

NEWSLETTER



**Gitxsan Huwilp
Government**



In Memoriam:

Wii Eelast – Jim Angus



It is with deep sadness that we mourn the passing of Wii Eelast – Jim Angus, a respected leader, wise mentor, and lifelong role model for the Gitxsan Nation.

A plaintiff in the historic 1996 Delgamuukw case, Jim dedicated his life to upholding our Ayookw, protecting our Laxyip, and strengthening the Hereditary System. He served as an educator, influential speaker, and director on multiple boards, always living our values with integrity and commitment to future generations.

His legacy and contributions to our Nation will continue to inspire us for many years to come. Rest in peace, Wii Eelast.

Gitxsan Treaty Society 2025/2026 Year End Work Plan Summary of Progress

Our negotiating team includes Brian Williams (Gwiiyeehl), Norman Moore (Moolaxan), Gordon Sebastian (Luutkudziiwus), and Toby Howard Xsgogimlaxha. Here is their workplan summary for April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026

The BC Treaty Process is progressive for all Parties on Gitxsan Laxyip. The treaty process in British Columbia is now a very safe place for the Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs to participate and negotiate relationships based on our willaloo, “way of life”. This is due to the commitment and hard work by the BCTC funding staff: Carolina Jianto, Vincent Leung, and Lindy Provost. The chairmanship of Mark Smith, lawyer, at the negotiation table, the full support of the commissioners of the BC Treaty Commission (BCTC) and the full commitment of the federal (Cory Dekker) and provincial (Chris Pasztor) negotiations teams results in this outcome. Every gain in the negotiation process is felt by each Indigenous group, especially the unique Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs. There is now greater alignment to the principles of reconciliation and UNDRIP, along with legislative and policy changes (hegemony) that has opened a small window of opportunity to collaborate with the ancient Gitxsan Laxyip (land tenure), Ayookw (laws) and Wilp (governance/title holders) system.

We now see the other side of the mountain, and we are energized by the enormous possibilities that lie ahead. The Negotiation Teams of both the provincial and the federal crowns work many hours focusing on the renewed relationship and discussions on the Gitxsan system. At the same time these teams dutifully protect the Crown from unnecessary liabilities. They perform a great balancing act, and at times, are creative about internal Crown policies. However, creative with benefits!

The strong voices of Northwest BC coexist with Gitxsan governance in the Skeena and Nass watersheds. The first recorded act authorizing Crown coexistence with the Gitxsan system began in the late spring of 1871 when Edgar Dewdney drove a wooden stake into the ground, at the forks of the Skeena and Bulkley River, reserving a small area as a townsite for Hazelton. This being the center of a flourishing economy (fur trade) founded upon Gitxsan infrastructure, including established trails that became the route of supplies to Port Essington, and later, to the Omineca. The stake was the first action of the Crown to authorize coexistence with Gitxsan Hereditary System

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Gitxsan Treaty Society 2025/2026 Year End Work Plan Summary of Progress (Continued)



The parties continue to achieve objectives in the Tripartite Workplan 2025–2028, where Chiefs unite in the forum of Gitxsan Huwilp Government (GHG), and continue wilaloo in the Skeena and Nass Watersheds. The federal and provincial jurisdictions coexist with Gitxsan wilaloo on the Gitxsan portions of the Skeena and Nass since 1871. There are no other circumstances in British Columbia where three jurisdictions coexist in this manner.

The Relationship Agreement (Anaat) is the outcome of six productive negotiation sessions per year, since 2022, in two watersheds: Skeena and Nass. All parties rely on the visual that the Relationship Agreement is akin to a *bridge* resting on two foundations: the foundation of the two Crowns on one side and the foundation of the Gitxsan Hereditary system on the other side. This Relationship Agreement is ready for signing by two of the Parties, Province and Gitxsan. Table has been informed that the internal federal ratification process is moving along positively.

The Parties are aware these three systems exist with or without a written agreement. The Agreement describes how the three systems will engage for the benefit of all people in northwest British Columbia.

The authority for anglers and sports fisheries to coexist with Gitxsan Anaat on the rivers are the Fishing Permits and Fish Guiding Licenses issued by Crown. These permits/fish guiding licenses do not authorize trespass therefore permission must be obtained. The Ayookw provides that permission must be obtained before anyone who is not a Wilp member can trespass on these tenures, including members from a different Wilp. The public is aware of this requirement and does abide by the Ayookw (law) as fishing is enjoyable on Gitxsan Anaat.

There is no need for any changes to the foundations on either side of the bridge. This co-existence of systems has never fundamentally affected the rights and interests of third parties. There is no need for costly legislative reviews and nor any requirement for amendment to the Constitution of Canada.

Ratification is a huge slow process requiring a joint effort of all Parties. On September 18–19, 2025, Gitxsan traveled to Ottawa to meet with Danielle White, Assistant Deputy Minister, Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. After listening to what the Relationship Agreement is about, she said she would have no problem signing it. However, policy requires the document to go through the internal process for ratification which may require more lobbying by the Gitxsan.

Mike De Jong has taken on the challenge of this huge undertaking and is now 2/3rds done. Mr. De Jong's skill and experience is a huge boost and is proving to be invaluable to all Parties. (BCTC would benefit greatly from Mr. De Jong's skills).

The Parties are now confidently implementing this unsigned agreement on the table, specifically section 5, Intergovernmental milestones. The special committee is John Paul Rankin, CIRNAC; Shanti Thurber, MIRR, and GHG. The committee have made a diagram to fit into all the phases which may mean the phases are close to be completed with exception of Crown mandates and authorities.

(Gitxsan Governance Structure Diagram shown on Page 4)



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Gitxsan Treaty Society 2025/2026 Year End Work Plan Summary of Progress (Continued)

The minds of the Crown are not sufficiently cultivated or habituated to the Gitxsan Wilaloo.

Within Gitxsan Laxyip, Crown negotiators may be slightly perplexed. The Gitxsan table is more equal, respectful and not slanted in favour of the Crown. The domain of the Gitxsan remains unchanged since 1871, living with full governance, laws, boundaries, and people practicing land and fisheries tenures. The question is how will government legislature continue to collaborate with the mighty Gitxsan?

On one hand the Ayookw defines who gets to shape the Wilaloo. Parliament, on the other hand, is the chief arena of public debate for both Crowns. Lawmakers have their chosen advisors – unlike the Gitxsan, not every citizen has a right to address the public in this manner. The laws and policies of the Crown are transacted through oral rituals – such as taking of oaths, the giving of evidence, the making of speeches, or the formal debate of policy from which lesser human beings (voters) are automatically excluded! Gitxsan live, and relive daily, our way of life, wilaloo for years.

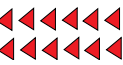
Outside Gitxsan Laxyip, the presumption of racial superiority of the Crown continues in the *Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy* (RRR Policy). With the exception of section 17 (hereditary system), the Crown continues its presumption throughout BC- that Indigenous people have no rights or title unless the Crown exercises their perceived authority to *recognize, acknowledge or to define rights and title!* Who has the responsibility to develop Terms of Reference for the policy?

The unintended effect of the RRR Policy that support injunction orders has been experienced by Wet'suwet'en and Gitxsan, in live video and on daily TV:

- Our people face the barrel of a gun, with police fingers on the trigger!
- The lives of Indigenous people are held in a split-second balance facing armed militarized RCMP.

Outside Gitxsan Laxyip, First Nations connections to their lands may never be recognized in agreements as Crown is very reluctant in this role. Crown may no longer be vague as to how they engage with Gitxsan.

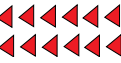
Tripartite Negotiations were hindered by Gitxsan internal strife and mostly by Crown Elections (2011 -2022). Gitxsan internal strife 2013 – 2015 caused legal problems for all in the BC treaty process being finally dismissed in 2017. Crown elections were every two years between May 2, 2011, to May 9, 2017(with tables paused for 5-6 months per elections). There was only one negotiation session per year between 2016 to 2018. There were no negotiation sessions at all between 2019 – 2021 due to three elections. Regularly scheduled negotiation sessions began 2023 – 2026 and continue to be consistent and fruitful



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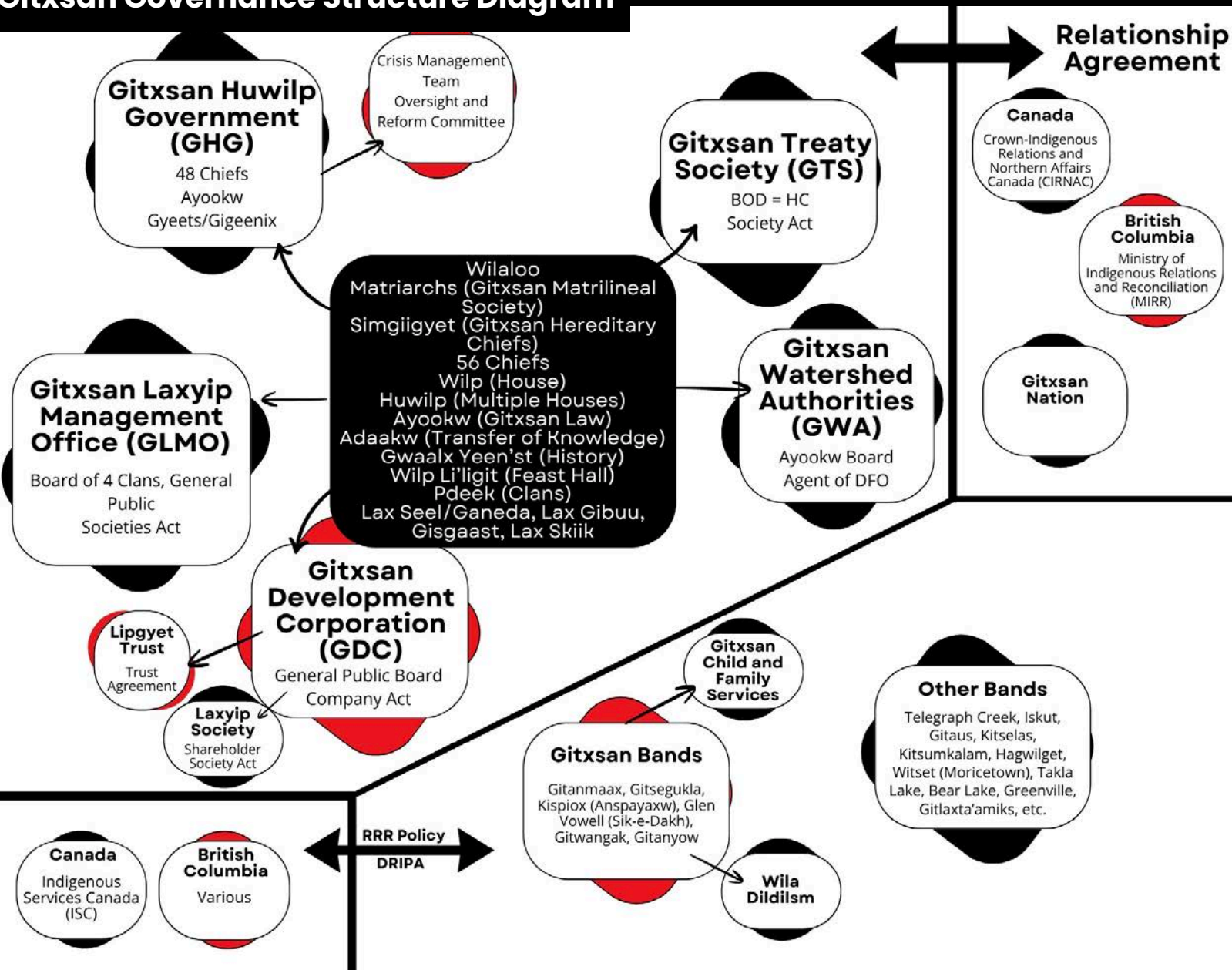


**Gitxsan Huwilp
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Gitxsan Chiefs governing the Laxyip since time immemorial Governance by Gitxsan Chiefs coexist with federal and provincial government. The three GHG Committees are engaged regularly in flourishing relationships with various government ministries, regional districts and municipalities. This actual practice contributes to a formulized division of responsibilities that work! Issues being addressed include the following: CN derailment with Regional District, Injunction orders with RCMP, and protection of the fisheries tenure on all the rivers with Canada and BC.

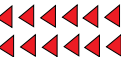
Gitxsan Governance Structure Diagram



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Gitxsan Treaty Society 2025/2026 Year End Work Plan Summary of Progress (Continued)

- Gitxsan have reset Gitxsan Government: Gitxsan Territory is loosely formulized into two areas: Gyeets (downriver) and Gigeenix (upriver). The Gitxsan have completed the process which began September 2017 and now has 48 Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs participating: 22 from the Gyeets, 26 from the Gigeenix and 8 Chiefs that are staying outside of this formal process.
- Gitxsan hired Communications Marketers and Communications Experts to build capacity on strategic planning, digital communications, public relations and community engagement. Team of four involves capacity building, media training, film making, live streaming of all Gitxsan Government meetings (NOW IN ZOOM), website maintenance, issues management and media and presentation training. Three newsletters, video produced and library to hold all material. Upcoming milestones will be placement of billboards and ad campaigns, including Gitxsan TV and news.
- Gitxsan completed the production of a docudrama entitled "I am Gitxsan". The process of film festivals is now complete with the docudrama winning over 30 awards worldwide. Thank you BCTC!

The Simgiigyet follow the same strategy as set out in the diagram (Last page), since 1977 and have a strong sense of long-term consequences. Success comes only after a passage of time and now, creating our own conditions on our side of the bridge. On the tripartite table good ideas are being implemented in each phase of section 5, and the parties regularly address what can be done to improve the process. Gitxsan feel very optimistic about this coming year as the Parties are well into implementing section 5 of the Relationship Agreement and establishing fiscal arrangements for Gitxsan Huwilp Government.



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**Gitxsan Huwilp
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2025 Gitxsan Community Survey

Gitxsan Huwilp Government completed analysis of the 2025 Gitxsan Community Survey. We extend our thanks to the community members who participated in helping us affirm, modify and improve our communication planning and practices. To find out about this snapshot of Gitxsan community sentiment watch for GHG posts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Gitxsan.ca for selected results. Congratulations to the winner of the \$250 gift card.



CN Rail Derailment

A landslide and train derailment occurred in April which led to rail cars laying in the Skeena River, the Gitxsan Huwilp Government are pushing for a full safety check of the CN Rail line that operates in and around the Gitxsan territory.

Though we have been told by CN that the latest train derailment was contained, we do not blindly put trust in their environmental consultants. We believe that the health of the 114-year-old rail line that runs through the Gitxsan Laxyip must be assessed.

This is not just a Gitxsan problem it is a national railway issue that has the potential to become a national disaster, particularly with the oil transportation from Alberta.

While GHG reached out to BC government ministries, who remain silent on the issue, we also reached out to Alberta government counterparts about the safety of the railway system.

GHG believes that CN owes the people of BCs Northwest a railway bed that is secure on Gitxsan mountain slopes and rivers' edge. Indigenous food security is at stake. We proposed a four-person committee with the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, Government of Alberta, CN and Gitxsan and the engagement of four engineers to prove the rail line is safe – to no avail.

We have however, scheduled a safety meeting with CN Rail to further discuss this ticking timebomb of an issue which could drastically effect our waterways and Laxyip.



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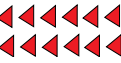
**Gitxsan Huwilp
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Sports Fishers Banned from Gitxsan Anaat – Fishing Ban Strictly Enforced for 2026 Season

Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs are reminding the public – with a fishing ban campaign – that trespass by sport fishers on any Anaat (Gitxsan traditional fishing area) is prohibited and will be strictly enforced during the 2026 fishing season.

The ban, now in its sixth year, covers 100% of the Babine, Bulkley, Nass, Kispiox and Skeena Rivers that run through Gitxsan traditional territory. The Gitxsan Nation spans 35,000 square kilometers (about five times the size of P.E.I.) in northwest British Columbia from Terrace to Smithers to Hazelton.

Any provincial fishing permits currently sold by Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, do not provide access to the Gitxsan Anaat or allow the breaking of centuries-old Gitxsan Ayookw (laws) which strictly prohibit playing with fish – as fish are a sacred staple of Gitxsan food security. Permission to fish Gitxsan Anaat is required from the Hereditary Chief that owns the territory, we trust that very few exceptions will be permitted in order to sustain our fish as for the next generations.



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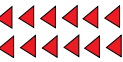
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EVALUATING MAJOR PROJECTS IN THE WAKE OF LNG CANADA WOES

Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs of the Gitxsan Huwilp Government have serious operational, regulatory, market, and public health concerns tied to the LNG Canada facility in Kitimat. While the Chiefs' traditional territories neighbour the LNG Canada facility, major projects that have substantially been started or are being cooked up between the Federal and some provincial governments to cross Gitxsan Laxyip (lands) have the Gitxsan Huwilp Government on high alert.

This is a complex and troubling situation that by peeling the layers of the onion back, Gitxsan Chiefs are evaluating the issues with the regional facility, the entire Canadian LNG industry and how the Liberal Government is fast tracking major oil and gas projects on or near our traditional territories. The whole of the issues is complicated:

- **Frequent flaring events:** Reporting suggests prolonged flaring during startup is common globally, but the Kitimat facility is also dealing with non-routine flaring tied to equipment integrity.
- **Known operational integrity issues:** Though LNG Canada has known since at least April 2025 about a flare stack integrity problem, reports indicate they could take three to five years to repair.
- **Regulatory non-compliance:** The BC Energy Regulator (BCER) found LNG Canada breached permit conditions related to black smoke emissions – which is not allowed during normal operations. The health implications of this have not yet been uncovered.
- **Health and environmental concerns:** Air monitoring near Kitimat shows pollutant spikes during a May 2026 flaring event. Ongoing possible toxic emissions include benzene. There are growing calls from BC and indigenous communities for independent cumulative health impact assessments.
- **Global market volatility:** Even with the May 14th announcement that the government of Canada is all in on investing in LNG Canada, there is growing global LNG market instability.
- **Expansion and investor uncertainty:** Federal support for LNG Canada global oversupply and reports that major stakeholders, including Shell and Mitsubishi, are exploring selling parts of their stakes in the LNG Canada project.
- **Reduced regulatory levies:** Recent cuts to BCER levies for LNG and pipeline projects are suspect. As this downward negative momentum could weaken inspection, compliance, and enforcement capacity for high-risk industrial facilities.
- The bottom line is that the Gitxsan Huwilp Government have mounting concerns with major projects substantially started or coming to the area soon as part of the Carney government's mandate.
- With lack of consultation on insufficient levies and uncertainties regarding land, waterway and air safety, it could force the hands of our WILPs (house groups) to use blockades on effected Laxyip. We anticipate that industry-led Injunctions in collusion with the BC Supreme Court could lead to proponents ignoring underfunded regulatory bodies. The end result is RCMP over-reach, corruption and stalemates between Gitxsan and industry outsiders.



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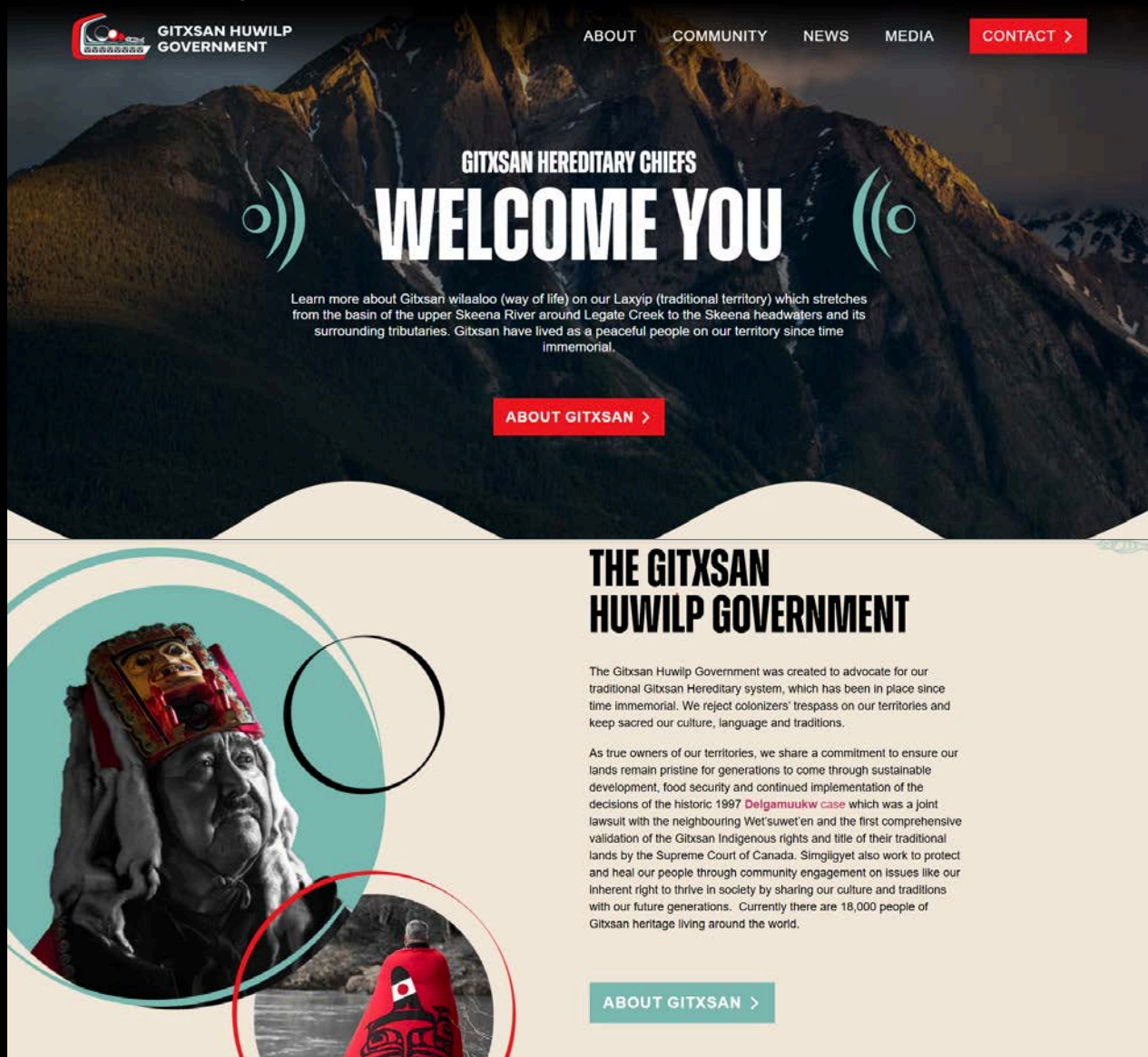
**Gitxsan Huwilp
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Gitxsan.ca - New Official Website

We are excited to announce the official launch of Gitxsan.ca - the new digital home of the Gitxsan Huwilp Government. This new website was created to better serve our people by providing a central place for important governance updates, event information, cultural resources, and community announcements. Whether you live in community or anywhere across Canada or around the world., Gitxsan.ca makes it easier to stay connected with our Nation and access the information you need.

We encourage all Gitxsan members to visit the site, explore the pages, and bookmark it for future reference. We will continue to keep our content fresh and keep you up to date with the news in the coming months.

Link to Website: <https://gitxsan.ca/>



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DEATH BY DRUGS VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE IN ACTION

Since its inception in 2025, the Death by Drugs Volunteer Committee has grown significantly and is now supported by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). The Committee currently includes 21 dedicated volunteers, made up of Simgiigyet, Story Keepers, and passionate community members who are committed to creating a healthier and safer future for our youth. We remain open to anyone who wants to volunteer their time and energy to help us battle the toxic drug crisis within our Gitxsan communities. We have also been deeply grateful to receive many generous donations in support of our cause. Our recent event, DBD Forum III, was a strong success with a healthy turnout. Seating was full with community members. We would like to thank the amazing guest speakers:

1. Jenny Redrum (FNHA) spoke about aftercare and mental health, emphasizing the importance of those two aspects of recovery. She also had a mini booth set up for anyone wanting to speak with her confidentially.
2. Corporal Ian Crowe (RCMP) answered many thoughtful and difficult questions from attendees.
3. Henry Morgan (IRSSS) shared powerful teachings on healing and culture. Henry brought his moose hide, which he is using to make a blanket for a Chief. He explained that using moose hide for blankets is a healing lost art.
4. Darlene Hockman from Wilp Si'Satxw also had shared a beautiful presentation.

Many community members actively participated in the open mic portion of the event, bravely stepping forward to ask thoughtful questions and share personal stories. The outpouring of gratitude from attendees was deeply moving and showed how meaningful the event was. The event was live-streamed – you can find it on the Gitxsan Facebook page. This is a recorded history, allowing those who couldn't attend in person the ability to take part in this important gathering. The love and appreciation shown throughout the day made one thing very clear: there is a strong demand in our communities for more events like the Death by Drugs Forum III.

The continued support of this hard work through donations, volunteering, or simply showing up, means the world to us. Together, we are turning grief into action and building a stronger, healthier future for our Nation.

RALLY Protect our future
generations
FOR LIFE

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

If you would like to receive our quarterly Gitxsan Huwilp Government Newsletter directly, just send your name, email address and the note #GitxsanNewsletter to Communications@gitxsan.ca and we will send it directly in your mailbox.