



WILPS GEEL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025



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INTRODUCTION & ABOUT



WILPS

Wilps Geel, a matrilineal house within the Gitxsan Nation, is deeply committed to the stewardship, cultural preservation, and sustainable development of its traditional lands. Rooted in the Gisg'aast Pdeek (Fireweed Clan) and carrying the Killer Whale crest, the Wilp's ancestral lands within the Anspayaxw (Kispiox) Watershed, including Lax̱ Di Dax̱ and Luu Andilgan, as well as Xsi Miin Anhl Gii in the Upper Skeena Watershed. These lands are integral to the identity of Wilps Geel, supporting the community's livelihood, cultural practices, and spiritual values. The connection to these lands is the cornerstone of the Wilps Geel way of life, and the community is determined to ensure their responsible stewardship for future generations.

At the heart of the Wilp is a governance system rooted in the Gitxsan matrilineal tradition, where leadership, lineage, and inheritance pass through the mother. The hereditary chieftainship is a responsibility that has been passed down through generations, ensuring that each leader has a deep understanding of the land and the traditions of the people. The leadership of Wilps Geel is entrusted to a collective of chiefs, matriarchs, and community members, all working together to protect their lands, preserve their culture, and guide their people toward a thriving future.

Wilps Geel is a diverse Wilp of approximately 300 members, each contributing to the strength and unity of the house. The leadership includes a wide range of chiefs and matriarchs, each



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bringing unique skills and knowledge to their roles. Together, they are dedicated to ensuring that the needs of the Wilp are met while honouring and respecting their cultural heritage.

This strategic plan aims to guide Wilps Geel in fostering long-term prosperity, resilience, and cultural vitality. It sets priorities for strengthening collective governance, protecting ancestral lands, and supporting the well-being of all Wilp members. The plan focuses on building a self-sustaining Wilp that honours cultural practices and environmental stewardship, nurtures leadership, engages youth, and creates sustainable economic opportunities. By preserving traditions, protecting the lax yip, and empowering members, Wilps Geel is ensuring a thriving future for generations to come.

As our rights and title gain more recognition, the role of Sim'oo'git and the Wilp continues to evolve. Each Wilp is autonomous, with the authority to make decisions based on its own laws, traditions, and responsibilities. This strategic plan recognizes that with greater recognition comes greater responsibility. We must build the knowledge, skills, and resources to face today's challenges, while staying true to our teachings and values. Guided by the wisdom of our ancestors, we are committed to strong, culturally grounded leadership that supports the well-being and future of our Wilp. This roadmap will guide the Wilp forward, ensuring that Wilps Geel continues to honour the wisdom of ganiye'etxw'm (ancestors) while building a brighter, more resilient future.

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN

A Strategic Plan is a roadmap that helps answer the question: Where are we headed, and how will we get there? It serves as a guiding framework for our Wilp's growth, built on the aspirations and goals articulated by our members. The plan prioritizes key initiatives and actions for the coming years, ensuring focus on long-term vision while adapting to new opportunities and challenges.

The plan starts with a shared vision that reflects where we want to go as a Wilp. This vision provides clarity and purpose, guiding our efforts. It is supported by an updated mission statement that accurately represents who we are and how we want to be seen moving forward.

Our strategic approach is shaped by core values that will steer our work. These values guide decision-making and are embedded throughout the Wilp, fostering a culture of trust and accountability.

The priorities in the plan are organized into clear goal statements, with actionable steps for implementation. Specific activities will be outlined in annual operating plans, which will be presented to the Wilp as a whole.

The plan is designed to be flexible and adaptable, with regular reporting on progress. It is a living document, continuously evolving to reflect the growth and future of our Wilp, the responsible stewardship of our lax yip, and the guidance of our Ayook.

START

MISSION & VISION STATEMENT & VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT

We strengthen the Wilp by preserving culture, protecting lands, fostering leadership, and creating sustainable opportunities for current and future generations.

VISION STATEMENT

In five years, the Wilps Geel is thriving and fully engaged – deeply connected to culture, safeguarding the land, and self-sustaining in managing our own resources.

VALUES

Community: Strengthening unity, engagement, and active participation of all members.

Culture: Upholding our Ayook and Adwaak through sharing and practicing our cultural traditions and passing down knowledge (Gwalx Yee'nst).

Land Stewardship: Protecting and maintaining a healthy lax yip.

Leadership: Mentoring emerging leaders for the future.

Self-Determination: Asserting our independence and self-governance in alignment with our Ayook.

Sustainability: Prioritizing environmental responsibility and sustainable resource development practices.

PRIORITY AREAS

PRIORITY AREA 1

Communication & Inclusivity – Foster open, transparent and inclusive communication and engagement that builds trust and strengthens relationship within Wilps Geel.

PRIORITY AREA 2

Education & Knowledge Sharing – Improve cultural, governance, and leadership understanding through traditional and contemporary education and training.

PRIORITY AREA 3

Environmental Stewardship & Sustainable Economy – Manage resources responsibly and create economic opportunities while still protecting the laḡ yip.

PRIORITY AREA 4

Leadership Development & Succession – Ensure current and future leaders are prepared through mentorship, training, and succession planning.

PRIORITY AREA 5

Wilp Engagement & Cultural Knowledge Transmission – Strengthen unity by welcoming all Wilp members participation, and traditional knowledge-sharing through events and land-based learning.

PRIORITY AREA 1

COMMUNICATION & INCLUSIVITY

GOAL:

Foster open, transparent and inclusive communication and engagement that builds trust and strengthens relationship within Wilps Geel.

Some of the ways we will action this priority include:

- Designate members from family branches to share and discuss information within their branches.
- Develop a user-friendly website as a central hub for actionable and understandable communications.
- Gather feedback on communication preferences and what information members need.
- Host virtual meetings for updates and remote engagement.
- Use platforms like Facebook and video messages to keep members informed.

PRIORITY AREA 2

EDUCATION & KNOWLEDGE SHARING

GOAL:

Improve cultural, governance, and leadership understanding through traditional and contemporary education and training.

Some of the ways we will action this priority include:

- Develop written materials, an app, and in-person programs on governance, culture, and roles.
- Establish a budget to support education and capacity-building efforts.
- Host Wilps Geel gatherings and educational trips to foster learning and cultural sharing.
- Organize workshops and community meetings focused on leadership, cultural protocols, and governance.
- Partner with industry for training opportunities to enhance members' skills and experience.

PRIORITY AREA 3

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP & SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

GOAL:

Manage resources responsibly and create economic opportunities while still protecting the lax yip.

Some of the ways we will action this priority include:

- Build partnerships to support sustainable business practices and eco-tourism opportunities.
- Create a financial plan for eco-tourism and other sustainable activities that maintain cultural and environmental integrity.
- Develop an inventory of our lax yip and identify zones for protection.
- Educate members on climate change and other proactive environmental measures.
- Identify and train members for environmental monitoring, archeology, and security roles.
- Organize activities incorporating land-based knowledge, such as workshops on traditional medicine or sustainable practices.



PRIORITY AREA 4

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & SUCCESSION

GOAL:

Ensure current and future leaders are prepared through mentorship, training, and succession planning.

Some of the ways we will action this priority include:

- Build relationships with youth, gauge interest in training, and pursue funding opportunities to support leadership development.
- Develop mentorship and leadership training for youth in communication, decision-making, and governance, and involve them in strategic planning to prepare for future leadership roles.
- Maintain a detailed genealogy chart with contact information for Wilps Geel members.
- Recognize and cultivate leadership potential within the wilp members.
- Use mock feasts to demonstrate leadership roles and responsibilities.



PRIORITY AREA 5

WILP ENGAGEMENT & CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION

GOAL:

Strengthen unity by welcoming all Wilp members participation, and traditional knowledge-sharing through events and land-based learning.

Some of the ways we will action this priority include:

- Develop programs explaining roles and connect experienced members with youth to teach cultural protocols and governance.
- Empower Wilp representatives to keep the community informed and engaged.
- Gather feedback through surveys to ensure members are informed and involved in decision-making.
- Organize land-based events like annual BBQs, fishing, hunting, and other cultural practices.
- Record and share Gitxsan history and key land locations through written and digital resources.



LOOKING FORWARD

WILPS GEEL

As we look to the future, the path for Wilps Geel is clear—one of growth, unity, and resilience. By embracing the values that have been passed down through generations, we are strengthening our community and ensuring that our cultural heritage, environmental stewardship, and governance continue to thrive. The strategic priorities outlined in this plan will guide us toward a self-sustaining future where our lands are protected, our traditions are preserved, and our leaders are empowered.

The actions we take today, from enhancing communication and inclusivity to developing our youth and leadership, will lay the foundation for the next generations. By engaging with our cultural knowledge, fostering education and mentorship, and ensuring responsible land stewardship, we are building a community that is rooted in its past while looking forward to a prosperous future.

With collective effort, open collaboration, and a deep respect for our traditions and land, Wilps Geel is poised to flourish. This strategic plan is not just a roadmap—it's a commitment to future generations, ensuring that Wilps Geel remains strong, vibrant, and connected to its roots for many years to come. Together, we will continue to honour our ancestors, support each other, and chart a course toward a brighter, more sustainable future for all members of our community.



GLOSSARY

Adaawak	History
Anspayaxw	The hiding place, Kispiox
Ayook	Laws
<u>G</u>aniye'etxw'm	Grandfathers (ancestors)
<u>G</u>eel	Head chief of house and Anspayaxw
Gisg'aast	Fireweed
Gitxsan	People of the river of the mist
Pdeek	Clan
Gwalx yeenst	Sharing and passing down knowledge, Inheritance
Lax Yip	Land and everything on it, around it and in it
Sim'oo'git	Chief
Wilp	House
Wilps <u>G</u>eel	House of <u>G</u> eel

