Issue No. 10 | October 1st | 2026 Curated by the ʔAFN Core Services Department

ʔAKISQ̓NUK COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER | K̓UPAQU⇂AQPIʔK



Photo Credit: K R Austin

ISSUE INDEX:

01 ʔAkisq̓nuk Calendar
01 Employment Opportunities
07 Health & Wellness
10 Member Services
14 Lands & Resources
19 Community Safety Spotlight
21 Governance
22 Core Services
25 Letters from the Editors

ʔAkisq̓nuk Calendar

OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Family Night, 4:30 - 6:30pm	2	3
4	5	6	7 Youth Night, 5 - 6:30pm	8	9	10
11	12 Thanksgiving *Office Closed	13 Jordan's Principle Claim Support, 9am - 5pm More details to come	14 Youth Night, 5 - 6:30pm	15 Dr. Paige Clinic, 2 - 4pm Community Dinner, 4:30 - 6:30pm	16	17
18	19 Women's Circle, 5 - 8pm	20 Massage Clinic, 10 - 4pm	21 Youth Night, 5 - 6:30pm Foot Care Clinic, 9:45am - 3:15pm Wiyu Wednesday, 4pm	22	23	24
25	26 Women's Circle, 5 - 8pm	27 Acupuncture Clinic, 9am - 2:30pm	28 Youth Night, 5 - 6:30pm	29 Good Food Box, 12 - 3pm	30	31 Happy Halloween!

Health & Wellness: Member Services: Lands & Resources:

Governance: Core Services: Other:

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Administration
  - **Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Coordinator** Windermere, BC
- Governance
  - **Manager, Governance Support**, Windermere, BC
- Health and Wellness
  - **Community Nurse (LPN)** Windermere, BC
- Infrastructure
  - **Housing Maintenance Worker**, Windermere, BC
- Lands and Resources
  - **ʔAkisq̓nuk Guardians** Windermere, BC (Hybrid)
- AFN Enterprises LP
  - **Recreation Facility Attendant (Casual part-time)** Windermere, BC

If you are interested in any of our ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation employment opportunities, please visit our website to see the full requirements and submit your application.

Our Community Bookshelf: Book of the Month

"Wheetago War Stories"

By: Sean Tonelli

ʔAFN Communications Manager

"I'm shivering, cold, terrified. It is the end of the world and we have caused this by doing nothing."

It does feel like everything is getting a bit heavy, doesn't it? For Tlicho Dene author Richard Van Camp, the writing has seemingly been on the wall for quite some time. The prolific author of The Beast and Wheetago War, Richard Van Camp returns to the Wheetago War universe with Wheetago War Stories, a collection of seven short horror stories gathered together for the first time. Some of these stories were originally published as far back as 2013, and they are now being brought together in one easy-to-enjoy collection, courtesy of Alberta publisher Renegade Arts Entertainment.

If you're not familiar with the Wheetago stories, let me summarize it for you really quick:

Our ancestors told us not dig up the earth and use its resources for greed. We didn't listen until it was too late, and now the world is overrun by a marauding army of flesh-hungry Wheetago. What follows is a bloody, high intensity series of stories that the author was able to slightly rework to have a bit of through-line. This makes the transitions between tales less of a tonal whiplash and more of a tight-rope walk of terror.

The collection of seven stories each offer a different perspective on the early days of the fall of humanity. The opening tale, *On the Wings of This Prayer*, sees a survivor reminiscing of the old days, when the war was just a warning, and before the zombies took the dogs.

Van Camp's opener sets the tone of what follows, and his ability to elicit genuine heart-felt emotion (dead dogs will always get a strong response from me) while speaking of torn flesh and spilt blood, makes the pages turn even faster, as the reader can often feel they are trying to escape from the grips of the current page they are reading.

My favourite of the collection, *The Fleshing*, follows Bear delivering some "glad bags" of caribou hindquarters to a mate's house. As Bear travels through the rez, heading to an unknown house of horrors, recalling his vivid dreams of the last few nights, the tension ramps straight up. Without getting to much into spoilers, Bear needs to step up and become the hero he always wanted to be.

We aren't only blessed with words however. Van Camp teams up with artist Christoper Shy; Known for his pervious work with Van Camp in *Wheetago War Roth*, graphic novel work like *Dead Space*, and a totally amazing Escape from New York poster I really want to buy. Shy's mixed media approach to art fills the book with images that enrich the terror the reader has conjured in their head. If you have a few extra bucks, maybe buy a second copy so you can cut out the art and hang it. Or head to his website and get a print (or two) for yourself!

At just 172 pages, this collection is the perfect quick October read as we head into spookiness of the season. One-part cautionary tale, seven parts pure terror, Van Camp's *Wheetago War Stories* is a must read for the horror aficionado. Just remember… Only read out loud when there is snow on the ground…



Meet the Author: An Interview with Richard Van Camp



Our October issue felt like the perfect time to step into the darker side of storytelling. Halloween has a way of bringing certain stories to the surface... the ones about things that are hard to explain, the things that live just beyond what we can see, and the stories that have been carried forward through generations.

Richard Van Camp, an author and storyteller from Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, has spent much of his career exploring the power of stories, oral history, family, humour, and Indigenous knowledge. He is the author of more than 20 books and has worked across novels, short stories, children's literature, and graphic novels.

After thoroughly enjoying *Wheetago War Stories*, we had the opportunity to ask Richard about his work and the beauty of the dark and mysterious. This is what he said:

For someone picking up Wheetago War Stories, with no idea what they're about to encounter, how would you introduce the book without giving too much away?

"Wheetago War Stories is a collection of stories about how and why the wheetago return and take over the world, and the birth of the human militia who use Indigenous traditional knowledge to fight them. It's brutal, horrific and laced with hope. :)"

What made you want to bring these Wheetago stories together now in one collection?

"I've been publishing short stories about the wheetago in my previous short story collections and it was Alexander Finbow (my publisher at Renegade Arts Entertainment) who suggested that we put together the stories to compliment our graphic novel *Wheetago War: ROTH* as we work on book two with Christopher Shy: *Wheetago War: ROSS.*"

What draws you to the Wheetago as a storyteller, and what makes them such powerful figures for horror?

"I grew up hearing about the wheetago and their unsatiable hunger. I also grew up hearing how to face and defeat them. I wanted to share that knowledge with readers. At the same time, get ready for marrow freezing horror. :)"

Your horror often feels rooted in family, land, relationships and community rather than fear for fear's sake. What does horror allow you to explore that another genres might not?

"I think you have to cross lines for great horror, and there is a huge cultural taboo when it comes to talking about them, but, at the same time, we live in the time of the wheetago: look at the insatiable greed happening globally where profit is costing us the beauty and abundance of what we all know today."

Christopher Shy's artwork brings another creative voice into the collection. What was it like seeing these stories interpreted visually by another artist?

"I've been wanting to work with

Photo Credit: Willliam Au

Christopher Shy for over 10 years; ever since I saw his work in the *Pathfinder* graphic novel. Christopher Shy is one of my heroes as an artist. To see his artwork roll in weekly now for book 2 feels like Christmas every single day. I feel like the luckiest guy in the world to be able to work with him. He can take my words, my script, my ideas, and launch everything to where it deserves to be."

There is something powerful about traditional knowledge and old stories continuing to live through contemporary forms like horror, novels and graphic storytelling. How do you think about the relationship between tradition and creating something new?

"I always love watching movies or reading books or graphic novels and wondering, 'How on earth are they ever going to get out of this.' I love using our traditional knowledge to defeat the evil beings in my books. Whether it's "The Dead One" in my novel *BEAST* or the wheetago in my short stories and graphic novels, you'll see how I use our traditional knowledge to defeat them so that they're actually scared of us. :)"

Our October newsletter comes shortly after the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. What role do you believe storytelling can play in helping people understand truths that reports, statistics or history books sometimes cannot?

"My mother, Rosa, was stolen when she was five years old. She went to two residential schools in Fort Smith: Breynat Hall and Grandin College. Her number was 12. I love using my short stories, graphic novels and novels to show the fall out--the shadows--that we're still living under as second and third and fourth generation residential school survivors. We're the bridge generation. I'm 55 now and I see how hard we are all working to reclaim what was almost lost through residential schools, the 60s Scoop and the foster care system, etc."

We are entering an era where artificial intelligence can generate stories and polished language almost instantly. What does that make you think about the value of a human voice, lived experience and the power of words?

"My novel, *The Lesser Blessed*, is now 30 years old. I just received the new edition--the 30th edition, yesterday. It still moves readers because of my vulnerability and my courage in the five years honing it. The spirit of my courage and Larry Sole's vulnerability lives in this novel. My spirit is braided in every word. AI can't match that."

For ʔAkisq̓nuknik working in writing, art, photography, music or other creative fields, what advice or encouragement would you give someone who has something they want to create but hasn't quite found the confidence to put it into the world?

"The story is the boss. Our job is to show up every day and ask, 'What does this story deserve and want to be? Is this a carving? Is this a novel? Is this a poem? Is this a photo?' Our job is to show up every day and serve the story."

For readers who have already made their way through *Wheetago War Roth*, can you give us any hints about when we might expect the sequel? And is there anything, even a small tidbit, you can share about where the story goes next?

Oh baby! I just saw the first 10 pages of *Wheetago War: ROSS* yesterday and I actually gasped, 'Oh My God!' out loud in my office when I saw page 10. Get ready to see what the end of our world looks and feels like when you read it, and get ready for courage and hope."

After readers close the final page of Wheetago War Stories, what do you hope stays with them?

"Wake up and fight like hell. Fight for our mother the Earth. Fight for the beauty of what we have now and fight for future generations so they can enjoy the abundance we know now. Fight."

Want to read more and follow Richard's storytelling? You can find his books, stories, interviews, and other work online.

Website: richardvancamp.com

SoundCloud: Richard Van Camp on SoundCloud

YouTube: Richard Van Camp on YouTube



Art Credit: Christopher Shy

Salmon Festival 2026

By: Val Stackhouse

ʔAFN Events Coordinator

The weather could not have been better for the 2026 Salmon Festival. The morning started off a little chilly for those who attended the Sunrise Ceremony and pancake breakfast, but it quickly turned into a beautiful day for the celebration.

This was my first Salmon Festival, and watching the canoes arrive at James Chabot Park after making their way from Kinsmen Beach was nothing short of breathtaking. It was a powerful way to begin the day and a wonderful sight for everyone gathered along the shore.

A special thank you to Nasuʔkin Donald Sam, Councillor Faro Burgoyne, Dion Burgoyne, Jason Nicholas, Kevin McNab, Stephen Nicholas, Eleni Nicholas and Raoni Sam for representing ʔAkisq̓nuk on the water and for their impressive paddling skills.

More than 300 people attended this year's festival, making it a wonderful day of gathering, sharing, learning and celebration. The food at the Salmon Feast was delicious, and with the help of many willing hands, everyone was served quickly and smoothly.

Bonnie Harvey shared engaging storytelling, while Susapnana brought incredible energy through their drumming and singing and by leading the dances following the Salmon Feast. The potato dance was definitely a crowd favorite!





Photo Credit: Kolton Johnstone







Councillor Faro Burgoyne did a great job as MC alongside Devin Thomas, and Kevin Morrall kept the sound system running throughout the day.

Angela Jones, Kelly Macdonald, Brennon Macdonald, Ashley Killin, and the ʔAkisq̓nuk Land Guardians, including Jay Nicholas, Dion Burgoyne and Kevin McNab, helped look after the ʔAkisq̓nuk information booth and children's craft table.

Keely Austin, Margot Cain, Sue Smythe, Trisha Clowers, Paul Stackhouse, Cody Price and Russell Nicholas also provided valuable support throughout the day, helping with set-up and take-down, the early morning pancake breakfast, the hot dog tent and the welcome table.

The success of the Salmon Festival was made possible by the hard work of the organizing committee, including Faro Burgoyne, along with the wonderful team from Shuswap Band: Josh Martin, Suzie Thomas and Kaylene Earl.

Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, shared their knowledge and helped make the 2026 Salmon Festival such a memorable celebration.

We are already looking forward to the 2027 Salmon Festival!

HONOURING OUR ANCESTORS

INDIGENOUS YOUTH ART RESIDENCY



PAID OPPORTUNITY ($25/hour) Apply by Sept 28th!

Deadline Extended to October 3rd

What: A six week after school Indigenous youth art residency program that explores art practices while learning about grief, loss, culture, and community.

Who: Seeking Indigenous Youth living in the Invermere area Ages 12-24

Where/When: Wednesdays 4pm-6pm, Oct 21- Nov 25
Wiyu Lodge & ʔakisq̓nuk Health Centre
*pick up and drop off available as needed

Youth will participate in circles, artistic practices, and workshops that explore how grief and loss impact our bodies, communities, and homelands, and how we can honour our ancestors through telling our stories.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
HONOURINGOURANCESTORS@GMAIL.COM

ɬikxawiɂikimik
For all things to be connected

·FOUNDRY·
EAST KOOTENAY

Operated by:
Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child & Family Service Society

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Overseer: David Bach, Chief Administrative Officer

Learning Together at ʔAkisq̓nuk

Welcoming New Learning Opportunities into Our Community

By: Sammy Gonzalez
ʔAFN Medical Office Assistant

ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation is pleased to be working with College of the Rockies to create meaningful student placement opportunities here at ʔAkisq̓nuk. Through these placements, students can bring what they have learned in the classroom into a real community setting while learning directly from the people, programs and experiences around them.

Our staff will help guide, support and supervise students throughout their placements, beginning with opportunities within our Health & Wellness Department.

For ʔAkisq̓nuk, this is about more than providing work experience. It is an opportunity to build relationships, share knowledge and help future professionals better understand the communities they may one day serve.

And we are excited to welcome our first student:

Welcome, Rayna!

Rayna is a third-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at College of the Rockies and will be completing her nursing placement with us this fall.

Originally from Brandon, Manitoba, Rayna moved to the East Kootenay two years ago to pursue her nursing degree and has quickly come to enjoy calling the area home. When she isn't studying, she enjoys running, hiking and spending time outdoors.

During her placement, Rayna is looking forward to getting to know ʔAkisq̓nuknik, learning alongside our Health Centre team and gaining experience that she can carry with her throughout her nursing career.

If you see Rayna around the Health Centre or



community, please take a moment to say hello and help us give her a warm ʔAkisq̓nuk welcome.

We're happy to have you with us, Rayna, and we look forward to learning together.

Fresh Eggs Still Available for Members

Our Wiyu Lodge chickens have been busy, and we still have plenty of fresh eggs available through the New Health Centre!

If you'd like to pick some up, please call the Health Centre at 250-342-6379 to arrange pickup. **Cash only.**

There are lots available, so be sure to grab yours!





Public Health Nursing at the lnvermere Health Centre

By: Invermere Health Centre
Public Health Team

Our Public Health Nurses are here to support you and your family through pregnancy, early childhood, and beyond. We offer a variety of services to help you stay healthy, answer your questions, and connect you with the care and resources you need.

We can help with:

- Immunizations for children, youth, and adults.
- Sexual and Reproductive Health clinics, support, and referrals.
- Well Baby Clinics to check your baby's growth and development and answer any your questions or concerns.
- Prenatal and Postpartum support including breastfeeding support and breast pump rentals.
- Child Dental Health - Lift the Lip Program with our dental hygienist.
- Speech and Language referrals and support.
- TB screening and monitoring.
- Pediatric Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy referrals to help connect your child with additional supports when needed.

Whether you have a question, need some extra support, or aren't sure where to start, our Public Health Nurses are happy to help.

Contact the lnvermere Health Centre Public Health team to learn more about our services or to make an appointment at 250-342-2360.

Your lnvermere Public Health Nurses:



Paula

Originally from New Zealand, I moved to the Valley nearly 20 years ago and have been incredibly lucky to call it home ever since. I'm a mom to two amazing boys, aged 9 and 7, who keep life busy, fun, and always full of adventure.

I'm passionate about supporting individuals, families, and our community to live healthy lives. I love the variety that Public Health nursing brings and the opportunity to build meaningful relationships. It's incredibly rewarding to be part of a professi on that is focused on preventi on, educatio n, and helping people thrive.





Megan

I grew up on North Vancouver Island but have been lucky enough to call the Columbia Valley home for the past six years. I'm currently covering a maternity leave through December 2026, and I've really enjoyed getting to know the community and the families I've had the opportunity to work with.

I discovered public health while I was in nursing school and was immediately drawn to its focus on health promotion, prevention, and supporting families. I especially love working with moms and babies during the postpartum period and having the opportunity to provide support and guidance during such an important time in their lives.

Outside of work, I love getting outdoors and enjoying everything the beautiful Columbia Valley has to offer. In the summer, I spend as much time as I can mountain biking, hiking, rock climbing, and camping. On winter weekends, you'll usually find me chasing my friends around the slopes at Panorama. I feel very fortunate to live in such a beautiful place and to be part of such a wonderful community.

Welcoming Back Wellness Programming

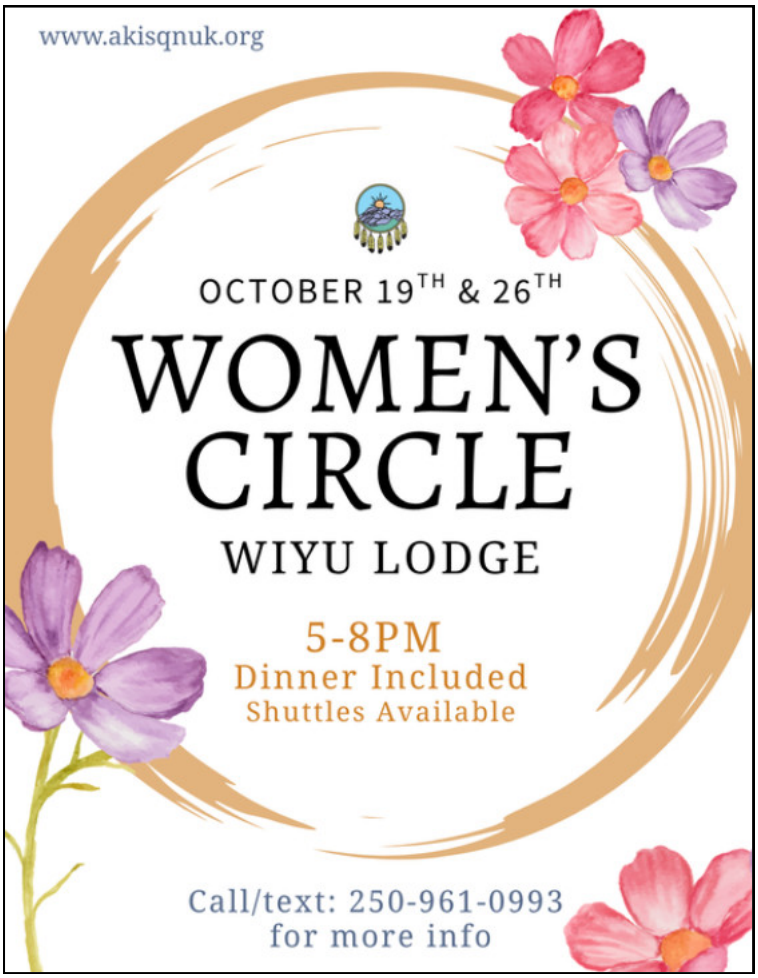
The Health & Wellness Department is welcoming back two community favourites this season: Women's Circle and WIYU Wednesday.

Women's Circle, hosted by the Andrea Sakamoto, offers ʔAkisq̓nuknik who identify as women an opportunity to spend an afternoon together at WIYU Lodge. The gatherings provide space to mingle and enjoy conversation around a chosen topic in the company of other women from the community.

WIYU Wednesday, hosted by the Health & Wellness Peer Support Team, is a monthly evening gathering open to all ʔAkisq̓nuknik. With dinner, conversation, and a few fun activities, WIYU Wednesday is a chance to spend an evening connecting with others in the community. Come down and enjoy yourself, you won't regret it!

Rides to these gatherings can be coordinated through the Health Centre phone line (250-342-6379) for those who need transportation.

The Health & Wellness Department looks forward to welcoming everyone back.







MEMBER SERVICES

Director: Victoria Stevens

Memories with an Elder: Marguerite Cooper

By: Gayle Michel

ʔAFN Housing Manager

I would like to share a story of the time Marguerite Cooper and myself went on a road trip to Alhambra, Alberta.

We were both working at the Lakeshore Campground and Marguerite often told stories of her mom and other family members when she lived in Alhambra. I took the hint and asked her if she would like to go there for a visit.

She was very excited and off we went. I have never been to that area so all was new to me. On our way we entered into the Banff National Park. They asked us to pay a park fee, a what? I said we were going to a cultural event and they said no charge. We attended a mini powwow and that was when I first met MLA Doug Clovechok. We had a great time visiting with Pikani drum group. When it was over, we continued on to Alhambra, the place her mom was buried. She had a nice visit with her mom then we went to visit her trailer where her son lived. He was not home so we went on the Rocky Mountain House. We were just getting a room at the Best Western Inn when a storm hit. The wind, rain and lightning were fierce. Trying to sleep was not possible because it sounded like being inside a popcorn machine.



Photo Credit: Gayle Michel

The next day was beautiful, lots of sunshine. We then continued back home. A great time spent with an Elder. I would like to wish Marguerite Cooper a very happy birthday.

Ask an Elder: Newsletter Callout

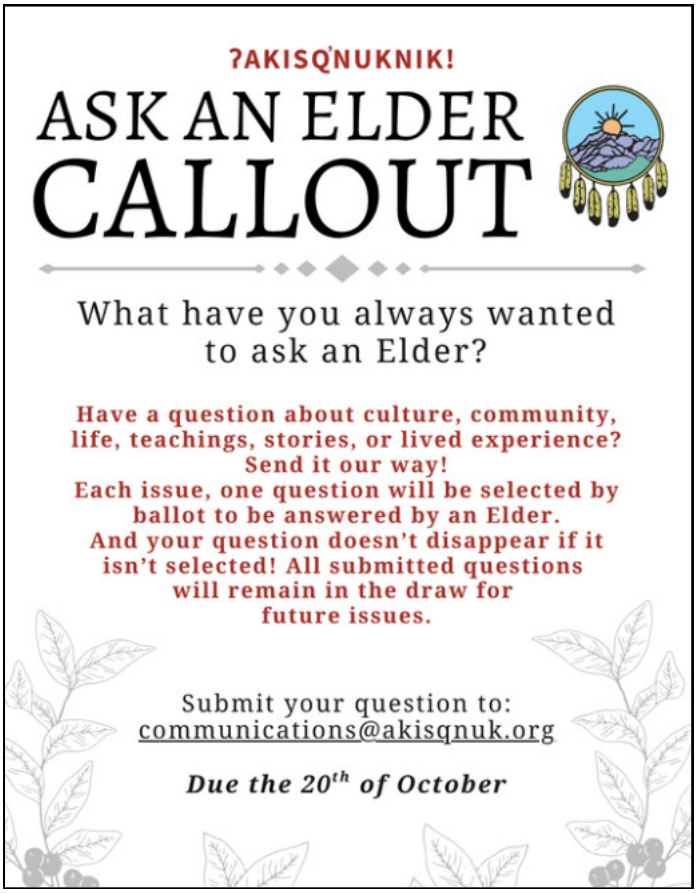
Sometimes there are questions we carry with us, things we have wondered about, stories we want to hear, or teachings we would love to learn more about.

With *Ask an Elder*, we're creating a space in the newsletter for ʔAkisq̓nuknik to ask those questions. Questions can be about culture, community, life experiences, teachings, stories, or anything you've been curious to ask an Elder. There is no need for your question to be complicated. Sometimes a simple question can open the door to a meaningful conversation.

For each issue, one submitted question will be selected by ballot to be answered by an Elder. While only one question will be selected for each issue, every question submitted will remain in the draw for future issues. So if your question isn't chosen this time, it may still have its moment in a future newsletter.

We're looking forward to seeing what questions come forward and giving our Elders a space to share their knowledge, experiences, stories, and perspectives with the community.

Have a question? Send it to the Communications team at communications@akisqnuk.org.



Community Strengthening DINNER



October | 15 | 4:30-6:30 PM

Come together with friends, family and neighbours for a community gathering filled with laughter and chilli dinner!

All Indigenous families and staff of Indigenous organizations are welcome!

AFN Band Hall

3050 Hwy 93/95, Windermere BC, V0B 2L2

ʔAKISQNUK FIRST NATION

Ktunaxa Kinbaskets Child & Family Service Society

Embracing Our Culture

Columbia Lake Recreation Centre

ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation

FAMILY FUN NIGHT!

THURSDAY OCTOBER 1ST
4:30 - 6:30PM



Bring the family together and come join us every first Thursday of the month at the Columbia Lake Recreation Centre for an awesome evening of food, games, and fun!
The Indigenous Policing Unit will be there to hang out, play games and get to know everyone. It's a great chance to meet some friendly faces and have a blast together!

3050 Highway 93 95, Windermere BC

Information Sharing Opportunity for First Nations Parents

Parent Support Regional Workshops

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) are pleased to invite First Nations parents to attend the Parent Support Regional Workshops.

This one day, in-person session will bring parents together to share knowledge, build connections, and strengthen the role and support that parents play in their children's education and success. Participating parents will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about tools and resources developed to help parents support their children's education, how families can get involved, and how parent and family engagement contributes to better outcomes for student success.
- Share ideas and strategies for creating positive routines, encouragements and connections at home that support learning and confidence.
- Learn from other First Nations parents, exchange ideas, and build a supportive network with other parents to share with your community and local parents club.
- Explore approaches to encourage regular attendance and engagement in school, discuss ways to address the challenges, and learn about education rights and responsibilities as well as career and education planning.

LOCATIONS & VENUE:

October 15th, 2026 – Kamloops
Double Tree by Hilton Hotel
399 St. Paul St., Kamloops, BC V2C 2J5

October 16th, 2026 – Richmond
Hilton Vancouver Airport Hotel
5911 Minoru Blvd, Richmond, BC V6X 4C7

October 22nd, 2026 – Prince George
Courtyard by Marriott Hotel
900 Brunswick St., Prince George, BC V2L 0E3

**Hotel booking code and details will be provided to everyone who is accepted as a participant via email.*

REGISTRATION

Please register for one of the sessions using the following link:
26-27 Parent Support Workshops REGISTRATION

** Space is limited and participants will be accepted on a first-come-first served basis. If session is full, you will be directed to our waitlist. Leave room in your suitcase for resources.*

ELIGIBILITY

Up to two First Nations parents per each First Nation community will be eligible to attend one of the scheduled workshops. Please register for the session **closest to your community.**

EVENT CONTACT

CrystalAsham,Coordinator, Parent and Community Engagement crystala@fnesc.ca

fnesc FNSA
First Nations Education Steering Committee
First Nations Schools Association

LANDS & RESOURCES

Director: Lorne Shovar

Kootenay ʔa·kinq̓uku TREX – Summary So Far

By: Sarah Budd

BC Wildfire Service ED Manager

Kootenay ʔa·kinq̓uku TREX got underway in the Canal Flats area on Monday September 14. All participants were welcomed to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa by Nasuʔkin Don Sam and introduced to the TREX facilitator group. The first day of the delivery was focused on helping participants understand and begin to connect to the land they are on, so after introductions, Mara Nelson gave a session on Ktunaxa language. In the afternoon, participants drove to ʔaq̓am to visit the Ktunaxa Interpretive Centre and learn about Ktunaxa culture and history.

The next day, participants were lucky to experience a walk-about with ʔakisq̓nuk elder Alfred Joseph, who educated the group about the local plant system, the community and living off the land. In the afternoon Jesse Thomas and Claire Peyton from Ktunaxa Nation Council and Ian Tamasi from Pathways Archaeological Cooperative conducted a site visit with an archaeological lens, identifying pit houses and other evidence of human use sites along the east side of Columbia Lake.

On Wednesday, participants with less previous fireline experience went through fire safety and suppression fundamentals, covering off topics like radio communications, water delivery systems and safe drip torch use. Those who have more experience visited the planned burn sites to familiarize themselves with the terrain and start to develop site-specifi implementation plans. Thursday focused on fire effects monitoring (FEMO), with an introduction to the topic in general, and a special session on culturally informed FEMO provided by Attila Nelson from the First Nations' Emergency Services Society (FNESS). This was followed up with field-based sessions at Kootenay River Ranch, where participants got to complete hands-on FEMO work to solidify their learning.



Moving into the weekend, with promising weather in the forecast and much of the required baseline knowledge and theory covered, Kootenay ʔa·kinq̓uku TREX will pivot into live prescribed fire delivery. There are four burns linked to the TREX delivery in the East Kootenay Area:

Wilmer area burn

Location: about 1 km north of Wilmer
Primary goal: ecosystem restoration
Size: up to 36.8 hectares

ʔAkisq̓nuk / CBT burn

Location: about 7.5 km southeast of Windermere
Primary goal: ecosystem restoration
Size: up to 19 hectares

Kootenay River Ranch

Location: 8 km south of Canal Flats
Primary goal: ecosystem restoration
Size: up to 30 hectares

Kaq̓a‡ikwaʔit

Location: adjacent to the Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq‡iʔit (Tobacco Plains) band office
Primary goals: cross-training, capacity development, and community risk reduction
Size: up to 46.5 hectares

ʔAkisq̓nuk Guardian Helps Lead ʔAkisq̓nuk Burn

By: Angela Jones
ʔAFN Guardians Manager



Photo Credit: Janice Dallaire

ʔAkisq̓nuk Guardian Dion Burgoyne recently participated in the BC Wildfire Service's TREX prescribed-fire training program from September 13-September 25. As part of this experience, Dion had the honour of lighting the ignitions for the ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation prescribed burn on September 23rd, 2026 in the CBT block.

The burn builds on years of ecosystem-restoration work in the CBT Block, including thinning dense forest to reduce fuel loading and encourage the return of grasses and other understory plants. This work improves winter forage and habitat for elk and other ungulates while supporting healthier forests and reducing wildfire risk. Having Dion, an ʔAkisq̓nuk member and Guardian, put fire on the land was a meaningful expression of Nation-led stewardship and a proud step toward strengthening capacity to care for ʔamak (land) and ʔa·kxam̓is q̓api qapsin (all living things).

Calling My Spirit Home: Women in Indigenous Leadership

Theresa Kains
ʔAFN Guardian

This program was beautiful, just like all the Indigenous women who participated. It was a meaningful opportunity to connect with and support Indigenous women from across Turtle Island. Although we came from many different Nations and communities, we shared common goals: supporting ourselves, our loved ones, our communities, and wanting to see our people thrive.

One thing that became clear throughout the week is that Indigenous women are natural leaders. Leadership is not always about being the loudest voice in the room or the most visible person. Leadership takes many forms. Sometimes it looks like listening, supporting, nurturing, teaching, advocating, or simply showing up for others.

Before sharing about my experience, I want to express my gratitude. Thank you to my husband, Kevin McNab, my parents, Shauna and Mason, my siblings, and all those who created a safe and loving space for my children while I was away. Thank you as well to my community and ʔAkisqnuk First Nation for investing in me. Because of your support, I was able to invest in myself and attend Calling Your Spirit Home: Women in Indigenous Leadership at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

Attending this program had been a goal of mine for nearly two years. A friend had recommended it, and it sounded like a beautiful opportunity to connect with other Indigenous women who carried similar hopes, responsibilities, and dreams for their families and communities. After



Photo Credit: Theresa Kains

waiting and exploring sponsorship opportunities, I approached my director at the time about attending as a professional development opportunity. I was grateful to receive their full support, and soon I found

myself registered for the September 13-18 program.

My journey began with a stop at Marble Canyon. I had promised myself that the next time I passed through, I would stop and explore rather than simply drive by. Keeping that promise felt significant. I walked the trails, took photographs, and began my adventure by honoring a commitment I had made to myself.

This was my first time staying at the Banff Centre. While I had visited Banff in the past for meetings or short trips, I had never truly experienced what makes it such a special place. Upon arriving, I slowly made my way through registration and settled into my room. It was simple, comfortable, and exactly what I needed. I quickly noticed that the Centre was like a small community of learners. People from many different backgrounds had gathered there to learn, create, and grow. Although I did not take advantage of all the amenities, such as the pool, library, or rock-climbing wall, perhaps that is something I can explore on a future visit.

Then it was time to meet the other women.

There is something special about entering a space and knowing you are exactly where you are meant to be. We were there to connect, support one another, learn from each other, and work on the journey of "calling our spirits home."

As Indigenous women living and working within fast-paced systems that are often not designed for us, many of us arrived carrying heavy responsibilities. We spend so much of our lives giving to our families, communities, organizations, and Nations that it can be easy to leave pieces of ourselves behind. This gathering offered us a chance to slow down, reconnect to the land, ground ourselves, and remember who we are.

Throughout the week, we were reminded of the teachings, tools, and strengths that have been passed down through generations. We reflected on how these gifts continue to support us in our work and our lives. We were encouraged to care for ourselves in the same way we care for others and to recognize that nurturing our own spirits is also an act of leadership.

We were fortunate to learn from remarkable facilitators and knowledge keepers. We were honored to spend time with Elder Alice Kaquitts of Goodstoney Nation and Elder Mary Jane Jim of Whitehorse, Yukon. Their teachings, wisdom, and generosity enriched our experience. We also learned from accomplished facilitators whose work continues to empower Indigenous communities and future generations.





The first day focused on reconnecting to the Earth through cultural practices and reflection. Each day built upon the last, encouraging us to reconnect with ourselves, our identities, our purpose, and our relationships. Through ceremony, teachings, storytelling, and shared experiences, we strengthened our spirits and remembered the importance of balance in our lives.

By the end of the week, I had formed new connections with relatives from across Turtle Island, reconnected with myself, and strengthened my commitment to serving my community. I left with a renewed sense of purpose, grounded in the teachings and ceremonies that have sustained Indigenous peoples for generations.

Most importantly, I was reminded that caring for our spirits is not separate from leadership. It is a necessary part of it.

HUŁ ʔANAK¢IYAŁA
LET'S GO HUNT FOR OURSELVES

Honoring Tradition • Protecting Rights • Respecting the Land

Status Indians:
(registered under the Indian Act)

- Can hunt, trap,and freshwater fish withouta licence in BC. ¢inałuqławut, v. to go fishing.
- Must be harvesting for food, social, or ceremonial purposes.
- Do not need to follow season, gear restriction, or quota/bag limits.
- Must do so within traditional territory and follow:
  - Conservation rules
  - Public health & safety laws
  - First Nation regulations

Recommended: Carry your status card and PAL during harvesting. It will make it easier if a Conservation Officer approaches you.

Non-Status Indians:

- Are not recognized under the Indian Act, but still identify as Indigenous.
- Must hold a licence to hunt, trap, or fish in BC.
- May still have Aboriginal rights, but risk being charged if harvesting without a licence.

To stay safe legally, it's advised to purchase appropriate licences and comply with regulations.

- All hunters require a Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) for firearms.
- See BC's 2024-2026 regulations HERE, or gov.bc.ca

Know the Boundaries:

- Wecanhunt anywhere.Whenwe leave ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, we respectfully follow local protocols and seek permission from local First Nations, usually friends or extended family.
- Hunter Safety Training: Recommended, but not required for Status Indians residing in BC.
- Outside Traditional Territory: Must contact and obtain permission from the territory holders and follow all hunting regulations (except licensing). For safety, do not hunt within 400m of residences, and be aware of other no shooting areas.

Non-Resident First Nations: Treated as non-resident hunters — must seek permission from the local Nation and follow all regulations.

Conservation notes:

Someexamplesof conservationrules that apply to Aboriginal hunters and fishers are:

- No hunting of species that are closed to all hunters.
- No wasting carcasses.
- No killing species listed in the Species at Risk Act, or endangered species.

This document has accurate information as of October 10, 2025.

HUŁ ʔANAKɸIYAŁA
LET'S GO HUNT FOR OURSELVES

Honoring Tradition • Protecting Rights • Respecting the Land

Traditional Protocols & Hunter Responsibilities from ʔAkisq̓nuk
Naʔsukin Donald Sam:

Yaqałhankatiłiłkina amak?
“Our people carefor theland, thelandcares for our people.” — Ktunaxa teaching.

- Take only what you need
- Hunt with knowledge passed down by Elders
- Share with community in a spirit of abundance
- Be mindful of local animal populations. Conservation is all of our responsibility Some herds experience higher stress than others, plan your hunt accordingly
- Be mindful of animal reproduction - hunting females during gestation or rearing their young is frowned upon. Remember you must eat what you kill - this includes the fetus
- You can fish at night, but don't hunt at night, it’s a safety thing
- CWD has been found in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, it is encouraged to participate in the BC testing program

Hunting Protocols on Reserve

- No hunting permitted at night
- Non-members are not permitted to hunt on-reserve, even when accompanied by a member
- Seek guidance from Elders on how to hunt respectfully and responsibly

COMMUNITY SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

Janicė Dallaire, ʔAFN Emergency Program Manager

Halloween Safety: Help Keep Our Children Safe

By: Sean Tonelli

ʔAFN Communications Manager

Halloween is a night for costumes, treats, laughter and making memories. As young ʔAkisq̓nuknik head out to celebrate, we can all help make sure everyone gets home safely.

With more children and families out after dark, drivers are asked to slow down and stay alert, especially in residential areas and places where people may be walking along the roadside. Costumes can sometimes make children harder to see, and excitement can mean someone steps onto the road unexpectedly. Taking a few extra seconds can make a big difference.

Families can also help by making costumes easier to see with reflective tape, lights or glow sticks. Encourage children to stay together, use flashlights, look both ways before crossing, and avoid walking alone whenever possible.

If older youth are travelling to Invermere, Radium or another community for Halloween activities, consider carpooling with friends or family rather than having multiple vehicles on the road. Planning rides ahead of time also means everyone knows how they are getting home.

Another option this year is the Columbia Valley Evening Bus. If the route and schedule work for your plans, it may be a convenient way for youth and families to travel for evening activities without needing another vehicle on the road.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to talk with young people about where they will be, who they are travelling with and what time they are expected home.

Halloween should be fun for everyone. By slowing down, looking out for one another and planning our transportation ahead of time, we can help keep our young safe while they enjoy the night.

Have fun, stay visible and look out for each other.



Photo Credit: pixelshot



Late Bus Launched September 22

By: Sean Tonelli

ʔAFN Communications Manager

New evening transit pilot program aims to connect communities and prove demand for expanded service.

Lack of transit options has made getting around difficult in the Columbia Valley. There is another option coming September 22nd – the Late Bus.

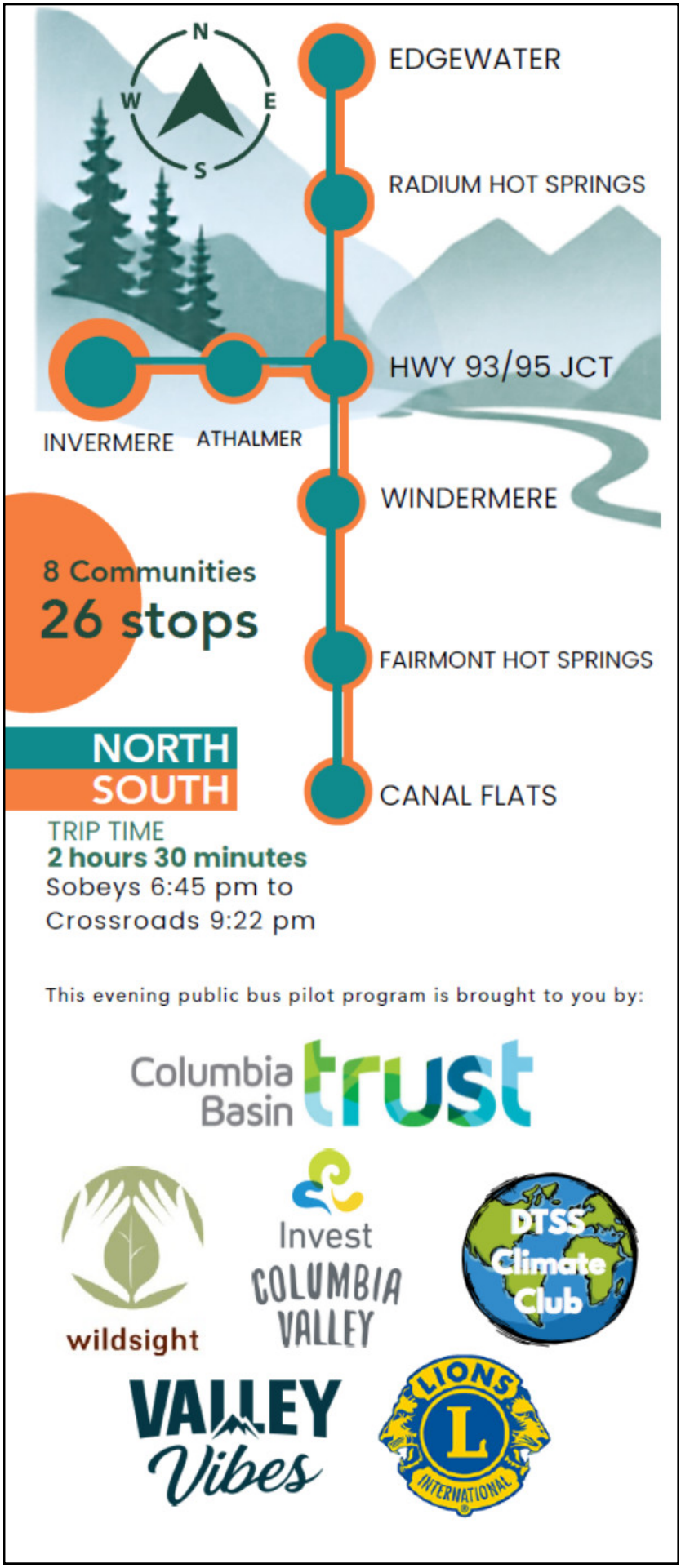
The Late Bus will connect Canal Flats, Fairmont, ʔAkisq̓nuk, Windermere, Invermere, Radium and Edgewater operating between 6:45 and 9:20 p.m. The service is available to everyone — including students, residents, part-time residents and visitors. The pilot runs September 22 to November 13, with Valley Vibes providing a 24-seat passenger bus. Fares are $2.50.

ʔAkisq̓nuk students attending school, and members with jobs or appointments in Invermere will now have another way home in the evening. The bus leaves Invermere from various locations between 7:45 – 8:00 pm, heading south to Canal Flats with many stops in between. The Late Bus will also stop at the Columbia Lake Recreation Center at 9:15 pm on its return trip to Invermere, making it easier for all valley residents to utilize the Center for sports and activities.

The DTSS Climate Club, supported by Wildsight Invermere (the organizers), have been working for years to launch the transit pilot program. Now, the organizers hope the community will help demonstrate that evening transit is needed. Strong ridership could help turn the pilot into a permanent expansion of evening service — ride the late bus and help prove there is a need for this evening transit service!

The project's organizers thank Columbia Valley Economic Development, Valley Vibes and the Lake Windermere & District Lions for helping bring the project over the finish line, as well as the Village of Canal Flats, Village of Radium and communities in Electoral Areas F and G for their support through ReDi Grants and Grants-in-Aid.

Information about fares, routes and schedules is available here:
https://investcolumbiavalley.ca/invest/columbia-valley-evening-bus/



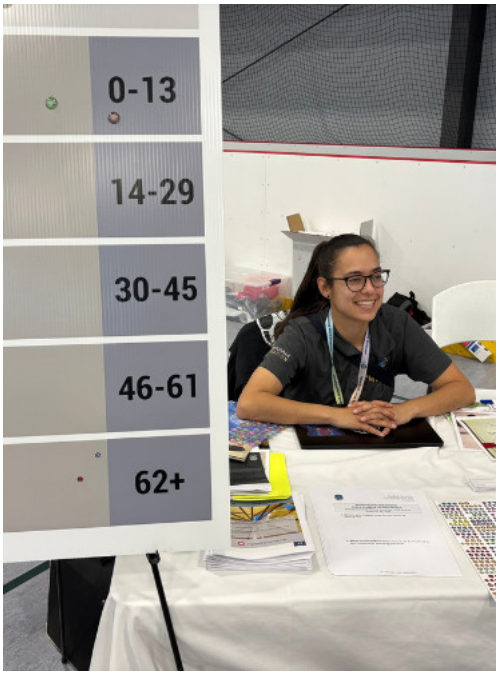
GOVERNANCE

Overseer: David Bach, Chief Administrative Officer

Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) Update

By: Lisa Cannady

ʔAFN Industry Engagement Coor.



Comprehensive community planning is a holistic process that enables a community to build a roadmap to sustainability, self-sufficiency and improved governance capacity.

The CCP is a community-led approach to planning, where the process is driven and owned by ʔAkisq̓nuknik rather than by a small group or committee. A CCP provides the means for the community to explore its core values, and to establish a vision for the future and work toward achieving it.

This past year the CCP Working Group has been working hard in the background to create the backbone that is necessary to be able to do the real work. This includes the Terms of Reference, Project Charter (the must haves and what success is), Covenants (how we will behave and treat each other) and the CCP Workplan.

We have also been slowly asking members questions that we hope will lead to more meaningful discussion and connection, and eventually create a CCP that will move the Nation forward.

Our North Star is: What is your biggest hope for the future of ʔAkisqnuk? We have also been asking 'what would make it easier for you to be involved in the planning process?'.

There are many areas that shape the future of ʔAkisq̓nuk, for example Governance and Self-Determination; Traditional Knowledge, Language and Culture; Education & Employment; Economic Prosperity; Health & Wellness and Lands & Resources.

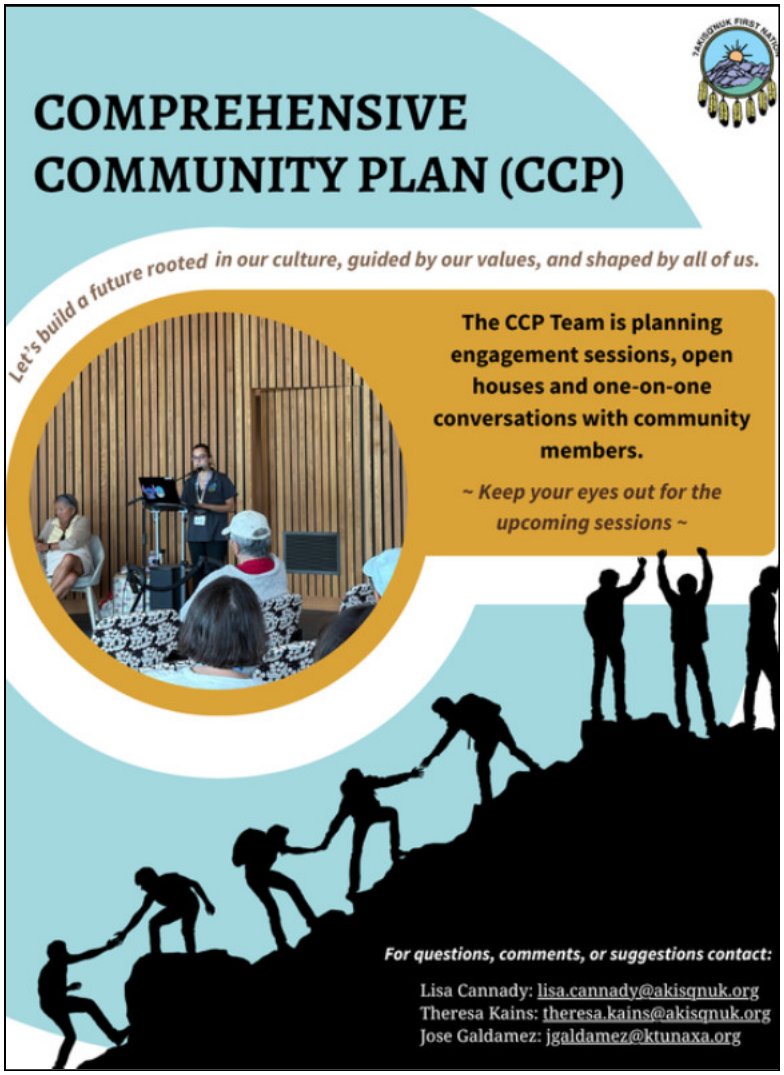
The CCP is building on earlier planning that was done in 2010, 2016 and 2018 which included engagement with leadership, staff and member voices. We want to honour the work done before us as we continue on this journey.

We have completed an ʔAkisq̓nuknik. engagement plan, a list of questions for you to think about the future of ʔAkisq̓nuk, and the team is now ready to begin engagement sessions, open houses and one-on-one conversations with ʔAkisq̓nuknik.

A successful CCP will empower ʔAkisq̓nuk to create its own future, become more self-aware and have the tools to respond to change in an effective manner.

This project is mostly funded through Indigenous Services Canada.

For more information, contact lisa.cannady@akisqnuk.org, or jgaldamez@ktunaxa.org



CORE SERVICES

Director: Donna Melnychyn

2026 Kelowna Communications Engagement Session

By: K R Austin

ʔAFN Administrative Assistant

A huge thank you to the ʔAkisq̓nuknik who had the opportunity to join Changemakers at the Communications Engagement Sessions.

These photos highlight the Kelowna session and some of the ʔAkisq̓nuknik who participated and shared their time and perspectives.

A special thank you to Renn and Donna Lapierre, Tish and Sharon Lovely, and Roger Guimont for participating and representing ʔAkisq̓nuk at the session.

Thank you for being part of the conversation!







Photo Credit: Sharon Lovely

Continue Your Ktunaxa Language Journey...

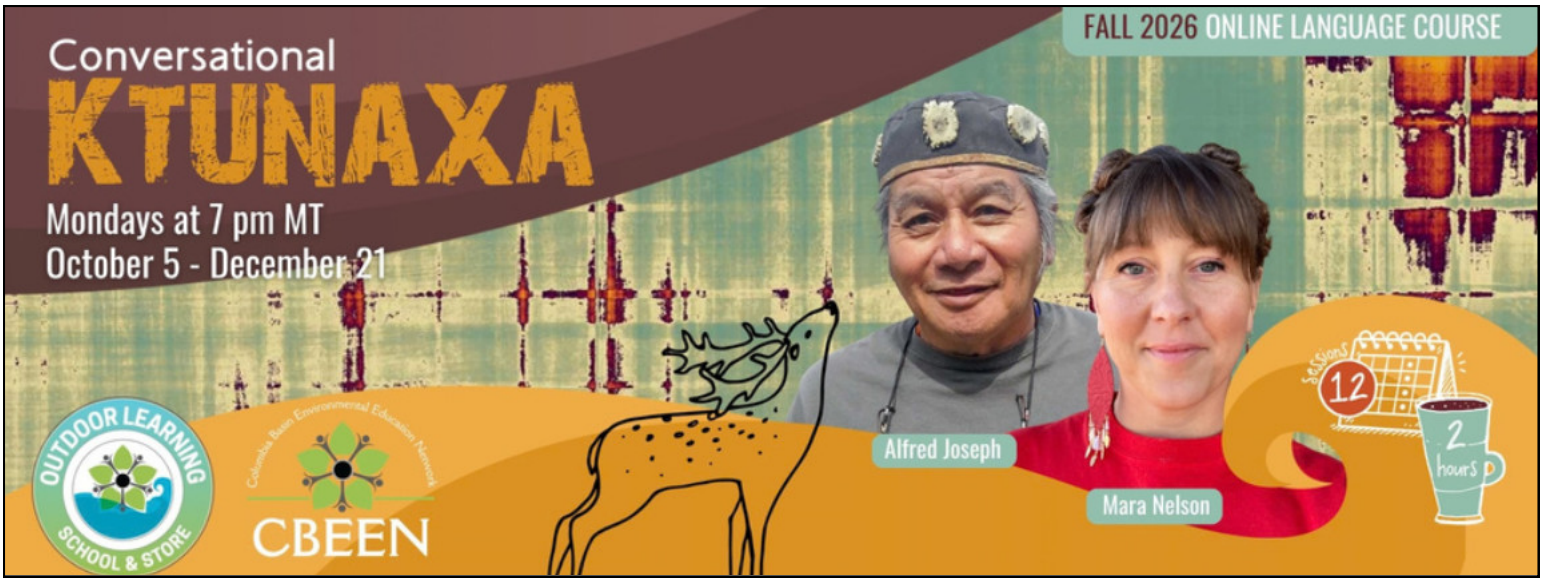
By: K R Austin

ʔAFN Administrative Assistant

There's still time to join Mara Nelson and Elder Alfred Joseph for this fall's Conversational Ktunaxa Language Course!

This 12-week course offers two-hour virtual sessions once a week, providing an opportunity to continue building your Ktunaxa language skills in a welcoming and supportive learning environment.

The course is designed for learners who have taken an introductory course or have a basic understanding of some elements of the language. Come learn, practice, and connect through Ktunaxa language this fall!





Showcasing ʔAkisq̓nuknik Creativity

There is so much creativity and talent within our community, and we want to make more space to showcase it.

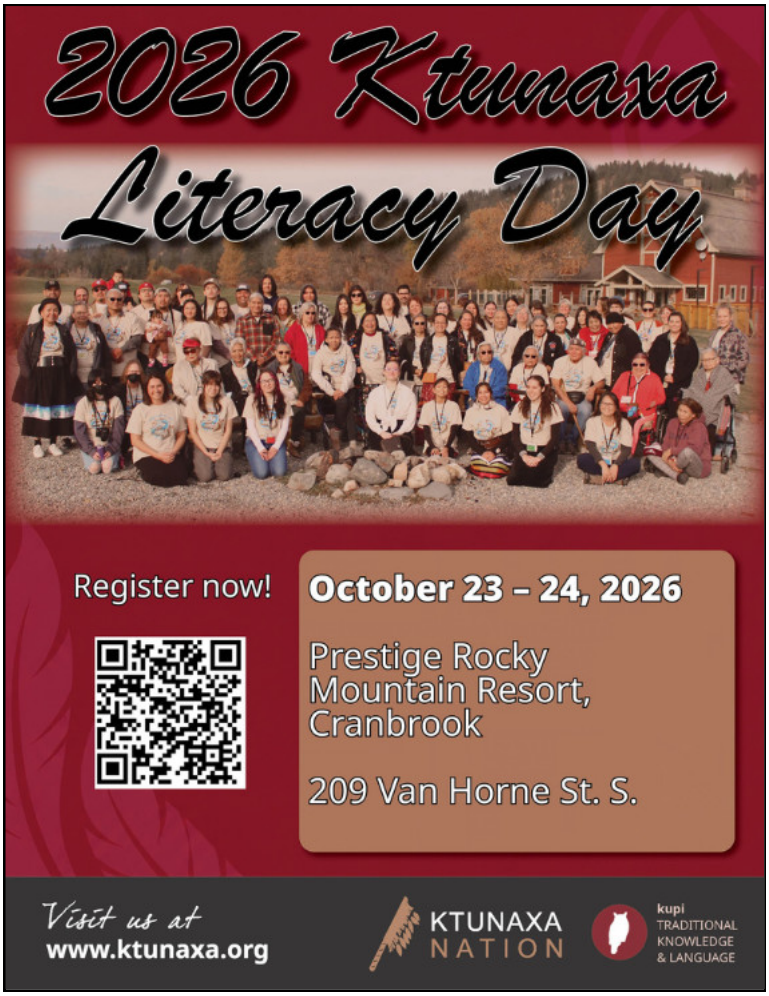
The Communications team is inviting ʔAkisq̓nuknik to share the things they create, the mediums they work in, and the talents they enjoy. Whether you are an artist, maker, photographer, writer, musician, carver, sewist, beadworker, or have another creative practice, we want to hear from you.

Maybe you have something you would like to sell or promote, or perhaps you simply want to share something you are proud of. Either way, there is a place for it here.

We hope to make this a continuing section in the newsletter, giving community members an ongoing space to share their work and let their creativity be seen.

And there's something extra sweet about sharing this month! Anyone who submits something for this issue will have their name entered into a draw to win a copy of this issue's Book of the Month, *Wheetago War Stories.*

So, whether you have a finished piece or simply have something you'd love the community to see, send it our way.





INVERMERE FILM FESTIVAL

COMING SOON

Complimentary Movie Tickets Available!



We have 6 complimentary tickets available for ʔAkisq̓nuknik.
First come, first serve.

Call the ʔAkisq̓nuk Band Office at 250-342-6301



Letter From An Editor

By: Sean Tonelli

ʔAFN Communications Manager

Change is scary. Fitting that this issue is coming out in my favourite time of the year. It's been just over two months at the time of writing this that I have been honoured with being your Communications Manager. For those who haven't met me, my name is Sean Tonelli. I was raised by my mother Katherine and Nana, Theresa on the shores of Lake Erie in Port Colborne, Ontario. With summers spent swimming and playing in the waters on the land of the Hatiwendaronk. Now, I call Windermere and its lake my home, with my family and I settling here over a year ago. So, yea… lots of change. New lands and waters to honour and protect. Scary stuff.

But change is good. Since starting, I've been looking for a way to share your proud and humble voice with each other. To help ʔAkisq̓nuknik feel connected across the lands despite the distance between you. Your monthly newsletter is just that. Your lands. Your words. Your stories. The newsletter is a monthly publication produced by ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation for ʔAkisq̓nuknik. I, along with my fearless co-editor Keely Austin, spend weeks thinking, meeting, and planning, about how we can make each issue the best one yet. Hopefully, you noticed it. No biggie if you didn't. Over the coming months you will see us refine, hone in, expand, subtract, add, move and shift all in the name of your community.

Now, we can't do that without you. In the last issue you may have noticed our survey for the newsletter. The response has been extremely positive and we have already started taking your suggestions and adding them into the newsletter. But that work is never done. So, please. Reach out. Maybe even contribute? I always love to hear from you: communication@akisqnuk.org.

Letter From An Editor

By: K R Austin

ʔAFN Administrative Assistant

When I first took on the newsletter, it was meant to be a relief support to Theresa Kains. I was ambitious about it from the beginning, although I think that ambition was often accompanied by a fair amount of hesitation. I wanted to do a good job, but I was also very aware that this was not simply a magazine I was putting together. I was helping tell the stories of a community that had welcomed me in.

Redesigning the newsletter alongside Theresa became a much bigger responsibility than I initially expected. We wanted to create something that felt like it belonged to ʔAkisq̓nuknik; something that could grow with the community and offer room for the stories and work of ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation the space they deserve.

For me, that responsibility carries a particular meaning. As a caucasian woman who grew up knowing very little about Indigenous culture, I have had a great deal to learn. Working with ʔAkisq̓nuk has given me opportunities to listen and better understand the community and my own spirituality. It has also given me an opportunity to give something back to a community that has, in many ways, nurtured me simply by allowing me to be here and grow. That is something I am genuinely grateful for.

And now, the newsletter is growing again. With Sean joining ʔAkisq̓nuk as Communications Manager, I have had the opportunity to collaborate with someone who brings fresh energy and another perspective to the work we are doing. Together, we are continuing to shape this magazine into something that ʔAkisq̓nuknik can be proud to see themselves represented in.

But that representation cannot come from Sean and I alone. Our role as editors is to create the space. The stories, experiences, accomplishments, knowledge, celebrations, and voices that fill that space belong to you. The newsletter is at its best when ʔAkisq̓nuknik are at the centre of it. We want to make room for your stories to thrive, rather than having them become lost among announcements and information. We want to hear about the things that matter to you, the people you want to celebrate, the history you want remembered, and the things happening in your families and community. So, if there is something you would like to see in the newsletter, please reach out. If you have a story, photograph, event, idea, accomplishment, memory, or something you simply think other ʔAkisq̓nuknik should know about, we would love to hear from you.

Thank you to Theresa for trusting me with this work in the first place, to Sean for helping us continue to grow it, and most of all, to ʔAkisq̓nuknik for giving us the stories to share. This is your newsletter. We are simply here to help give your stories a place to be heard.











?AKISQNUK FIRST NATION

Community is built on people, stories, and accomplishments that should be recognized!

It's all about lifting each other up and sharing moments of pride together

Membership Spotlight!

Work Anniversaries & Achievements
Birthdays & Wedding Announcements
Education & Training Achievements
New Additions to Families
Special Celebrations






Know someone who should be celebrated?

Submit a Membership Spotlight to celebrate them in our monthly newsletter!

Please make sure the person you are celebrating is comfortable being featured. We want every shoutout to feel positive, respectful, and something they're happy to share with the community.

Send your submission to communication@akisqnuk.org







