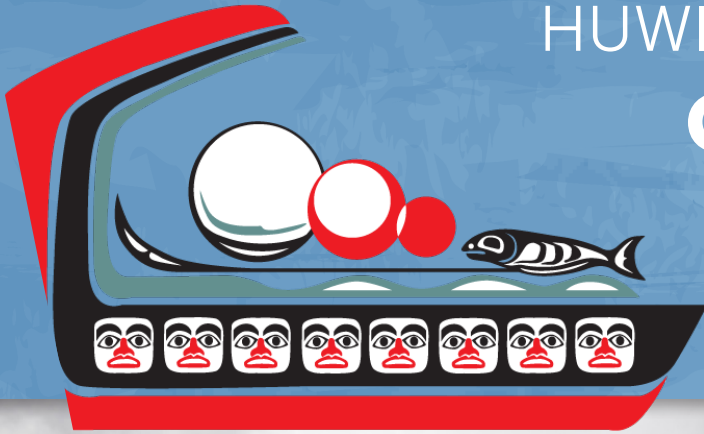


HUWILP GITXSAN GOVERNMENT

GALD'M MAHLASXW

(SPREAD THE WORD)



Inside

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

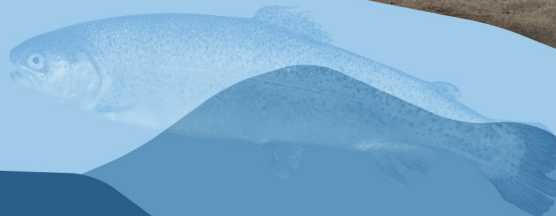
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS: MEETING WITH
MINISTER DOUG DONALDSON TO ADDRESS
ACCESS TO GITXSAN FISHERIES
TENURE, ANAAT

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE CHIEFS ON
THE ANAAT

ANIMAL VISITS

Q&A WITH COMMUNICATIONS LEAD,
LINDA MATTHEWS

CRISIS MANAGEMENT
TEAM UPDATE





LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Gordon Sebastian

Dear Gitxsan members,

NEW CHIEFS ADDED

We have a mission to keep adding chiefs to the table and since our last update in January we have added another six chiefs (including myself) to the Gitxsan Government. The Gitxsan government has always been here and we are established. Now it's just meeting of the minds, bringing us together and working together to have a stronger position on issues like jurisdiction over our Annats.

I welcome you and I share our principles of inclusiveness, progressiveness and solidarity.

- Axtii Tseex – Keith Mowatt
- Waiget – Sheila Joseph
- Wii Minosik – Larry Skulsh
- Haakwx – Shannon Wright
- Woosimlaxha – Peggy Morgan

FISH CRISIS COMMUNICATION MEETING – BC, CANADA & THE GITXSAN

We are making progress in our meetings and though progress may have stalled with a representative from the province yet to be finalized, we know they are working on finding the appropriate representative. We are holding firm on our commitment to continue the work we've started and BC has committed to helping fund signage for our territory to notify permit holders and the non-native public that trespass on our boundaries where we have our Annats located will be off limits to fishing.

Purpose of the Newsletter

These newsletters will provide updates for members about Gitxsan Huwilp Government activity including:



Important meetings and news updates



Tracking ongoing conversations and issues



Historical facts and education about Gitxsan history



Interesting stories about Gitxsan members and initiatives in the laxyip and beyond



Opportunities for you to get involved

If you have an idea or a question, please email us at communications@gitxsan.ca. We would love to hear from you.

CONNECT WITH US

Want to learn more and stay up to date?

Go to our Facebook page by searching Gitxsan Huwilp Government and follow the page. Check out our new website which is updated frequently at Gitxsan.ca and while you're there sign yourself up or any family members that would like more information but don't have access to a computer for updates. We can mail or email information to you depending on your preference. Share these channels with your family members, friends and neighbors – this is just of one of the many steps toward informing, engaging and inspiring the Gitxsan to stand behind what they believe in.

FISHING CLOSED BY GITXSAN AND DFO

In May, we sent out an official statement to the press informing the public that the fishing will be closed within the Gitxsan boundaries. Effective July 11, an official press release was sent out from DFO stating that all recreational fishing for sockeye salmon in the Skeena River was watershed temporarily closed.

What I'd like to emphasize is that the Gitxsan didn't need science and research to help us understand that we have a fish crisis on our hand. We've been watching our land closely, the fish, the river, the trees, the habitats in which our wildlife lives and we've also been watching the climate and environmental change. We know what our intuition is telling us and when it's telling us fish stock are in crisis – we know what to do and we've been doing it since time immemorial. We take only what we need and we work together to ensure external impacts are limited in order to replenish our fish stocks. We have established our government, our boundaries, our laws and now we are working together to have BC and Canada work with us as a government not just a First Nation Community.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

We are a government so that means collaboration is key. The team has been hard at work collaborating with BC and Canada and have them view us for what we are – – a government. It's important we stand together on issues such as our fish and jurisdiction.

Sincerely,

Gordon Sebastian

Not disrespecting our process on the Anaat” – people are taking a positive attitude towards the Gitxsan

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I have a question about the Huwilp Government - which Chiefs are participating and what they are doing – where do I get answers to my questions?

The best way to get answers about the Huwilp Government is to review the website at www.gitxsan.ca. On the website you'll find information about participating Chiefs and the team supporting them, as well as, regular updates about the activity of the Crisis Management Team, its government relations work, and other activities. If you still have a question after reviewing the website, please reach out to us on [Facebook.com/gitxsanhuwilpgov](https://www.facebook.com/gitxsanhuwilpgov) or by email to communications@gitxsan.ca.

We are working on an official inquiry form to submit specific questions and requests, which will be available on our website soon. If we can answer your question right away, we will respond as soon as possible. If your question requires submission to the group of Chiefs, it may take longer, so thank you for your patience.

What if I miss a live stream of a meeting?

Once a live stream is over, the recording will stay on Facebook for viewing any time after the meeting. The recording will allow you to skip forward or replay any aspect of the meeting that you choose to watch.

How can I work with the Huwilp Government and/or its team?

In addition to our goal to be transparent and accessible with Huwilp Government activities, we also strive to provide training and opportunities for Gitxsan members as a part of our process. Our team is made up of people of various ages and skill backgrounds – all who are contributing to providing regular communication updates and good two-way communication about our work.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS:

MEETING WITH MINISTER DOUG DONALDSON TO ADDRESS ACCESS TO GITXSAN FISHERIES TENURE, ANAAT



"Our Simoogit are the decision makers and this is a government to government process with Minister Doug Donaldson. His commitment to the Gitksan Chiefs ensures consideration of the rights of anglers in at least the 2020 season," stated Sakum Higookw Vernon Smith.

Another meeting between the Minister's office and the Crisis Management Team is planned for September. Within the Gitksan proposed approach, all parties will look at how the permitting and licensing process works as well as management direction, prioritization, enhancement and restoration.



On Monday June 10, 2019, members of the Crisis Management Team met with Minister Doug Donaldson to create a shared objective that respects and upholds the recreational fishing ban for the 2019 season.

The discussions focused on access by anglers to the Anaat in the 2020 season. Currently, fishing permits and licenses issued by government agents in the recreational fisheries do not allow trespass. Gitksan Hereditary Chiefs no longer allow the fishing permits and guide fishing licenses to trespass on Gitksan Fisheries Tenure, Anaat for the 2019 season.

"In this process, the Gitksan are demonstrating an authoritative approach as there has never been proper management of the fisheries in he Skeena Watershed," said Gwiiyeehl Brian Williams, Chair Person of Gitksan Government.

Minister Donaldson indicated that he understands the issues and is committed to the Crisis Management process through appointments earlier of Paddy Hirshfield, Manager of Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and now the appointment of Troy Larden, Fish & Wildlife Section Head to the Crisis Management Team. The Minister cites the mandate set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as an important initiative of the Provincial government to engage with Gitksan Government.

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE CHIEFS ON THE ANAAT

Over a weekend in June, several Simgiigyet and house groups invited members of the communications team, along with a videographer and photographer, to visit several Anaat at various parts of Gitksan territory including Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Kispioox, K'san and Hagwiglet. Chiefs gave interviews in regalia and head dress and the experience was both inspirational and informative.

The images and video collected will be part of a communications campaign that will be rolled out this summer, to continue to spread the word about the fishing ban and encourage fishers to get permission from Chiefs.

Thanks to the following Chiefs for their invitation and hospitality. It was a memorable experience, enjoyed by all.

Moolxhan/Noolaa Norman Moore of Lax Seel

Sakum Higookw Vernon Smith /Ska'yan Anita Davis /Txogyet Eileen Smith at Gwax Ts'eliksit which means "River of Whirlpools"

Xsgogimlaxha Vernon Milton at XX Anaat.

Gwiiyeehl Brian Williams, Xantxw Monty Stevens and Txalgyamlaxha Kevin Stevens (Gul t gya am Laxha) at AnKwadixsw Anaat.

Djogaslee Ted Mowatt, Axtii Tseex Keith Mowatt, Aspiyuwa Betty Sampson, Mas Gibuu Alvin Sampson, Wa'Goom Charlie Mowatt, Skagiihl Shirley Lattie (House Nox Nox) and Hxadoiimx Frank Mowatt at XX Anaat.

If you would like to invite our team to photographer your Anaat, please reach out to us at communications@gitksan.ca.

ANIMAL VISITS:

We were honoured to be visited by many different types of curious animals on our tour.

BEAR

The protector of the animal kingdom. With great power and human like qualities, the Bear is known as the Elder Kinsman and is always treated as a high ranking guest. The Bear also symbolizes strength, learned humility, motherhood and teaching.

BEAVER

Creative, artistic and determined. Known as the carpenter of the animal Kingdom.

EAGLE

Symbol of power, prestige and wisdom. The Eagle also has a strong connection to peace. Its sacred down represents friendship and its feathers are used for ceremonies and rituals.

RAVEN

The creator, transformer and trickster. Legend says the Raven released the sun and moon, and discovered mankind in a clamshell. The Raven also brought the salmon and the water to man, and taught people how to fish and hunt.



SALMON

The Symbol of immortality and wealth, dependability and renewal. The Salmon is the life source, and is always treated with high regard. The great abundance of salmon allowed the culture of the Northwest Coast to flourish.



ANAAT: THE SECRET TO A LONGER, HAPPIER, MORE FULFILLED LIFE

BY: GORDON SEBASTIAN

In Gitxsan Territory, the secret to living a longer, happier and more fulfilled life can be summed up in one word: Anaat. Anaat means the “place to fish” or “to fish with a net”. It is the key to our good life, it is the reason we wake up each morning, and it is freedom! Woven together, these simple life values give clues as to what constitutes the very essence of Anaat: a sense of purpose, meaning and motivation in life.

Since time immemorial, the Anaat is a way of life especially prominent on the Skeena River and its tributaries in the Skeena Watershed. It is the reason for which Gitxsan wake up in the morning. For example, for an 85 year old fisherman from Wilp Guxsun, it is catching fish for his family and extended families, for each grandmother it is holding her tiny great, great grandchildren in her arms every day and for all mothers (Skayan) it is a place to teach the Gitxsan language and for her family to taste the many varieties of salmon she and her husband have prepared.



Having a meaning in life is a key component of living a long and healthy life. A majority of Gitxsan families have Anaat in their life and partly due to diet and exercise has reduced risks of cardiovascular diseases and lower mortality rates. This is the freedom each person experiences at their Anaat, freedom from negative people, freedom from cell phones and TVs, and freedom to enjoy the forest, plants and animals. It is hard to say whether or not having the Anaat guarantees longevity in life however having a sense of purpose on an Anaat can encourage you to build a happy and active life.

Asking a Gitxsan person a few simple questions: What makes you happy? What are you good at? What do you value? What motivates you to get up in the morning? The Gitxsan has a simple answer: Anaat.



1. START SMALL.

Every fishing season Gitxsan start small and execute each step with care. When the fishing season begins, the Gitxsan devote all their time and effort into creating the best and tastiest product from their Anaat. They get the smoke right, they cut the fish to desired thickness and size, they constantly adjust and move the prepared fish around in the smoke house – to get the desired smoke and air flow. Their sense of starting small, during preparation of the Anaat to the handling of the fresh fish, to certain cuts for each type of product, propels them to go incredible lengths in preparing their food for the future months.

The day begins with quiet discussion in the language, with the learners listening quietly – connecting each word to an activity and purpose of each chore. Pronunciation generates laughter and glee as each word is learned in its proper context. All learners are expected to be fluent sometime in the future and all are aware that it can be a long process.

2. HARMONY AND SUSTAINABILITY

It is harder to achieve your most important goal if you’re constantly in conflict with people around you. Waking up each day and working with the Anaat sets aside all conflicts and simply respecting each fish and the hands of the people that work with them.

The fisherman constantly reads the river to determine how the net is set, how many times to empty the net and personally ensures that the condition and health of the fish contributes to the success of the Anaat. The ayookw or standards on the Anaat provides that the fish should never be played with or wasted. This ensures respect for the salmon which is a necessary daily needed food source.

3. THE JOY OF SMALL THINGS

There is joy in small things – waking up early, morning air, cup of camp coffee and rays of sunshine bursting through cedar trees. The sight of familiar faces enjoying the same joys brings you immense happiness. A very simple diet and exercising to your abilities each day, cutting and preparing the wood for the smokehouse, cutting and cleaning fish for the best taste and type: half smoke, fully smoked, huukxs and daily snacking.

4. BEING IN THE HERE AND NOW

It is important to work in and focus on the present and practice mindfulness all day long on the anaat. The preparedness of the boat – fuel, paddles, safety vests, anchor; the maintenance of the net – mending the net and cork line, proper positioning in the river currents, and regularly checking the net for fish, and cutting the proper wood for the smoke house – dry limbs to start the burning wood, dry rotted cotton wood. Maintaining the smoke house and keeping it dry, clean and healthy with enough smoke and air movement during the process. The role of the anaat is clear for a long and healthy life.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Engagement with Government to share Gitxsan culture and way, building understanding, including visits to the river. Government has appointed two representatives who will participate in Crisis Team activities.
- Received requests from Minister’s office to collaborate to prioritize Anaat in order to educate about and regulate access to Anaat through Chiefs.
- Government will share regulatory toolbox with potential to assist with access (governance) process.
- Fishing ban awareness building campaign underway, set to be rolled out this summer.

MEET THE TEAM



Q&A WITH COMMUNICATIONS LEAD, LINDA MATTHEWS

WHAT IN YOUR WORK OR PERSONAL LIFE MOTIVATES YOU?

My family, children and grandchildren motivate my success including my traditional teachings from my ancestors that have gone on before. My conscientiousness, resourcefulness and strong organizational skills has led to my successes in any role in the work place. I give it 150% always! The strong culture within the office and the respect and traditional practices exercised by the staff is a great motivator, which generates a strong sense of belonging and support is there at a much higher level because of it.

WHAT ARE THE CREDENTIALS THAT YOU BRING TO THE TEAM?

I am a very visual learner and have worked with the Elders in the Better At Home Program allowing elders to live at home independently and providing them supports. I have my grade 12 and have many certificates in my resume.

I am successful in that I have been groomed as a Matriarch in Wilp's Tsim Sta Hloxw (Inside the Half Moon) in the Giskaast Clan in the Gyeets (Down River). I know who the Gitksan Chiefs are and their Gitksan Chiefdom names and understand the language and speak a bit of our Sim Algyax.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES AND FAVOURITE THINGS TO DO?

I love to cook and if I could have an endless supply of any food it would be pasta, especially spaghetti bolognese or lasagne. I love detective and revenge movies, especially John Wick. I love (don't laugh) romance novels. I love to garden, harvest fish and, last but not least, absolutely adore my two granddaughters, Alayna and Kinsley. They are the reason we do everything we do to ensure sustainability of our Lax Yip. It is for my granddaughters and their daughters to come.

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT NOT EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT YOU?

I was considered a Bill-C31 even though I am Gitksan. My father had to enfranchise, give up his status to join the army. My siblings and I grew up with no Indian status. I received Indian Status when I married my husband of 38 years and in the eyes of the government am still viewed as a non-first nations who acquired status through marriage.

WHAT DO YOU DO AS A COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL ON THIS TEAM?

My role is to support planning and delivery of community engagement and communications activity for the Gitksan Huwilp Government, which is based in the Gitksan Treaty Society Office. I supervise, direct and lead other communications staff and coordinate with other members of the Gitksan Huwilp Government team including Hereditary Chiefs, Watershed Coordinators, media, contractors/consultants and the external audiences.

How to get involved

REGISTER FOR UPDATES ONLINE AT:

www.gitksan.ca

OR PHONE AND ASK FOR LINDA

1-866-842-6780

FOLLOW US

Facebook.com/gitksanhuwilpgov

ATTEND AN EVENT

Watch for details, including live streaming, in the weeks to come

HAVE A QUESTION?

Email communications@gitksan.ca or stop by the Gitksan Government's Office.