 27, 2023 and we anticipate completion by approximately October 31, 2023.

### Taseko-Nemiah Road Work

For the last four years, TEN has held the contract to lay gravel in and around Xenigwet̄'in utilizing the services of Xenigwet̄'in Enterprises.

Although the contract is now in its final year, TEN is negotiating with the Ministry of Transport and Dawson Road Maintenance to secure funding for future maintenance work and improvements to the road.



*Photos of the girder launch that was recently done on the Zenzako bridge*



# Phase 2 Honouring Our Past, Present & Future

**March 16**  
Nen Sanagwelax  
A Day of Land Management  
10 AM - 3 PM  
Yunesit'in Esgul Gym

**May 24**  
Tintuwh Dadaben  
Xanelhyax  
A Day of Forests & Plants  
10 AM - 3 PM  
Tsiyi (Bull Canyon)

**June 5**  
Nulh Dezilhti  
A Day of Fish & Wildlife  
10 AM - 3 PM  
XGFN Traditional Village by Chilko Lake

**June 19**  
Tu Diztiy  
A Day of Water  
10 AM - 3 PM  
Tsideldel Cultural Centre

**TBD**  
Nagwadint'i Ts'edilhts'iny  
A Day of Infrastructure  
10 AM - 3 PM  
Location TBD

**MARCH**      **APRIL**      **MAY**      **JUNE**

**March 15**  
Nation Nen Planning Event  
5:30 - 9:30 PM  
Cariboo Memorial Complex  
Gibraltar Room

**July 5 & 6**  
Nation Nen Planning Event  
10 AM - 3 PM  
Bendziny Wellness Resort

## T̕ilhqot̕'in Nation Nen Plan

The T̕ilhqot̕'in Nation Nen Plan will be a high-level, territory-wide plan for all of T̕ilhqot̕'in nen. The Nation Nen Plan will take a holistic approach to nen care including:

- Stories of nen uses of the Sandax (Past), K'andzin (Present) and Nexwech'an Gwazelh (Future)
- Grounded in the Four Sacred Directions
- A focus on Strategic Focus Areas ("Sacred Mountains") communities identify as resting within the Nation
- Mapping significant places and areas of use across the territory

There will be an upcoming Nation Nen Event: A Day of Grassland, Range, Recreation, Wild Foods and Medicine Harvesting in September 2023 hosted at Farwell Canyon. Event Posters will be distributed by Community Nen Planning Coordinators and the event will be posted on TNG Facebook page.

We hope to continue to bring all six T̕ilhqot̕'in Communities together to shape the Nation Nen Plan in the summer, fall and winter.

Here are some of the ways to be involved:

1. Nation Gathering (Summer)
2. A Day of Grassland, Recreation, Wild Food and Medicine Harvesting (September)
3. Nen Retreat (Fall)
4. Community Workshops (Winter)

# ᐃElhelh ᐃat'in ᐃeguhnadeghut'l If We Work Together, We Will Be Strong

## Shared Vision for Nen Planning

*Honouring the wisdom of the past, six T̄silhqot'in Communities will develop Nen Plans, created by and for our people, to honour our values and protect and care for a healthy and self-sustaining nen, for current and future generations.*

*The Community Nen Plans will be brought together in a Nation Nen Plan that sets out a shared vision and connection to our homeland, driven by each community and coordinated as a Nation. This is like six streams coming together to form a river.*

T̄silhqot'in Nen Planning purpose:

- Relationship building and collaborative decision-making between TNG, Nation communities, and members
- Preserving and revitalizing T̄silhqot'in culture and language
- Continuing to assert T̄silhqot'in rights and title across the territory
- Protection, management, and healing of nen (air, land, water, plants, and animals)
- Strong nen decision-making, governance, negotiations, assertions, arrangements, and referrals
- Strengthened community engagement, pride, and sovereignty
- Community health and healing
- Sustainable economic and infrastructure development

The purpose of the Nation Nen Planning Events are to:

1. Celebrate and honor T̄silhqot'in unity in developing the Nation Nen Plan
2. Continue to build awareness of Nation Nen Planning
3. Strengthen relationships among T̄silhqot'in
4. Honor the wisdom of our ᐃesggidam and current generations
5. Share openly what we have learned at the Nen Planning Events by summarizing community knowledge on Land, Water, Forests and Plants, and Fish and Wildlife
6. Continue to gather T̄silhqot'in knowledge of the past and present situation of nen and future visions for nen
7. Continue to gather T̄silhqot'in ideas for nen mapping

# Tsilhqot'in Nation Nen Planning Process & Journey



If you have any questions or would like to know more about how to get involved with the Nation Nen planning please feel free to reach out to Tsilhqot'in Nen Planning Coordinator Jenny Allen at [jallen@tsilhqotin.ca](mailto:jallen@tsilhqotin.ca)

## Stewardship Wildlife Update

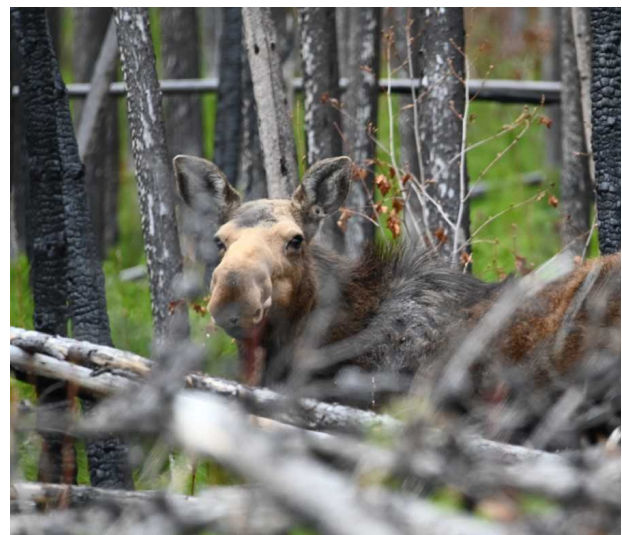
The Wildlife Section of the Stewardship Department has been completing various wildlife focused work this spring and summer. This included hiring a seasonal wildlife technician, Kaitlin Green, to join Gracie Frost in the field for surveys and projects. Some of the highlights and project updates are below.

### Surveys

The wildlife crew has completed a number of different surveys this year including surveys focused on mule deer, sharp-tailed grouse, owls and northern goshawks. This is in addition to locating grizzly bear collars and completing trail camera deployments.

### Moose

There was a moose SRB survey completed this past winter in MU 5-13A, which is located on the North side of Highway 20 in the Alexis Creek area.



*Cow moose observed while travelling by survey sites by Kaitlin and Gracie*

This survey estimated a moose density of 0.21moose/km<sup>2</sup>. The bull to cow ratio was estimated to be 65 bulls:100 cows, which is above BCs minimum target ratio of 30 bulls:100 cows.

TNG is planning to finally be able to start our moose collaring project this winter collaring 20 cow moose and 40 bull moose across five sites in the North Chilcotin. There will be more information in the next TNG Newsletter regarding this project and how you can help keep an eye out for these animals moving forward.

### **Debi (Bighorn Sheep) Collaring Project and Lamb Monitoring Survey**

The bighorn collaring project has continued for its second year (and final year unless additional funding becomes available) with some concerning results so far. To date there have been 10 natural mortalities on the sheep from the four herds in the project with none in the Dash/Relay herd, three in the Taseko herd, one in the Tsilos herd and six in the Tsuniah/Nemiah herd. A cougar appeared to be responsible for most of the Tsuniah/Nemiah mortalities and has since been removed - while cougars and wolves were each responsible for half the other combined herds mortalities.

TNG has been assisting Tl'esqox with lamb monitoring surveys for the Junction herd of bighorn sheep and to date the results have been mixed with some portions of the herd having near zero lambs while other portions of the herd having high percentages of lambs. These groups of sheep have had lamb ratios ranging from 0 lambs:100 ewes to 75 lambs:100 ewes.

### **Denik (Elk) Collaring Project**

In April, TNG collared three cow elk and one bull elk in the Coast Mountains near Mount Waddington to determine if these elk are likely to expand out into the Chilcotin or if other work is needed to increase the elk population in the Chilcotin. To date, all four elk are still alive and all collars are working as planned. Additionally, we are waiting on genetic testing to determine if these are Roosevelt elk, Rocky Mountain elk or a hybrid of the two.

### **Nunitsiny (Grizzly Bear) Collaring Project**

All seven bears that went into their dens last fall came out of them in April and all seven collars have been working as planned. However, one sow was a younger female (approximately four years old at the time of capture) and her collar came off this summer as planned, but she did not die. A second sow, called "Casper" by some of the people around Chilko, also had her collar come off this summer. This was a year early and occurred because the fail safe (layers of cotton) rotted off faster than anticipated. This is likely due to the combined amount of time she spends in the water during the salmon season and her summer habitat. This leaves us with one boar and four sows still collared. We will be collaring more grizzly bears this fall in the Chilko and Taseko systems.



*"Caspers" collar showing the cotton layer that rotted off*



*ARU site in the subalpine*



*ARU site being knocked over by a grizzly bear*

## Trail Camera Projects

TNG has a number of projects that include the use of trail cameras. All of these projects are focused on learning more about wildlife, their habitats and behaviours and none of which involves human use studies. We have labelled all of our cameras, however, many of the labels are fading so we will be relabelling them over the next year with stickers. We ask that anyone who finds one of our cameras not to borrow it or impede its ability to take wildlife photos. This will limit our ability to get the work completed and improve the situation for moose and other ungulates using the data from these projects as the justification for future projects including habitat enhancement work. If you happen to know where any of the “borrowed” cameras have ended up, we would appreciate them and the camera data being sent back to us.

## ARUs/Bat Detectors

TNG has several autonomous recording units (ARUs) and bat detectors placed out in several areas of the Chilcotin. These are to help identify species present at those locations and not human activities. These range in size and colour from small green boxes (smaller than a trail camera), to camo boxes the size of trail cameras, to larger boxes with a solar panel attached to them. All of these help us with establishing base line wildlife data.

If you have any questions or want to know more about any of the wildlife in the Territory you can reach out to myself, Mitchell Warne, using the following contact information:  
mwarne@tsilhqotin.ca, or 250-302-3914



# Stewardship Fisheries Update

## *TNG Fisheries Team*

- Randy Billyboy, Fisheries Manager
- Michelle Tung, Fisheries Strategy Lead
- Pete Nicklin, Fisheries Biologist
- Leonard English, Fisheries Field Coordinator
- Winston Bambrick, Fisheries Technician
- Gerald William, Fisheries Technician
- Wayne Levesque, Hatchery Manager

## **T̓ilhqot̓'in Fisheries in 2023**

Please note: This update includes fisheries information that is current to the end of August 2023.

2023 T̓ilhqot̓'in Fisheries Plan:

On July 8th, 2023 TNG shared the 2023 T̓ilhqot̓'in Fisheries Plan on behalf of the T̓ilhqot̓'in Council of Chiefs. The plan prioritizes harvest opportunity, while shaping the fishery to support T̓ilhqot̓'in Nation conservation goals and help protect our most vulnerable salmon stocks.

The unique traditional T̓ilhqot̓'in dipnet fishery is one of the most selective and sustainable

fisheries in the world, and the T̓ilhqot̓'in Nation is home to some of the strongest Ja̓s̓ (Chinook) and Ts'eman (sockeye) stocks in the Fraser. However, our salmon are facing unprecedented challenges. This year, our returning Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman include babies from 2019 parents; in 2019, Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman returned in record low numbers, and were highly impacted by the Big Bar Landslide. Our highly vulnerable earliest-timed Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman stocks were hit hardest by Big Bar.

Technical information early in the season indicated that 2023 returns would likely support a Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman fishery during the typical fishing time in mid to late August when the stronger Chilko populations of Ja̓s̓ and Ts'eman return to the Territory. 2023 is also a Dandzex (pink salmon) year, which provides additional harvest opportunity.

The 2023 Fisheries Plan asked fishers to follow voluntary protection measures to help protect highly vulnerable early-timed Chilcotin Ja̓s̓ and Taseko Ts'eman, including not fishing before the scheduled time in August to allow these fish to safely reach their spawning grounds. TNG is leading emergency conservation enhancement (hatchery) efforts to rebuild and restore these endangered stocks.

Fisheries openings (to the end of August 2023):

The scheduled T̓ilhqot̓'in fishery opening for Ts'eman (sockeye), Ja̓s̓ (Chinook), and Dandzex (pink) occurred August 17 to 27 per the 2023 fisheries plan.

On August 25, it was announced that the Dandzex (pink) fishery would remain open for the rest of the fishing season.

On August 29, the Ts'eman (sockeye) fishery was extended to 6:00pm on September 6, 2023; the opening may be extended further as more technical information becomes available (see weekly TNG Fisheries Bulletins on the TNG website and Facebook page).

## TNG Fisheries Department Activities

The salmon season (mid July to mid/late September) is the busiest time of year for the TNG Fisheries Department. Technical information continues to flow in from all along the salmon migration route, from the ocean to the spawning grounds. TNG Fisheries gathers and analyzes information from various sources including TNG's own technical programs, DFO, and the Pacific Salmon Commission. This information directly supports T̓ilhqot̓in Leadership fisheries decision making and informs fisheries priority setting and planning.

Our core activities and strategic initiatives have resulted in one of the richest, most comprehensive sets of salmon fisheries information in BC.

### Catch Monitoring:

Ja̓s (Chinook) and Ts'eman (sockeye) fisheries were monitored throughout the fishing season. Catch monitoring provides valuable information about fisheries, condition and usage of fishing sites, water levels, catch success, and overall fish health.

### Annual Stock Assessment Programs

Our experienced crew runs annual stock assessment programs throughout the field season, which runs from April to November. We collect critical information about the health of all T̓ilhqot̓in stocks on the ground, on the water, and in the air. Key field projects we have conducted since April include:

- Spring aerial enumeration flights for Tislagh;
- SONAR assessments for returning Ts'eman (sockeye) and Ja̓s (Chinook), at the junction of the Chilcotin and Fraser Rivers and in all three key nursery areas (Chilcotin, Chilko, and Taseko);
- Aerial assessments (helicopter flights) for Ja̓s (ongoing);

Mark-recapture program for Chilko Ja̓s (ongoing).

Upcoming fall stock assessment projects include aerial surveys of Ts'eman Dalkw'ish (coho) and mark-recapture program for Chilko Ts'eman.



02A/02B (2 photos – left and right): Winston Bambrick (left) and Gerald William (right) marking Ja̓s for the mark-recapture program, which provides information about population size and demographics of Chilko Ja̓s (Aug 2023)



03: Taseko SONAR (July 2023).SONAR (Aug 2023).



04: Field coordinator Leonard English downloading Taseko SONAR files (Aug 2023).



05: Fisheries manager Randy Billyboy in the helicopter conducting an aerial survey to assess Upper Chilcotin Ja̓s (Aug 2023).



01: TNG fisheries technicians Winston Bambrick and Gerald William completing installation of the Chilko SONAR (Aug 2023).



## Strategic Initiatives

Since the introduction of the TNG Fisheries Strategic Framework and Fisheries Action Plan in 2019, we've expanded the TNG Fisheries program to include several strategic initiatives including emergency enhancement for priority vulnerable and endangered stocks and the TNG conservation hatchery program.

### TNG Conservation Hatchery – operating this September

After several years of technical feasibility work, engineering design, site preparation, and hatchery construction, the interim TNG conservation hatchery is now ready for full operation including egg incubation and rearing! This a key milestone in TNG's staged approach to developing long-term conservation hatchery capacity in T̓silhqot̓in Territory, a Nation-wide priority identified by Leadership in 2018 for rebuilding declining T̓silhqot̓in salmon populations. We have been conducted systems testing and staff training throughout the spring and summer, and are eager to receive the first Ja̓s (Chinook) eggs at the hatchery in early September 2023.



07: Field coordinator Leonard English and Hatchery Manager Wayne Levesque at the TNG Conservation Hatchery (June 2023).

08: Fisheries technician Winston Bambrick and hatchery manager Wayne Levesque touring the Dunn Creek hatchery (May 2023).



09 Hatchery manager Wayne Levesque and fisheries technician Winston Bambrick training at the Snootli Hatchery (April 2023).

## Fisheries Communications & Engagement

TNG Fisheries provides information on salmon populations and returns, fishing opportunities, and TNG Fisheries Department activities through various channels throughout the year. We also engage regularly throughout the year with T̓silhqot̓in Leadership to inform fisheries planning, priorities, and decision making.

### Mid-July to September 2022: Weekly In-Season Fisheries Communications

During the fishing season, TNG Fisheries hosts weekly update Zoom calls for T̓silhqot̓in Leadership and staff. We also provide weekly Fisheries Bulletins, which are publicly available on the TNG website at [www.tsilhqotin.ca/fisheries](http://www.tsilhqotin.ca/fisheries) and on the TNG Facebook page.

For questions please contact TNG Fisheries Manager Randy Billyboy  
Email: [rbillyboy@tsilhqotin.ca](mailto:rbillyboy@tsilhqotin.ca) / Tel: 250-392-3918

## Emergency Conservation Enhancement

TNG Fisheries has been working on emergency conservation enhancement for priority vulnerable and endangered T̓silhqot̓in stocks since 2020. This includes collecting brood (parent) stock (eggs and milt) and raising salmon in hatcheries from eggs to the fry stage to increase survival. Juvenile salmon are then released back to their natal streams in the spring. Our experienced crew collected brood stock for highly vulnerable Upper Chilcotin Ja̓s in July, and will collect brood stock for Taseko Ts'eman in early September.