Uyaqḥmis

June 2021 Issue 62



Huu-ay-aht gifts totem to Pacheedaht at celebration on National Indigenous Peoples Day

See story on page 6

PM41913515



Shawn Nicholson from Island Forestry Company Inc. gives apology to leadership and members of Pacheedaht, Huu-ay-aht, and Ditidaht. (Photo by Heather Thomson)

Pacheedaht, Huu-ay-aht, Ditidaht receive apology from IFC for actions of employees

On Friday, June 4, 2021, Island Forest Company Inc. made an apology to the Hereditary and Elected Chiefs of Ditidaht, Pacheedaht, and Huu-ay-aht First Nations. The apology took place on Ditidaht Territory, at the dryland sort.

The apology came in response to the incident that occurred between IFC workers and protesters on TFL 44, located in Ditidaht territory last month.

Ditidaht singers and dancers did a cultural opening, then Ditidaht Elected Chief introduced Shawn Nicholson from IFC. He thanked Shawn for coming and acknowledged that it takes strength and courage to acknowledge and take responsibility for the actions of another individual.

In his apology, Shawn said he does not condone the actions of some of their employees. The racist statements and aggressive behavior displayed by the contractor's employees toward protestors was inappropriate and unacceptable. Shawn said if he could take it back, he would, but this was a chance to make it right.

The personal apology was acknowledged and accepted by all three Nations, with each elected chief offering words of thanks and appreciation on behalf of their hereditary leaders.

You can see the complete apology video on our website at: https://huuayaht.org/whats-happening/our-latest-news/



Ditidaht members start the day with a paddle song and dance. (Photo by Heather Thomson)



A moment of silence was called for the 215 children found in Kamloops Residential School. (Photo by Heather Thomson)

huu ay aht

ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

Huu-ay-aht envision a strong, self-governing and self-reliant Nation. ʔiisaak, Hišuk ma c̓awak, and ʔuuʔałuk guide us as we work together to foster a safe, healthy, and sustainable Nation, where our culture, language, spirituality, and economy flourish.

Huu-ay-aht Uyaqḥmis is printed up to six times a year to foster community engagement among a population of more than 800 citizens. Uyaqḥmis promotes the recovery and sharing of the Huu-ay-aht dialect of the Nuu-chah-nulth language, as well as knowledge of Huu-ay-aht culture.

Please send all comments and questions to the Huu-ay-aht Communications Department.

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Nations take back decision-making responsibilities over ḥahahuuɬi

Since time immemorial, Huu-ay-aht, Ditidaht, and Pacheedaht First Nations have been stewards of the forest, fisheries, and all resources within their ḥahahuuɬi (traditional territories).

On June 4, 2021, the three Nations signed the Hišuk ma c̓awak Declaration to take back their power over their ḥahahuuɬi. For more than 150 years they have watched as others decided what was best for their lands, water, and people. This declaration brings this practice to an immediate end.



Hereditary Chiefs and Elected Chiefs from Pachedaht, Huu-ay-aht, and Ditidaht sign Hišuk ma c̓awak Declaration. Standing with them is Olivia Peters, daughter of Huu-ay-aht Tayii Ḥaẃiɬ ƛiišin (Derek Peters). (Photo by Heather Thomson).

"We have made a commitment to our people to manage the resources on our ḥahahuuɬi the way our ancestors did – guided by our sacred principles of ʔiisaak (utmost respect), ʔuuʔałuk (taking care of), and Hišuk ma c̓awak (everything is one)," explained Huu-ay-aht Tayii Ḥaẃiɬ ƛiišin (Head Hereditary Chief Derek Peters), Ditidaht Chabut Satiixub (Hereditary Chief Paul Tate), and Pacheedaht's Hereditary Chief Frank Queesto Jones. "We are in a place of reconciliation now and relationships have evolved to include First Nations. It is time for us to learn from the mistakes that have been made and take back our authority over our ḥahahuuɬi."

This Declaration acknowledges that the sacred principles are often ignored, and the Nations are the last to benefit from what is taken out of the territory. They are last to be asked what must be put back.

The three Nations are already engaged in extensive stewardship efforts on their territories to repair damage done in the past and to plan for future generations, drawing on sound data and information, best practices and science, and as always, guided by traditional values. On Saturday, June 5, 2021, Pacheedaht, Huu-ay-aht, and Ditidaht formally gave notice to the Province of B.C. to defer old-growth logging for two years in the Fairy Creek and the Central Walbran areas while the Nations prepare their plans. This is in addition to the decision of Huu-ay-aht First Nations to defer logging of its treaty lands.

"Our three Nations look forward to building a future based on respectful nation-to-nation relationships with other governments that are informed by Indigenous history, Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous rights, and Indigenous priorities," said Chief Councillor of the Pacheedaht First Nation Jeff Jones. "We ask that all peoples both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learn and move forward together and that by working together we can realize a future that is fair, just, and equitable."

The Declaration states that in accordance with the traditional laws and constitutionally protected Aboriginal Title, Aboriginal Rights, and Treaty Rights, the governance and stewardship responsibilities in the ḥahahuuɬi of the three Nations must be acknowledged and respected. 3rd parties – whether they are companies, organizations, other governments, or individuals – have no right to speak on behalf of the Nations. Moreover, for third parties to be welcome in their ḥahahuuɬi, they must respect their governance, stewardship, sacred principles, and right to economically benefit from the resources within the ḥahahuuɬi.

Pacheedaht, Huu-ay-aht, and Ditidaht have committed to developing and implementing world-class integrated resource management plans. These plans will draw on the teachings of their ancestors, wisdom of elders, input from citizens, valued partners, and the best forestry, fishery, and integrated resource management advice available. The process will be open and transparent, and the leaders of the three nations commit to offering opportunities for input as long as it takes place through the process outlined by the Nations.

"It is our responsibility to take care of our land for future generations – we are the decision makers," explained Huu-ay-aht Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis Sr. "We follow the guidance of our elders and citizens to make the decisions we think are right – we are asking others to respect that process and follow our direction on our territory. Our citizens have a constitutionally protected right to manage and benefit from our lands, waters, and resources."

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Nation receives grant to fund repatriation

When Huu-ay-aht First Nations finalized the Maa-nulth Treaty, one of the most exciting opportunities it outlined was a plan to bring cultural treasures home from BC museums.

On May 17, the Province of BC and the BC Museums Association announced the 2020 Repatriation Grant recipients. Huu-ay-aht is one of 25 Nations to receive a grant. The Nation will receive $35,000 of the $454,000 grant to fund repatriation research and activities announced this week.

"We celebrated together in 2016 as we watched as many of our cultural treasures were returned," explains Councillor Edward R. Johnson. "Our history was extracted from us, and this is about bringing back a little bit of our history, one piece at a time, knowing that our treasures are scattered all over the world."

He added, this is a key part of recognizing the past and that Huu-ay-aht's ancestors and treasures need to come home.

"We are just scratching the surface of reconciliation by bringing some of our treasures home," he said.

The grant will be used to identify and catalogue the items the Nation wants repatriated from the Royal BC Museum. These will join the items previously returned in the Cultural Centre.

Throughout the history of Canada, Indigenous peoples have had their belongings, language, culture, and even ancestors taken from them and housed in museums, universities, and private collections across the world. For decades, Indigenous leaders have worked tirelessly to support the return of their communities' ancestors and cultural patrimony.

Through the 2020 Repatriation Grants, the BCMA and the BC government are taking a critical step in reconciliation and supporting this work. These grants are funded through the B.C. government's $500,000 investment in 2020.

"These items were bought or taken from our ancestors, and it's time that we bring them home where they belong," explained Tayii Ḥaẇił ƛiišin (Head Hereditary Chief Derek Peters). "The effort made by the province and the museum shows respect for our history and reconciliation in action. It honours our our sacred principles of ʔiisaak (utmost respect), ʔuuʔałuk (taking care of), and Hišuk ma c̓awak (everything is one) and ensure future generations do not have to go to a museum to experience their history."

Nations ask that people who visit territory respect their lands

Continued from page 3

The Nations ask that while work is underway everyone allow forestry operations in other parts of their Territories, approved by the Nations and the province, to continue without disruption. Anyone who requests permission to enter our ḥahahuuɬi is welcome provided they conduct themselves in accordance with our sacred principles. That includes safe, peaceful, and lawful protest that does not interfere with legally authorized forestry operations.

The Nations are also engaged in extensive stewardship efforts on their ḥahahuuɬi to repair damage done during the colonial past and plan a sustainable future for generations to come. They do this work with the sacred principle Hišuk ma c̓awak (Everything is one) in mind. It is this belief that guides their decision making on their ḥahahuuɬi.

Monumental cedar has always been important to our Nations for its cultural, spiritual, economic, habitat, and biodiversity values. Decisions on monumental cedar protection and forest management must be led by the people who have held the rights and title and looked after this land for thousands of years.

"Everything we need comes from our forests and our marine habitats in our traditional territory," explained Ditidaht Elected Chief Brian Tate. "It is time for the people who come to our territory to respect that and to recognize the rights we have to what happens in our ḥahahuuɬi. What we take out must be put back in." Leaders of the three Nations, guided by their members and citizens, know that if their authority over their land is acknowledged and respected it will be a win-win for everyone. In time, it will lead to economic opportunities for all and stewardship practices that will heal the lands and water.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations launches HIRMP

Following extensive consultation with its citizens, Huu-ay-aht First Nations is pleased to announce the upcoming development of its Hišuk ma c̓awak Integrated Resource Management Plan (HIRMP).

The HIRMP is a coordinated plan for forest and environmental management in the Nation's entire ḥahuuɬi (traditional territory of the hereditary chiefs). It represents the present and future needs of the ecosystem and the Nation. Its namesake sacred principle, Hišuk ma c̓awak, acknowledges the many interconnected aspects considered and incorporated into the plan.

"This has been a long time coming and is shaped by the input we heard from our citizens and Ḥaẃiiḥ Council (hereditary leadership) that showed us there is a deep need for this work," explains Tayii Ḥaẃiɬ ƛiišin (Head Hereditary Chief Derek Peters). "We are not waiting for others to look after our territory. We have created a path for this plan that honours our values and our sacred principles of ʔiisaak (Utmost Respect), ʔuuʔałuk (Taking Care of), and Hišuk ma c̓awak (Everything is One)."

The Huu-ay-aht have been stewards of their territory since time immemorial. They manage the resources that sustain their people based on their utmost respect for the ḥahuuɬi. The sacred principles will guide the direction and implementation of the plan.

The HIRMP is Huu-ay-aht's commitment to do all they can to balance the economic benefits from use of the resource land base with sound management that supports other aspects of the Nation's interconnected resources and livelihoods.

"We want to do this the way we would have done it all along, following the principle that what one takes out, one must put back," says Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis Sr. "We will consult and rely on experts in order to merge our Ancient Spirit and Modern Minds, but this plan is made in Huu-ay-aht, for Huu-ay-aht, by Huu-ay-aht."

Over many years, the Nation has had the benefit of expert forestry and resource advisors including Chris Niziolomski of Forest Ecosystems Solutions, Bruce Blackwell of BA Blackwell and Associates, Bob Bocking of LGL Ltd., and Bryce Bancroft of Symmetree Consulting Group. These experts will continue to support the work on the HIRMP.

The planning process that Huu-ay-aht is embarking on will not only help Huu-ay-aht manage its own Treaty Lands and forest tenures, it will also be working collaboratively with other forest companies on our ḥahuuɬi to extend Huu-ay-aht values to forest management in the entire territory.

Forest ecosystems are complex with many integrated components and past histories. Creating and implementing the HIRMP will not be a fast process. Huu-ay-aht will take as long as is needed to get it right and find balance so it pays off for present and future generations.

Some highlights of the HIRMP are:

• Developing a harvesting, reserve, and silviculture strategy.

• Setting appropriate annual allowable cuts (AAC).

• Setting aside culturally important forests as protected areas for citizen enjoyment and use.

• Developing a strategy that continues to value existence of old-growth forests and monumental cedar.

• Continued support to Huu-ay-aht's ʔuuʔałuk Watershed Renewal Program.

• Aligning Forest Stewardship Plan renewal, forest management systems, and monitoring across all tenures, while allowing economic opportunities for Huu-ay-aht.

• No timber harvesting on Treaty Lands in the calendar year 2021

• Developing objectives for good stewardship of fish and water, riparian areas, wildlife and their habitat, biodiversity, cultural heritage, visual quality, and minimizing windthrow/ blowdown.

• Ensuring that these critical objectives are appropriately balanced with the economic benefits that come from the forestry and resource economy, all in accordance with Huu-ay-aht values.

"Our main driving force behind this is to look after the land the way our ancestors taught us," says Huu-ay-aht Councillor Duane Nookemis. "Up until about 150 years ago we managed our own lands and resources in a sustainable way. Our hereditary and elected leadership draw on the teachings of our ancestors and the wisdom of our elders, as well as input from citizens when we make stewardship decisions like this plan. We use this knowledge and input from our partners to determine best practices for forestry, fishery, and other natural resources. The HIRMP will allow us to regain decision-making powers in our ḥahuuɬi."

Huu-ay-aht will be hosting Community Engagement Sessions for its citizens and residents of the neighbouring community of Bamfield in June. Huu-ay-aht will provide an overview of the HIRMP process and two-year timetable and will provide answers to questions regarding the process.

For more information, visit www.huuayaht.org

Pacheedaht, Huu-ay-aht, and Ditidaht celebrate relationship on National Indigenous Peoples Day

On June 21, 2021, Pacheedaht, Ditidaht, and Huu-ay-aht First Nations gathered to celebrate their shared culture. It was an opportunity to demonstrate the strength of the relationship the three nations outlined when they signed the Hišuk ma c̓awak Declaration earlier this month.

Pacheedaht Chief Councillor Jeff Jones welcomed everyone to the territory, “Thank you for travelling here today to celebrate in unity. Our three nations have signed a declaration recently, saying we are taking over our authority of our territory and that the three nations will be deciding by themselves how the resources of our territories will be managed. That was a historical moment, and it’s a great pleasure that we now stand together as one moving forward.”

The event included an official recognition of their Hereditary Chief Frank Queesto Jones by Huu-ay-aht Tayii Ḥaẇiɬ ƛiišin (Derek Peters). Wišqii spoke on behalf of ƛiišin, thanking Queesto for welcoming his Nation to their territory and recognizing the significance of having both hereditary chiefs present on Monday.

Huu-ay-aht Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis Sr. spoke passionately about the need to move forward from the mistakes of the past and with the Nations deciding the path.

“This territory belongs to Queesto. The reconciliation I would like to see is that Queesto and his people decide how their lands are managed,” Chief Councillor Dennis explained. “That, to me is about the best apology I can ever get – the most complete reconciliation I can see is being able to live the way our forefathers lived.”



Pacheedaht, Huu-ayaht, and Ditidaht, end National Indigenous People's Day by standing with totem for a group photo. (Photo by Nick Cessford)

He said by joining with Pacheedaht on National Indigenous Peoples Day in a traditional cultural way it shows how strong First Nations people are when they work together. It also sends a message to people that decisions made on their ḥahahuuɬi are to be respected and followed.

Huu-ay-aht brought with them singers, drummers, and dancers. Pacheedaht is in the process of building the language and cultural knowledge within their nation. Pacheedaht Chief Jones thanked Huu-ay-aht for sharing so much with them.

Huu-ay-aht surprised the members and leaders of Pacheedaht at the end of the day by presenting them with a spirit pole, carved by Huu-ay-aht Master Carver Ed Johnson. Speaking for his Tayii, Wišqii explained that only a master carver can release the spirits from the cedar. He said, the pole that was gifted to Queesto and his nation starts at the top with a thunderbird, representing the ḥaẇiɬ that is above us, the whale is the chief under sea, the bear represents the land ḥaẇiɬ. At the bottom is the transformer that represents the spirit – making it a true spirit pole.

Wišqii said the gift is to Pacheedaht and their Hereditary leader, Queesto, from all Huu-ay-aht people and particularly the ḥaẇiiḥ as it represents their territory.

“Our nations are rich in resources, and this is one example of how wealthy our forests are. Cedar means so much more to us in this form than it does in its cubic metre value,” Wišqii said. “We wanted to gift the spirit of the cedar to all of the community here on behalf of Huu-ay-aht First Nations.”

As visitors to the territory, Huu-ay-aht also gifted a paddle to Chief Jones as a sign of respect and appreciation, and ƛiišin and Wišqii gave Pacheedaht permission to use Huu-ay-aht’s paddle song.

“Today we enjoyed a lot of great sharing of culture and speaking of wise words,” Chief Councillor Jones said on behalf of Pacheedaht Hereditary Chief Frank Queesto Jones. “We are very honoured to accept the spiritual pole from the Huu-ay-aht First Nation Hereditary Chief. We will place the pole in a dedicated space of honour to serve as a permanent reminder of the connection between our Nations. On ƀehalf of all Queesto family, ƛeekoo ƛeekoo.”

Nations come together to celebrate on June 21















Pacheedaht, Ditidaht, and Huu-ay-aht First Nations gather at Pacheedaht territory to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day. There was lots of singing and dancing. Huu-ay-aht gifted Pacheedaht with a totem. (Photos by Nick Cessford)

Nation awarded grant funds from Childcare B.C. New Spaces

Huu-ay-aht First Nations is pleased to announce it has been awarded $763,924.33 from the Province of British Columbia's Childcare B.C. New Spaces funding.

This grant will allow the Nation to create 24 new spaces at the Oomiiqsu Childcare Centre, which will be housed at the proposed Oomiiqsu Mother Centre in Port Alberni. The site will be located at 4305 Kendall Ave once complete and offer services to Huu-ay-aht and
Nuu-chah-nulth families.

The Oomiiqsu Childcare Centre will be an integral part of Oomiiqsu Mother Centre, and priority for the spaces will be given to children residing in the centre. Of the 24 spaces, eight will be for children 36 months and under and 16 will be for children 30 months to school age.

"We are grateful to receive this grant from the province because it enables us to move forward on this exciting project," says Huu-ay-aht Councillor Edward R. Johnson. "This has been a collaborative effort from the start. I am very thankful for the team and am truly honoured to have witnessed this journey. It is so important to our Nation to bring more of our children home as that honours our Ancient Spirit and Modern Mind."



Above view of architectural drawings of Oomiiqsu that will be located in Port Alberni.

Elders and other community members will teach Nuu-chah-nulth language and prepare traditional foods with the children. Traditions, ceremonies, songs, drumming dance and crafts will be shared and taught by Huu-ay-aht First Nations Elders, community members and staff as well as other Nuu-chah-nulth Nations.

"We honour our Ancient Spirit and Modern Mind when we find ways to keep our youth safe and in an environment that nurtures traditional learning at all ages, just as our ancestors taught us," explains Huu-ay-aht Tayii Ḥaẃiɬ ƛiišin (Head Hereditary Chief Derek Peters). "By doing so, we are following our Sacred Principles of ʔiisaak (Utmost Respect), ʔuuʔałuk (Taking Care of), and Hišuk ma c̓awak (Everything is One)."

Mothers will be welcome at the centre and strongly encouraged to participate in the childcare program. Parenting support will be offered as well, and programming will support children and their mothers to build strong cultural identities that will connect them to their larger families and communities.

The land on Kendall Avenue has been purchased by BC Housing, and a Rezoning Application has been submitted to the City of Port Alberni. A public hearing was held on May 13. There were no objections voiced at the meeting, and the matter was approved by Port Alberni City Council at a later meeting. Construction was set to begin in April 2021 and the Oomiiqsu Childcare Centre will open in September 2023.



There is lots of construction going on in Upper Anacla. The workers are busy! (Photo by Nick Cessford)

Huu-ay-aht recognizes they are doing business on Tseshaht's territory

On March 26, 2021, Tseshaht and Huu-ay-aht First Nations leaders gathered at Huu-ay-aht's Port Alberni Government Office to finalize a protocol agreement they signed in the fall of 2020.

The agreement outlined how the two nations would work together in Tseshaht's territory. This included such things as regular meetings to discuss business opportunities in their territory, government-to-government relationship building, and signage recognizing Huu-ay-aht is doing business in Tseshaht's territory.



Left to right (back row): Tseshaht Manager of Natural Resources, Nasimius (Darrell Ross), Huu-ay-aht Executive Councillor, ƛicitaṯ (Edward R. Johnson), Tseshaht Elected Councillor, Nasimius (Ed Ross), Huu-ay-aht Chief Councillor, Emchayiik (Robert J. Dennis Sr.), Huu-ay-aht Executive Councillor, Ḥiiyiqḥsaṯ (Trevor Cootes), Tseshaht Elected Chief Councillor, waamiiš (Ken Watts), Left to right (front row): Tseshaht Hereditary Chief, ḳeḳeeʔin tiičanim (William Severinson), Huu-ay-aht Hereditary Chief, Yaałuuʔa (Jeff Cook), Tseshaht Tyee Seat Holder, histakʷaayačiɬ (E. Darlene Taylor), Tseshaht Hereditary Chief, kʷacaapii (Josh Goodwill). (Photo by Heather Thomson.)

Signage was the final piece to come together. On March 26, Tseshaht Elected Chief Councillor waamiiš (Wawmeesh/Ken Watts) presented Huu-ay-aht Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis Sr. with plaques for their operations in Port Alberni.

Huu-ay-aht currently has three offices and a daycare operating in Port Alberni. The signs recognize that in the spirit of the Traditional Protocol between Tseshaht and Huu-ay-aht the building operates on the unceded territory of the Tseshaht First Nation.

Treaty brings different levels of government-to-government relationships

By Crystal Jack

The Maa-nulth Treaty Agreement establishes within Canadian law what First Nations peoples have always known, that the Indigenous peoples of Canada have an inherent right to self-government.

The preamble of the Maa-nulth Treaty says "The Maa-nulth First Nations assert that they have an inherent right to self-government, and the Government of Canada has negotiated self-government in this Agreement based on its policy that the inherent right to self-government is an existing aboriginal right within section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982."

The preamble of the Treaty also says that the agreement will "establish new government-to-government relationships based on mutual respect."

The efforts to regain recognition and respect of this inherent, and constitutionally protected, right created a fundamental shift in the relationships between the Maa-nulth Nations and the governments of Canada and British Columbia. It created a government-to-government relationship.

This government-to-government relationship takes place at a broad range of levels and tables.

- Bi-lateral - HFN engages one-on-one with one or more Provincial ministries or Federal departments on treaty implementation, agreements, engagements, and consultations

- Maa-nulth Treaty Society – Political leaders and/or technical support address issues of collective interest and/or collective responsibility, engagements, and consultations with BC and Canada

- Tripartite Implementation Committee – A quarterly meeting between Maa-nulth, BC, and Canada on the implementation of the Maa-nulth Treaty

- G2G Forum – An annual forum where Maa-nulth leaders meet directly with Ministers of the BC Government to discuss ongoing and emerging Treaty Implementation Issues

- BC Alliance of Modern Treaty Nations – The eight modern Treaty Nations of British Columbia (the five Maa-nulth Nations, Tsawwassen, Tla'amin, and Nisga'a) coordinate and collaborate on a variety of areas of shared interest, responsibility, and/or engagement and consultation.

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Huu-ay-aht to build 11 housing units with Rapid Housing Initiative funding from CMHC

Huu-ay-aht First Nations has made housing one of its top priorities. Thanks to a grant from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), it will have 11 new units in Anacla by March 2022.

Huu-ay-aht is one of two First Nations communities in British Columbia to receive a Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) grant to build houses it their communities.

CMHC announced a total RHI investment of $6.92 million to build 19 units of affordable housing for British Columbia First Nations under the National Housing Strategy. Huu-ay-aht will receive approximately $3.62 million. The remaining funds go to the Uchucklesaht Tribe for seven units of housing.

"We have made a commitment to our people to create a safe, healthy place to live where they can connect with the land and their culture," explained Tayii Ḥaẇiɬ ƛiišin (Head Hereditary Chief Derek Peters). "A key to fulfilling this commitment is offering proper housing on our ḥahuuɬi (traditional territory), and this grant allows us to take a big step toward that goal. By doing this, we honour our sacred principles of ʔiisaak (utmost respect), ʔuuʔałuk (taking care of), and Hišuk ma c̓awak (everything is one)."



Photo taken of Upper Anacla housing June 2021. (Photo by Amanda-Lee Cunningham)

"This 11-unit housing project builds on the success of our 2020 housing project, and it brings our total new housing units up to 22," explained Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis Sr. "Thanks to the timely contribution from CMHC, we are able to offer affordable housing to more of our citizens so they can move home and enjoy our wonderful homeland."

The Nation began the project in March, starting construction on seven units – six in the Upper Anacla subdivision and one in Lower Anacla. The first seven units are expected to be completed by September, and the remaining four units will be complete by March 2022. The units consist of:

• A fourplex of two-bedroom, one bath

• A duplex of four-bedroom, two bath units

• A four-bedroom, two -and-a-half bath, with a single garage home

• Two three-bedroom, two bath homes

• A two-bedroom, two bath, with a single garage

• A two-bedroom, two bath, single-wide home (lower village)

If you would like more information about housing through Huu-ay-aht, contact Sheila Charles at Sheila_c@huuayaht.org or call 250-731-5676.

Huu-ay-aht continues efforts to build relationships

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A relationship needs communication, respect, and trust to be successful and a successful government-to-government relationship is vital to treaty implementation. It will require conscious and continued efforts from all parties. Huu-ay-aht continues to push for the governments of Canada and British Columbia to take more responsibility for their role in this now decade long relationship through

- Internal education of political leaders and bureaucratic staff, at all levels, on the Maa-nulth Treaty
- Clear mandates at consultation and negotiating tables
- Changes to policy and legislation that honour the spirit and intent of the Maa-nulth Treaty
- Respect and reconciliation

Huu-ay-aht stands with those mourning the loss of 215 children

By Nick Cessford

Warning: The below article may be difficult to read or trigger past trauma as the subject matter deals with Canadian residential schools.

The impacts and horror of Canadian residential school policy have once again made headlines nationally. On May 27, 2021, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation announced the discovery of the remains of approximately 215 children on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School. The remains were discovered through survey and ground-penetrating radar. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation records indicate that only 51 official deaths occurred at the school. At this time, there is no official documentation regarding the additional 215 who lost their lives attending the school. Discoveries like this are truly a national tragedy.

Further research and survey are still being conducted with a preliminary report to be released later. Operated by the Catholic Church and Indian Affairs Canada, the Kamloops Indian Residential School was the largest in the residential school system and was able to house up to 500 children at any given time. The school was successfully closed in 1978, although the structure still stands to this day.

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation and the Adams Lake band held a walking the spirits home ceremony from June 11 to 13. We support and offer healing thoughts and prayers to Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation as they honour their lost loved ones.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time a story like this has come to light. It has been officially documented that 202 children died in residential schools on Vancouver Island. This number does not account for undocumented incidences like the discovery at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. The names of the children who officially died in the residential school system are available on the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's website (www.nctr.ca/memorial). The last residential school to be closed on Vancouver Island was the Christie Indian Residential School, which was located on Meares Island, but ultimately moved to Tin Wis for its final years.

Tseshaht First Nation is making efforts towards having the grounds of the former Alberni Indian Residential School surveyed to search for unmarked graves on the grounds. Concurrently, Ahousaht intends to have the grounds of the Ahousaht Indian Residential School surveyed and scanned with ground-penetrating radar. Ahousaht has cleared the land on Flores Island for a healing centre to be constructed in place of the former residential school.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations stands with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation in mourning the loss of 215 children. On Monday, June 7, Huu-ay-aht held a memorial via Zoom to honour and mourn the victims of residential schools. On Monday, May 31, Tseshaht held an in-person gathering to honour those found in Kamloops, as well as all victims, survivors, and intergenerational survivors of residential schools.

When stories such as this resurface so too does the trauma, hurt, and negative energy that has come from surviving residential schools. Huu-ay-aht Nations wishes to make sure that community members feel supported and connected to their families and their culture. There are numerous resources available to community members. Cory Howard Sr. is available for Huu-ay-aht cultural support, prayer, and brushings. As COVID-19 restrictions are being eased, we can begin to get back together as a community for prayer and cultural gatherings. This is a time for the community to come together and be there for survivors and intergenerational survivors. Huu-ay-aht children and family services are also available to help through this difficult time. Further, Quu'asa services are available through Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and focus on healing the traumas associated with residential schools. If you or someone you care about needs support, it is always available.

Huu-ay-aht is actively working to bring the children of the Nation home and keep them safe, healthy, and connected to their families and culture. As part of the Nation's Social Services Project, Huu-ay-aht has partnered with BC Housing to build Oomiiqsu (Aboriginal Mother Centre) in Port Alberni. This centre will be a two-floor residential building that will house 12 shared units. These units will feature comprehensive support for the mother and child in a culturally grounded setting. Oomiiqsu will provide space for four transitional units for those transitioning out of Oomiiqsu. It will also house a licensed child care center for 24 children. This wrap-around support works to ensure that Huu-ay-aht children are kept with their families and out of provincial care. Finally, Oomiiqsu will be the permanent home for Huu-ay-aht's Child and Family Wellness Team. Separate from Oomiiqsu, Huu-ay-aht operates Pawaats daycare for children in both Anacla and Port Alberni. These are all good steps towards keeping Huu-ay-aht children safe, healthy, and connected to their families and culture. Huu-ay-aht has recently completed a progress evaluation report to follow up on the report of the social services panel of 2017. This report is helping guide and steer Huu-ay-aht towards meeting the goals and recommendations of the initial 2017 report. The outlook for Huu-ay-aht families and children is looking bright.

These numbers are based on information up to mid-June. Numbers are to increase as more nations do scanning in their community.

Child and Family Wellness are busy planning programs and services

Programs and Services – we want to hear from YOU!

The Child and Family Wellness Department is busy planning programs and services for 2021 and we would love to have your input, as soon as possible. If you have ideas for programs, please email shannon.z@huuayaht.org.

Some ideas include:

- Money Management for Youth
- Money Management
- Parenting After Separation and Divorce
- Grief and Loss

Child Tax Benefit

The Federal Governemnt Announced that Child Tax Benefits increased for families with children six and under starting in May and quarterly payments from there. Eligible families with a net income of $120,000 or less will receive four $300 payments for each child under the age of six. The increase is intended for "unpredictable expenses of the COVID-19 pandemic," including child care, meals, clothes, and at-home activities. You must file you 2019 and 2020 tax returns in order to access payments. For more information, please visit the Government of BC website.

Food Security

Salvation Army Port Alberni offers Good Food Box. How it works is:

Order a Good Food Box before the first Thursday of every month, and pick it up the following Thursday. The cost for a box of produce is $12, and you get to take home a minimum of $20 worth of fresh produce, picked out by Leslie, the Financial Assistant, at local grocery stores that very morning.

Salvation Army Port Alberni also offers Milk for Kids Program. How it works is: Families can register their children in this program, which provides one litre of milk per week, per child. They also have a baby formula program for newborns and infants.

If you are intersted in using these resources, contact Salvation Army Port Alberni at 250-723-6913.

Culture Support

Cory Howard Sr. is doing Culture Nights on his Facebook page "Cory HowardSr". Add him as a friend so you can join his live videos.

Language Resources

Did you know First Voices keyboard is available on the App Store? Check it out!

Step 1: download app

Step 2: follow installation instructions - select your region and language (Huu-ay-aht is BC Coast region and nuučaaʔuɬ language)

Check out: https://www.firstvoices.com/

Check out: http://kwistuup.net/

Check out Hinatinyis's website: http://hinatinyis.com/

New Staff

Becki Nookemis is a Huu-ay-aht citizen. Becki's parents are Duane Nookemis and Matilda Charleson. Her paternal grandmother is Linda Young, daughter of Edward and Mabel Nookemis. Becki's maternal grandparents are the late Monica Charleson, Ray Charleson, and Donald Mundy.

Becki graduated from Vancouver Island University in 2018 with a Bachlors in Psychology, First Nations Studies, and a Certificate in Addictions Studies.

Becki is excited to join the Child and Family Wellness Team as a Protection and Family Support Liaison.



Becki Nookemis

Tobias Rader lives in Port Alberni and has for nearly 10 years. Tobias is married and has two children aged 5.5 and 2.5 years. Tobias grew up in the Comox Valley and came to Port Alberni by way of Victoria.Tobias is in his 22nd year in the social service field. He graduated with a Bachelors of Social Work from Dalhousie University in 2019 and is currently studying a Masters in Narrative Therapy and Community Worker from the University of Melbourne, Australia. Tobias is passionate about his community and the people in it. Tobias looks forward to working with the Huu-ay-aht people and community.



Tobias Rader

Huu-ay-aht recognizes new babies with welcome ceremony

Children of all ages are precious in Huu-ay-aht culture and baby wecoming veremonies are held annually to recognize the baby's place in the community and family.

On Friday, June 11, 2021, mothers and their babes, special guests, Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis Sr., Councillor Edward Johnson and Tayii Ḥaẇiɬ ƛiišin (Derek Peters), acting Executive Director Coral Johnson and Child and Family Wellness Staff gathered to celebrate these little ones. Nine mothers and children were in attendance, and 14 little ones were acknowledged.

Cory Howard Sr. opened with a song he wrote called You are the Centre of the Blue Sky the World Over. After the song, mothers introduced their little ones and shared how they chose their names, many of which honoured family members who had passed on.

Each baby received four gifts, three of which have cultural significance. Cory made drums and drumsticks for each baby. Drums represents the heartbeat and are important in Huu-ay-aht culture as stories are told through songs and dance.



Huu-ay-aht welcomes new babies via Zoom on June 11, 2021. (Photo provided by Becki Nookemis)

Cory Howard Sr. and Stephen Smith harvested cedar from the ḥahuuɬi and Cory made Cedar Headbands. Cedar is sacred and is recognized as the Tree of Life. Before harvesting cedar, a ceremony and prayers are offered, and whenever cedar is used, gratitude is expressed to the Creator. Cedar protects the wearer, and when the headband is worn, only good thoughts can enter the person.

To encourage attachment, literacy, and learning, each baby received a Board Book written by Roy Henry Vickers.

Whales are important in Huu-ay-aht culture as traditionally, whales were harvested to feed the Nation and the fat was burned to give light. Today, whales are the symbol on the Huu-ay-aht logo.

Grandparents, Executive Council members, and staff expressed their well wishes and shared wisdom with the mothers. Chief Dennis shared that he is available to share history and culture with the mothers and encouraged them to seek out Elders and learn from them. When someone seeks knowledge from an Elder, it is a sign of respect and shows a willingness to learn.

Cory closed the event with a song.

Queen's University Research Project gets a new logo

Queen's University put a call out for a logo for the Research Project, and they have selected art submitted by Huu-ay-aht citizen, Corrissa Janson.

Corrissa's Mother Beverly Dennis comes from Huu-ay-aht and Father Lennie John comes from Ahousaht. Corissa was born in Port Alberni where she was introduced to the arts of West Coast designs.

The logo is called "New Moon Child". The design shows Huu-ay-aht's journey as a modern treaty nation by being able to constantly change its phase and seek new beginnings. The moon is surrounded by our ocean waters and there it finds our next beginning within our children and begins to nurture the next generation. Corrissa thinks that a moon strongly represents Huu-ay-aht and its research advisory committee's importance to its people's future.



Bamfield students say goodbye to long-time teacher

By Nick Cessford

On June 23, 2021, Bamfield Community School held a barbecue to celebrate the end of the school year, as well as long-time teacher Kristin Russell's departure from the School. The event was kicked off by drumming and singing of the dinner song by Cory Howard Sr, Charlie Clappis, and Seth Nookemus. Huu-ay-aht youth and Russell danced while the song was being sung. Following this, Russell was presented with a bouquet of flowers and cards from Principal Dave Maher on behalf of School District 70. Seth and Cierra Nookemus wrapped their long-time teacher in a blanket boasting the Huu-ay-aht First Nations logo. Finally, Huu-ay-aht education, employment and training manager Brent Ronning presented Russel with a carving on behalf of Huu-ay-aht First Nations thanking her for the work she has done with Huu-ay-aht youth. The event continued with students, staff, and community members participating in a game of kickball.



Seth and Cierra Nookemus blanket teacher Kristin Russell at last day of school Barbeque. (Photo by Amanda-Lee Cunningham)

Kristin Russell has spent the past eight years working at the Bamfield Community School. She has made the decision to move from Bamfield to her new home in Port Alberni. She will be continuing her teaching career at the newly re-named Tsuma-as Elementary (formerly A.W Neil Elementary). When asked about her experiences at Bamfield Community School Russell recounted how she loved the positive impacts she was able to have upon students. Further, Russell also commented on how unique a teaching position working in Bamfield is since she was able to work with the same students every year. Bamfield Community School next year will truly be a family affair as current teacher, Ms.Schmidt's mother will be filling the role vacated by Russell.

Huu-ay-aht members learn how to operate drones

Members of Huu-ay-aht and Stinson Aerial Services have been working together in the Sarita watershed on a variety of projects including drone workshops and ecological surveying. Amanda-Lee Cunningham and Hector Little of the Nation spent five days training with Stinson Aerial Services. During this time they learned drone flying, mission planning, and data collection. Beyond this, time was spent discussing uses of drones in industry today, such as LiDAR for mapping, 3D modelling for surveying, and how thermal cameras are used for wildfire mapping.

Stinson Aerial Services is looking to hold another larger training session with the Nation at a later date. Stinson Aerial Services was also recently awarded a two-year contract for hotspot mapping with BC wildfire and hopes to recruit members from the Nation to assist with this project during 2022's wildfire season.

Stinson Aerial plans to spend a few days every month surveying and training in the Sarita watershed for ecological purposes with the Nation's blessing. For example, Stinson Aerial Services used RPAS technology to create a 3D model of a forestry stand impacted by heavy winds to assist Humiis Forestry Venture. For more information please reach out to Justin@Stinsonaerial.ca



Amanda-Lee Cunningham



Hector Little

Support is available for anyone affected by Residential Schools



Miłinkas - We are next to one another

Feelings of shock, anger, and deep sadness have filled our hearts and, as a community, we are grieving. This event is a trigger for Residential School Survivors who experienced the atrocities of Residential School, and it is traumatizing.

Coming together as a Nation will offer an opportunity to show our love and support to one another.

Support is available for anyone affected by the impact of residential schools and those who are triggered by the latest reports. The Indian Residential School Survivors Society can be contacted toll-free at 1-800-721-0066. A national Indian Residential School Crisis Line has been set up for emotional and crisis referral services by calling the 24-hour national crisis line: 1-866-925-4419.

Support Available

Huu-ay-aht Cultural Support
Please contact Cory Howard Sr at 250-723-0100
Quu'asa Services
David Zryd (Clinical Counsellor) 250-724-3939 or 250-720-5999 - in Anacla on Wednesdays
Arianna Clarke-Watts (Part-time Clinical Counsellor) 250-724-3939 or 250-735-7730 – in Anacla on Tuesdays
Judy North (Crisis Response Clinical Counsellor) 250-724-3939 or 250-731-8283
Donna Lucas (Child and Youth Counsellor) 250-724-3939 or 250-731-7671
Cherie Elliott (Resolution Health Support Worker - Residential School Survivors) 250-724-3939 or 250-731-6645
Richard Watts (Resolution Health Support Worker – Residential School Survivors) 250-724-3939 or 250-720-6988

Other Supports

First Nations Health Authority Counsellors – please call Shannon at 778-419-1013 for contact info for counsellors in your area
Vancouver Island Crisis Line 1-888-494-3888 24 hours/day - call
250-800-3806 6pm – 10 pm - text

KUU-US Crisis Line Society - 24/7 at 1-800-588-8717

BC Crisis Line Suicide Prevention 1-800-784-2433 24 hours/day
BC Mental Health Support Line 310-6789

HGB provides individual career development and support

The Huu-ay-aht Group of Businesses has developed an innovative Employment, Training, and Career Development Program that matches our strategic goals.

In March 2020, the Human Resources and Governance Committee placed their support behind developing a program that would recruit, train, and retain Huu-ay-aht citizens and provide current employees with ability to build their career. Our program meets the goals set out in the Huu-ay-aht Economic Development Act. It increases the capacity of HGB to perform better and ensures that citizens can benefit from economic initiatives.

Our program can be scaled into any of the HGB enterprises and offers one-on-one support through HGB's Human Resources Manager and Huu-ay-aht citizen Sarah Johnson. Sarah's role is to meet individually with people and create individualized learning plans. She also works to keep people motivated and empowers them to build on their strengths. Sarah enjoys watching people succeed because it also gives her a sense of accomplishment. She says, "It's really exciting, and I can say I helped with that."

Sarah describes the program as a framework that balances employee autonomy with a variety of ways to learn. Unlike other programs, this program provides a continuity that allows for longer lengths of time for the employees to reach their goals and supplements the Huu-ay-aht First Nations programs. The key to the program's success is integrating industry partners into the program.

Sarah is enthusiastic about the program's potential and explains, "We also have access to several contractors that will support and scaffold employee learning, while providing work experience across a wide variety of jobs. We are giving citizens and employees an opportunity to map out their future."

Sarah works closely with the Huu-ay-aht Education, Employment, and Training Manager Brent Ronning to ensure Huu-ay-aht citizens who are attending school can access work experience opportunities.

Through the Employment, Training, and Career Development Program, HGB is creating opportunities for citizens to grow, learn, and gain the skills needed to be successful. HGB continues to demonstrate the Huu-ay-aht First Nations Sacred Principles of ʔiisaak, ʔuuʔałuk, and Hišuk ma c̓awak by recognizing that workforce development is critical to success.

For more information you can contact Sarah Johnson at 778-421-2663 or by email sarah.j@huuayaht.com.

