

?akisqnuk Community Newsletter

February 1, 2026



Indian Baths, Fairmont Hot Springs

In this issue...

2	Honoring James Lightbown	13	Construction Update
3	Health & Wellness	16	FireSmart
11	Employment Opportunities	18	Lands & Resources
12	For ?akisqnuk Membership	20	Ktunaxa Nation Council
14	Wiyu Garden	24	Odds & Ends



Fairchild Cornell



Pacific Western Boeing 737



Vickers Wellington



Pacific Western Boeing 737



HONOURING THE LIFE OF JAMES "JIM" RAYMOND LIGHTBOWN

Orginal Article By Vic Bentley

Born: 1922, Stavely, Alberta

Passed: 1996

James "Jim" Lightbown was a proud Ktunaxa and ɬakis̓nuk community member whose life took him from the Kootenays to the front lines of WWII and into a remarkable aviation career.

Highlights:

- WWII RCAF bomber pilot, completing 33 missions and earning the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery.
- Flew Halifax, Lancaster, and Wellington bombers with 431 "Iroquois" Squadron.
- Served as a commercial pilot across BC, the Prairies, and the North, flying everything from floatplanes to Boeing 737s.
- Selected to pilot Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip during their 1970 northern Canadian tour.
- Led restoration and operation of the historic Supermarine Stranraer flying boat.
- Retired in 1982 with more than 14,200 flight hours.

Jim's life reflects courage, innovation, and deep dedication to aviation.



Health & Wellness

JANUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

MARCH 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1		2	3	4	5
				Dr. Page Clinic 2-4pm		
	Member's Band Meeting 5-7:30pm	Community Circle @ Wiyu Lodge 6-8pm	Wiyu Wednesdays 1-8pm	Family Night @ Rec Centre 4:30 - 7pm	Playgroup @ Little Badgers 10am-12pm	
	8	9	10	11	12	13
		Elders Meeting @ Health Centre 1-4pm				14
			Land Based Learning @ Wiyu Lodge	Acupuncture Clinic 9:30am-12:30pm		
	Women's Circle At Wiyu Lodge 5-8pm	Community Circle @ Wiyu Lodge 6-8pm	Wiyu Wednesdays 1-8pm		Playgroup @ Little Badgers 10am-12pm	
	15	16	17	18	19	20
	BC Family Day - Health Centre Closed	Massage Clinic 10am-3pm	Foot Care Clinic 9:45am-3:15pm	Dr. Page Lunch + Learn 12-1pm & Clinic 2-4pm	Building Our Fire: Wellness Weekend	21
		Community Circle @ Wiyu Lodge 6-8pm	Wiyu Wednesdays 1-8pm		Playgroup @ Little Badgers 10am-12pm	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Kindness Week					
	Health Centre Closed for Day - Staff training			Good Food Box 12-3:30pm		
Please contact the ?akisqnu Health & Wellness Centre at healthcentre@akisqnu.org or 250-342-6379 for more information or to book or cancel an appointment						

?akisqnu Health and Wellness Programs Scan QR code for more details on Website.

- Mental Wellness and Trauma Recovery
- One-on-One Recovery Mentorship
- Recovery Healing Circle
- Chiropractor
- Acupuncture
- Massage
- Nutritionist Coaching
- Vaccines
- Non-Coverage Medical
- Medical Appointment Transportation





Ktunaxa Kinbasket
Child & Family
Services Society



*Pakisqnuuk First Nation, Shuswap Band, KKCFSS, and Foundry
proudly present:*

BUILDING OUR FIRE

A WELLNESS GATHERING FOR ALL AGES

February 20 - 22, 2026

@ Columbia Lake Recreation Centre

Open to all Pakisqnuuk and Shuswap Band members
and family. Make sure to register to let us know
you're coming and to secure travel support.

Shuswap Band: Call Gerard *@ 778-526-8323*

Pakisqnuuk: Call Health Centre *@ 250-342-6379*

Or Use A Registration Form Available Below





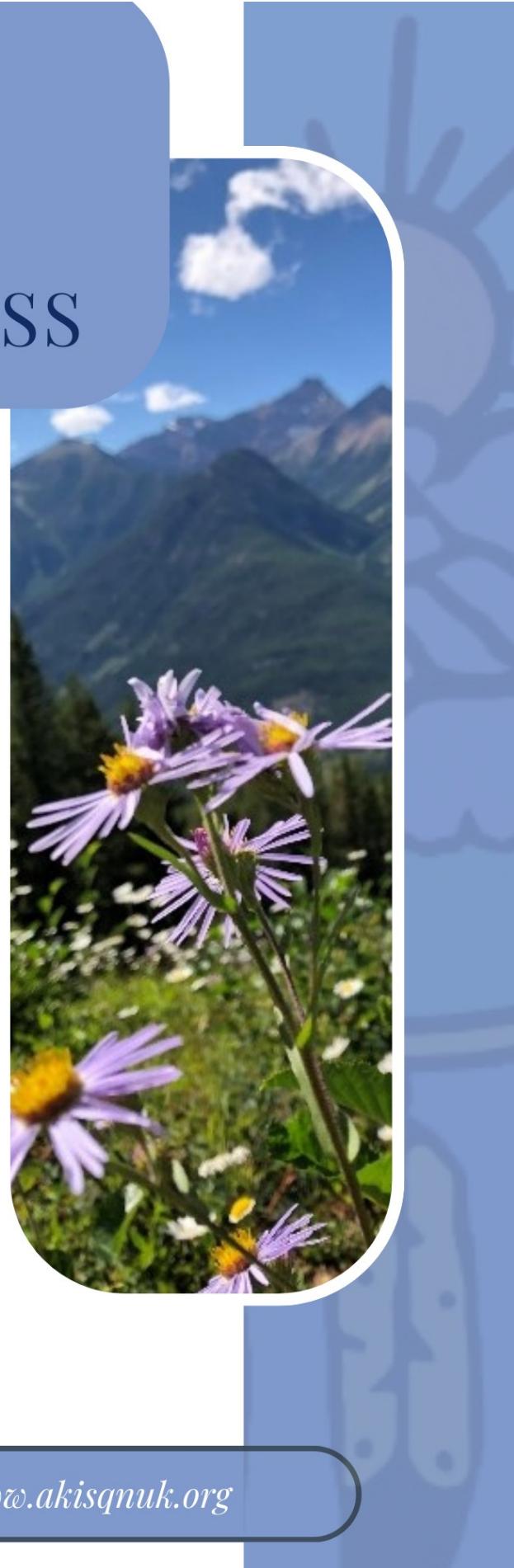
?AKISQNUK LIVES KINDNESS

We're excited to offer a series of trainings and community events focused on lateral kindness and ?akisqnuk's commitment to keeping our community safe, supported, and connected.

These sessions are open to AFN members and staff and will include inspiring speakers, learning opportunities, meaningful discussions, and space for sharing our experiences. More information will be shared as the schedule and details are finalized

 **FEBRUARY 23-27, 2026**

**ALL ?AKISQNUK
COMMUNITY AND STAFF
WELCOME.
YOUR VOICE MATTERS!**



250-342-6301

| www.akisqnuk.org



ʔAKISQNUK MEMBERS

WINTER Ski Program

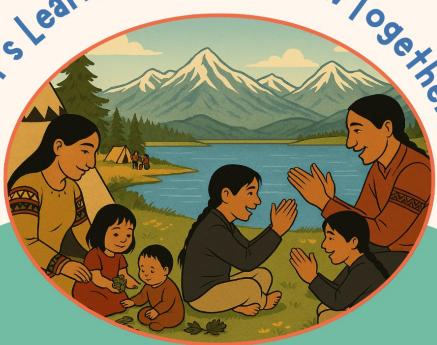
PANORAMA & KIMBERLEY SKI DAY
EVERY SUNDAY STARTING
JANUARY 18

EXCLUDING BLACKOUT DATES (TBD)

E-mail trisha.clowers@akisqnu.org
to register on or before each Tuesday!



In partnership with ʔakisqnu First Nation and Little Badgers Early Learning Programs



Free Early learning Play group!
Ages 0-5 year olds
Every Friday 10am- 12pm
at Eva Joseph Centre (Little Badgers)

A time to come together with caregivers and children,
free play, crafts, stories and snacks. Open to all.
Guardians must be in attendance at all times

Any questions please reach out to:

Olivia Rasilainen | Ashley Killin Healthy Child
Inclusive Coordinator Development Coordinator
inclusive.littlebadgers@gmail.com ashley.killin@akisqnu.org

Monthly Lunch & Learn

For Members & Staff!



Thursday February 19 from
1-2p.m. in the Round Room

This session, join our guest speaker to discuss
online physiotherapy to remote communities via
telehealth.

Lunch will be provided
Please RSVP by calling the
Health Centre: (250) 342 6379

COMMUNITY SHOPPING TRIP TO CRANBROOK

FIRST MONDAYS!
POSTPONED FOR FEBRUARY

Welcome BABY

If you or someone you
know in the community is
expecting a baby, we'd love
to hear about it. Whether
it's your first or new
addition to your family, let
us know so we can offer
any support or resources
that maybe helpful.
Please reach out to
ʔakisqnu Health center at
250-342-6379 or email
Ashley.killin@akisqnu.org





7akisqnuuk Peer Support Team

Reach out for support, harm reduction supplies, transportation, and social connection.

**Available Monday to Thursday
from 12-8pm**

Call or text Jamie at (250) 342-5996
or Tegan at (250) 688-9483 for more information.



There are resources available to you if you need support.
Circle of Care: KUU-US First Nations and Aboriginal Crisis Line
Support is Available 24 Hours. Call 1-800-588-8717

Join us for pizza on National Pizza Day!

Community Strengthening Dinner

February 9th 5:00 - 7:00pm
Windermere Community Hall

All Indigenous families and staff from
Indigenous serving organization are welcome



7akisqnuuk First Nation



Ktunaxa Kinbasket
Child & Family
Service Society



I-SPARC

Move | Play | Compete



FSP Webinar Opportunity: Healing Our Relationship with Food

Join us **Feb 18 | 12-1:30 PM** for a grounding and inspiring session with **Raina Lutz**.

Dear Food System Champions,

Food is so much more than fuel — it carries our memories, culture, teachings, and medicine.

Join **Raina Lutz** for **Healing Our Relationship with Food**

A gentle, powerful masterclass exploring traditional foods, whole foods, and ancestral approaches to true wellness.

This experience isn't about rules, restriction, or perfection — it's about remembering what wellness is meant to *feel* like.

How to Participate:

The FSP Team

Morgan Anson

Provincial Coordinator, Engagement – Food Systems Program

Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council

Suite 208, 5462 Trans Canada Hwy |
Duncan, BC | V9L 6W4

P: 250.856.0873

E: manson@isparc.ca

www.isparc.ca

Register here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/TNZSY8rDR0ePNKZq0KikXw>

Open to all — share widely!

YOUR BENEFITS YOUR WAY



Ki?su?k kyukiyit Ɂapiniskit. We have had over 200 ?akisqnuknik sign up for member health benefits! Below are some resources to help download the app(s), sign up for CINUP, and submit claims. Click the video below, [my-benefits for Employees](#), to see a quick how-to tutorial. Or go to: <https://cinup.ca/my-benefits/>

We hope this helps make submitting your claims easier! If you are still having trouble, email healthcentre@aksignuk.org more assistance.



Submit Online

my-benefits eClaims® allows you to submit many of your Health and Dental claims online, quickly and easily – no paper claim forms to complete. Claim payments are deposited into your account within 48 hours of being processed.

It's easy:

- Select the service or product supplied (the type of claim)
- Enter the service date and amount charged by the provider
- Attach a digital copy of the original receipt and submit

It's as simple as that. You will receive an email notice when your Explanation of Benefits has been prepared and claim payments have been deposited into your account.

Not registered, [sign up now!](#) All you need is your Firm and Certificate number.

my-benefits for Employers



my-benefits for Employees



[LOGIN](#)

Submitting claims with your phone or tablet?

Download the *my-benefits* app. It's as simple as taking a picture of the receipt using your device.

Available on the
App Store
Download
to iPhone

Available on the
App Store
Download
to iPad



FAMILY



NIGHT



THURS. FEB. 5th

4:30pm – 6:30pm



Columbia Lake
Recreation Centre



Bring the family together and come join us every
first Thursday of the month

an awesome evening of food, games, and fun!
The Indigenous Policing Unit will be there to hang
out, play games, and get to know you. It's a great
chance to meet some friendly faces and have a
blast together!



Employment Opportunities

Whether you are a community member re-entering the workforce, navigating a career change, or a recent graduate, ?akisqnuuk First Nation (AFN) is dedicated to your success.

We offer training, coaching, mentorship, and professional development opportunities to support you.

While having all the qualifications listed in the posting isn't always necessary, the first step is to apply for an opportunity that interests you.

You can submit your application directly to Human Resources at hr@akisqnuuk.org. For more job postings, visit our [website](#).

?akisqnuuk First Nation has exciting new employment opportunities available! Visit our website to see the full requirements and submit your application.

www.akisqnuuk.org/employment-opportunities

AFN Enterprises LP

- AFNE Board of Director (Volunteer)
- Property Manager
- Recreation Facility Attendant (Casual)
- Natural Resources Manager

Finance

- Accounting Manager

Health & Wellness

- Medical Office Assistant
- Social Worker

Lands & Resources

- Natural Resources Manager



Feedback

?akisqnuuknik have a right to access quality services. Part of this means clients and families can voice perspectives, ask questions, and feel respected by AFN staff.

To provide feedback, whether a compliment or a complaint, send us an email at feedback@akisqnuuk.org, or you may also submit in a sealed envelope to the health centre front desk.



FOR PAKISQNUUK MEMBERSHIP

BAND MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND

CHIEF & COUNCIL REMUNERATION MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT SESSION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH

Pakisqnuuk First Nation Health Centre, Round Room
Dinner at 5p.m. meetings start time **5:30 - 7:30pm**

<https://akisqnuuk.org/governance>



ʔAKISQNUK ELDERS



ʔAKISQNUK FIRST NATION ELDERS MEETING

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 10 | 1PM TO 4PM
HEALTH CENTRE



For more information contact Eldene Stanley
ʔAkisqnuk Language, Culture Manager
Office Phone: 250.342.6379 extension: 3216
Email: eldene.stanley@akisqnu.org

SAVE THE DATE
KNC TKL QUARTERLY
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 2026 | 10AM
LIONS HALL



ʔAkisqnuk First Nation is hosting the next Ktunaxa Nation Council - Traditional Knowledge & Language quarterly meeting at the Lions Halls, Invermere. This event is intended for all Ktunaxa Elders and Knowledge Holders



WIYUGARDEN

PAKISQNUK



Feature Story

We Flew the Coop: A Shed Becomes a Home for Future Hens!

Our shed has been successfully moved from the AFN Health Center to its new home up at Wiyu Lodge. It has now begun its transformation into a new housing development for some egg producing hens. With a determined effort to upcycle and re-purpose existing infrastructure this chicken coop will be built with over 90% repurposed or reclaimed materials.



Now This Coop Needs Some Soul.

We're looking to bring life, colour, and character to the coop—and your creativity could make it happen!

Do you have:

- DIY or carpentry skills you'd like to practice?
- Artistic talents itching for a new project?
- A clever, fun, or meaningful name idea for the Chicken Coop?

Whether you're a builder, a painter, or simply someone with a great imagination —this coop could be your canvas!

If you'd like to get involved in any way, please contact:



james.sullivan@akisqnu.org



(705) 494-6550

Spotlight

More Free Greenhouse Training Available to Members!

The College of the Rockies has announced a second intake for the new Greenhouse Practices and Fundamentals micro-credential program, running February 4–27.

This course is an excellent opportunity for anyone looking to:

- Develop new horticulture and greenhouse skills
- Build confidence in food production
- Gain knowledge that supports both personal and community sustainability

Great news:

- ?akisqnu members: Course fees are fully covered
- Non-members: Registration is open at a cost of \$200



AFN PROJECT MANAGER BOB COTTERALL UPDATE MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY

DEAR ?AKISQNUK COMMUNITY,

We are now in the end of January and are looking at critical dates for the completion of the Project. Given the design stages and the construction to this point we are entering into the 6th year of the Project and will be completing within this Year.

Work is proceeding within the 3 components of the Project as described.

Administrative Component

Drywall is completed and the T-Barr ceilings are being put in place. Following will be the application of painting to the walls. Flooring will follow and before the walls and ceilings are buttoned up the mechanical and electrical systems will be tested. Exterior wood siding is now being applied to the exterior of the building.

Band Hall

Masonry work continues on the exterior wing walls, wiring for lighting in the ceiling is being installed with the wood ceiling started soon. The Commercial Kitchen and washrooms will start soon. The mosaic flooring is the last component to be completed and will not start until prior work activity is completed.

Health Component.

Drywall is started and with the completion of the drywall, painting , ceilings, flooring will be started. Mechanical and Electric systems will be tested and siding to the exterior is well underway.

Once all the components are completed the Furniture will be brought in.
In general the site exterior will be touched up, the septic system tested.

Happy New year !!

Bob Cotterall
Project Manager

COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO DROP BY THE PROJECT MANAGERS
OFFICE ANY TIME, TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THEY MAY HAVE.



250-342-6301



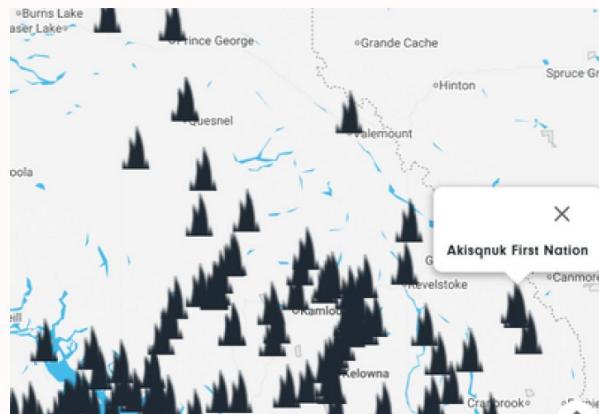
bob.cotterall@akisqnuuk.org

AKISQNUK FISRT NATION

BUILDING A FIRE-RESILIENT COMMUNITY

REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK AT HOME AND BEYOND

The FireSmart Program is a provincial initiative aimed at reducing the risk of wildfire damage to homes, communities, and forests. Everyone's actions count. Whether you're a homeowner, renter, or community leader, following FireSmart principles helps build a wildfire-resilient British Columbia.



SIMPLE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME AND PROPERTY

A few tips to FireSmart your home and property

- Move fire wood at least 10m away from your home.
- Remove combustable material from under deck and away from your home
- Keep a 15m non combustable zone around your home and deck
- Clean and maintain gutters and rooves
- Keep deck clear of leaves and debris
- Keep grass cut to below 10cm
- Install 3mm screens to all external vents to keep embers out
- Limb trees up to 2m and remove all latter fuels





CULTURAL & PRESCRIBED BURNS: REVITALIZING TRADITIONAL FIRE STEWARDSHIP

Indigenous communities have in many ways been leading wildland fire mitigation and prevention in Canada since time immemorial.

Over the ages, cultural burning on the homelands shaped the lives of humans, plants, animals, and Mother Earth herself. Through repeated burning practices, the Indigenous Peoples of the land were able to shape their own environment to their own specific needs.

Indigenous communities have various current and emerging fire stewardship practices in support of cultural

revitalization, resilience and pride, and emergency preparedness.

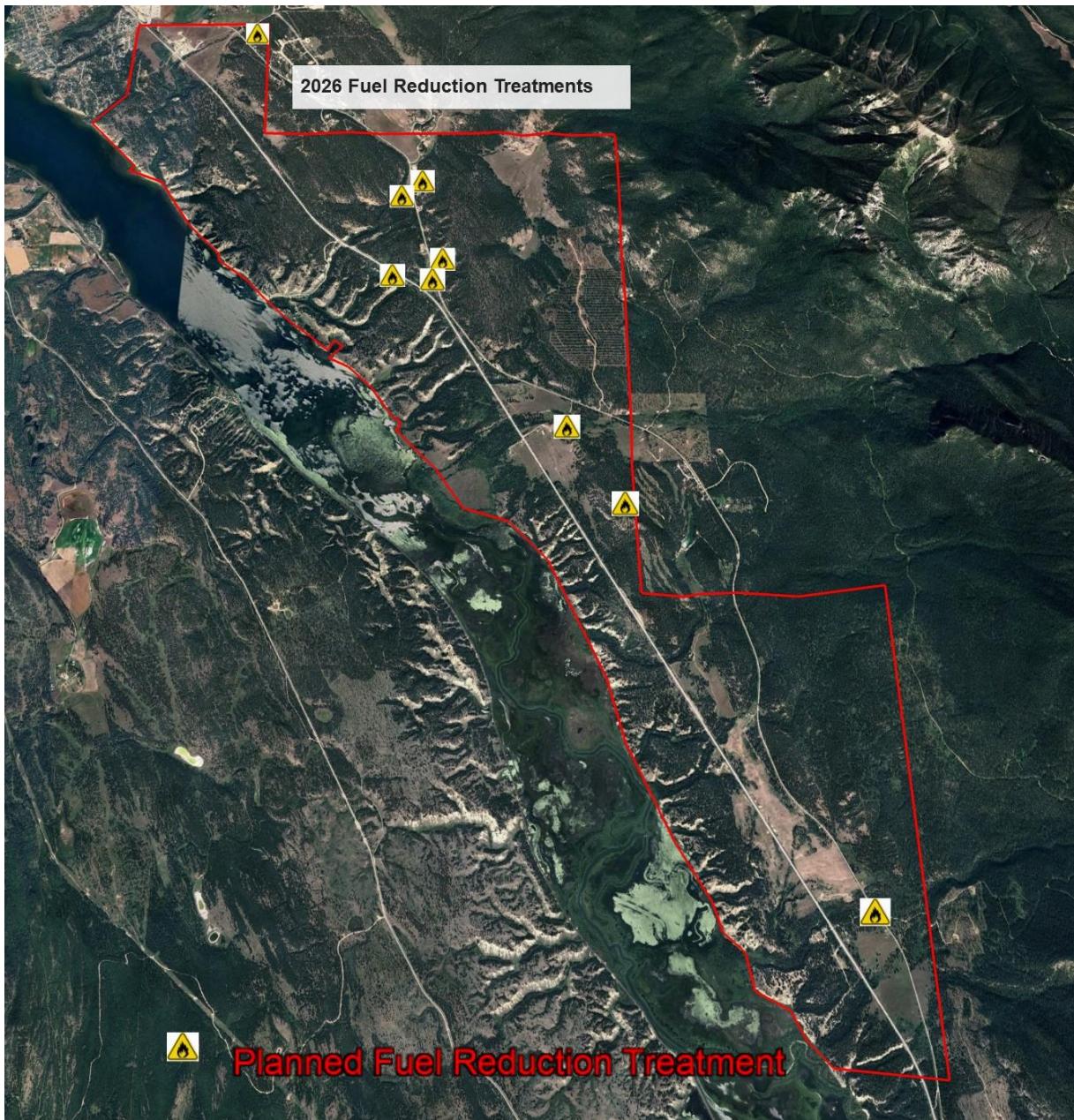
Fire is a natural, normal process in many ecosystems and is necessary to maintain a healthy forest and a diversity of plant and animal life.

However, a history of aggressive and highly effective wildfire suppression in the Province has resulted in a significant build-up of forest fuels; greater tree encroachment on grasslands; and, 'in-filling' of once open, dry forests. Aggressive fire suppression has both increased the risk of devastating wildfires and negatively impacted biodiversity and forest health

Lands & Resources

Nine Fuel Reduction Treatments Planned on Reserve in 2026

Recently Pákisqnuq First Nation was awarded a FireSmart grant to complete Fuel Reduction treatments on IR3 and we have recently tendered this work. We are hoping to get this work underway starting in January and going until the end of March. In addition, we have a crew working on the CBT Ecosystem restoration block and anticipate this work will be completed by the end of March 2026. Reducing the fuels in our community will help reduce the risk of future catastrophic damage caused by wildfires. We anticipate that smoke may be visible throughout our community throughout January, February, and March.





Cultural Conservation Value Program

Calling ?akisqnuknik and Ktunaxaniítik who are interested in participating in a Cultural Conservation Opportunity in collaboration with the AFN Lands department.

Come help learn, enhance, and preserve our ability to practice Ktunaxa culture in ?amak?is Ktunaxa. We will be going out to various sites to assess and monitor our ability to be Ktunaxa on the landscape. Berry picking, plant/material gathering, bird watching, wildlife use monitoring, game scouting, hunting, and fishing are some activities we can conduct to assess impacts to Ktunaxa cultural practices. It is a great chance to experience the territory, meet industry, gain contacts and work experience, and practice our Ktunaxa culture. Many of the activities will revolve around seasonal Ktunaxa cultural practices on the land.

There are opportunities for day or multi-day trips with small groups. We'd like these trips to lead to more and improved community engagement sessions both in community and on the land, as well as seek interested ?akisqnuknik who want to join our Lands Team.

If you are interested, please reach out! There is no age limit - students and families are invited to attend.

?akisqnuknik and Ktunaxaniítik can contact chris.joseph@akisqnu.org or (250) 342-6301 Ext. # 3841 for more information and to provide suggestions for areas that they need to know more about.



Ktunaxa Nation Council
Mail: 7825 Mission Road
Cranbrook, B.C. V1C 7E5
www.ktunaxa.org
Call: 250-489-2464
Fax: 250-489-2438

January 23, 2026

An open letter to residents of ?amak?is Ktunaxa

*Your homes are not at stake: Ktunaxa title and rights
can co-exist with fee-simple land ownership*

The governments of the Ktunaxa Nation in Canada—[?akisq̓nuk First Nation](#), [Paq̓am](#), [Yaqan Nuʔkiy](#), and [Yaq̓it Paʔknuq̓liʔit First Nation](#)—are deeply concerned with what is being communicated to British Columbians following the recent Cowichan Tribes Aboriginal title case. ([Cowichan Tribes v. Canada \[Attorney General\], 2025 BCSC 1490](#))

The [Ktunaxa governments](#) see much of the publicized rhetoric as being based on misunderstanding and/or misinterpretation of the facts related to Canadian law and the scope of the decision itself.

Setting the record straight

The Ktunaxa (Kootenay, Kootenai, Kutenai) Peoples are a distinct and unique Indigenous Nation who have used and occupied [?amak?is Ktunaxa \(Ktunaxa lands\)](#) in what is now Canada and the United States since the beginning of time. Ktunaxa Peoples have never ceded title to ?amak?is Ktunaxa—therefore Ktunaxa title and rights remain intact. (In fact, most B.C. First Nations have never ceded title to their lands and the resources therein and have not signed treaties.)

The legal reality in Canada is that Indigenous Peoples have inherent rights recognized in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. These rights were further recognized with the passing of the Federal *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, (2021), and the B.C. *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, (2019).

For decades, Supreme Court rulings have consistently acknowledged the existence of First Nations' title and rights, yet many First Nations governments are still forced into the courts to have their distinct rights recognized.

Our rights and responsibilities

One of the primary objectives of the Ktunaxa Peoples' self-determination and, by extension, the mandate of the Ktunaxa governments, is the stewardship of the lands, waters, air... across the whole of ?amak?is Ktunaxa, *for all living things*.



Ktunaxa Nation Council
Mail: 7825 Mission Road
Cranbrook, B.C. V1C 7E5
www.ktunaxa.org
Call: 250-489-2464
Fax: 250-489-2438

The Ktunaxa believe that a majority of people who have made ?amak?is Ktunaxa their place of residence also value the clean water, fresh air and abundance of nature that is still evident here.

We believe that, with proper management, the land's wealth can sustain all living things in perpetuity.

Our governments contend that the Ktunaxa Peoples' title and rights, including our responsibilities for land stewardship, can indeed co-exist with fee-simple land ownership.

Ktunaxa governments' negotiations are no threat to the average citizen, their property or their livelihood.

First Nations Peoples understand displacement and would not wish it on anyone.

We hope the government of British Columbia will provide residents of B.C. with assurance that their homes are not at stake.

"The Court in Cowichan Tribes called on the Province to enter into good faith negotiations with the Cowichan to reconcile the existence of third-party interests with Cowichan's Aboriginal title in a manner consistent with the honour of the Crown." Kate Gunn, October 27, 2025.

(Correcting Misconceptions: Aboriginal Title, Private Property, and the Cowichan Tribes Decision)



?AQ'AM



YAQAN NUKIY
LOWER KOOTENAY BAND



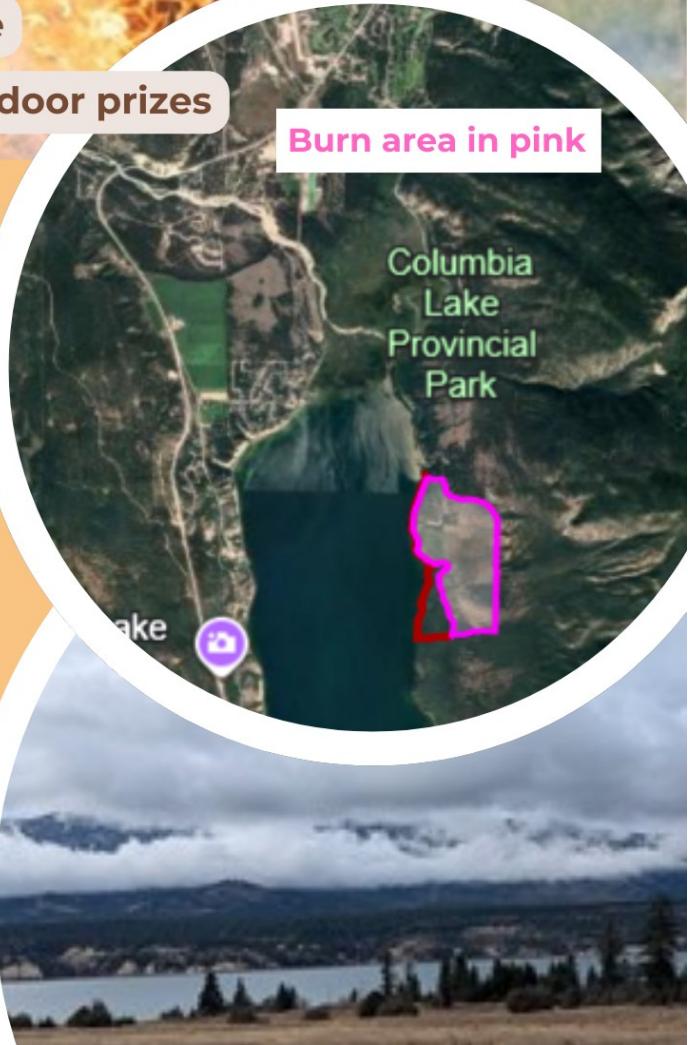
Yaqt?aknuqt?it

COME LEARN ABOUT the Lot 48 Burn

All Ktunaxa ?ak̄smaknik welcome

Celebration dinner with food and door prizes

The Lot 48 burn is part of the Ktunaxa Nation Council and ?akis̄nuk First Nation's kin̄quqanki Stewardship Project (formerly the Columbia Lake East Side [CLES] Stewardship Project). A culturally informed prescribed burn is planned for the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Lot 48 for March or April 2026 (depending on weather). An information session and dinner will be held March 12th, 2026 at 5:00 pm. KNC staff and fire ecologist, Colleen Ross, will be there to answer your questions and receive any feedback for this or future burns.



Thursday, 12th
March
5:00 pm



Our Location
Columbia Lake
Recreation Centre

Link to video from Kootenay ?a·kin̄uku TREX (prescribed fire training) 2025:
<https://blog.gov.bc.ca/bcwildfire/kootenay-%CA%94a%C2%B7kinq%CC%93uku-trex-prescribed-fire-training-exchange/>



FORDING RIVER EXTENSION (FRX) PROJECT

KTUNAXA-ONLY VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION

**Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2026
6:00-8:00 PM**

Location: Zoom (link provided after sign-up)

Who: Ktunaxa Citizens

About the Project

The Fording River Extension (FRX) Project, proposed by Elk Valley Resources (EVR – formerly Teck), has now entered the provincial and federal environmental assessment processes.

- Proposed project lifespan: 35 years
- Footprint: over 4,300 hectares

PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

This is a Ktunaxa-ONLY space to:

- Hear an overview of the FRX Project from EVR
- Learn what is known so far about potential impacts & ask questions

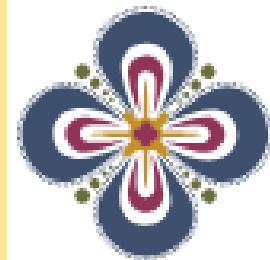


**How to
Participate**



Sign up to Receive the Zoom Link
& Information Packages:
landscommunityengagement@ktunaxa.org

Odds & Ends



FEDERAL Indian Hospitals SETTLEMENT

Federal Indian Hospitals Settlement – Claims Process Now Open

Claims Opened: January 27, 2026

The Federal Indian Hospitals Settlement claims process is now active. Community members who believe they may be eligible are encouraged to review the official details.

What You'll Find Online:

- Eligibility requirements
- Required documentation
- Step-by-step claim instructions
- Deadlines and updates

Learn More & Begin a Claim:

ihsettlement.ca



**WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU
VISITED KTUNAXAREADY.COM?**