

## ?Akisq'nuk First Nation

## Monthly Leadership Report

# December 2024

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## Governance Work

December brought significant governance responsibilities and travel before the holiday closure.

Over the past month, I contributed to Nation governance through:

- Governance Training and Policy Work, Cranbrook (December 1, 2, 3)
- CAO Performance Review (December 5)
- Chief & Council Meeting (December 10)
- Strategic Planning, Calgary (December 14, 15, 16)
- Review of Draft Governance Policy (December 17)
- KNCS Leadership Meeting (December 18)
- CAO Evaluation (December 19)

## What December Taught

The governance training in Cranbrook brought valuable teachings. Doctrine of discovery. Calls to Action for truth and reconciliation. Important work.

But here's the question that matters: Section 35 rights are fine. They shouldn't supersede natural law.

Natural law speaks to our rights. Our covenant with Creator. Our connection to ʔa·kxam̓is ʔapi qapsin (all living things). This predates contact. This predates Section 35.

How do we build governance and policies that capture this? How do we validate systems and laws that existed before anyone needed to give us permission? How do we make meaningful relationships and alliances from that foundation?

That's the work ahead. Not just defending what Section 35 allows. Building from what natural law requires.

## Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning sessions in Calgary were three days of hard and vulnerable work. What stood out: we have a team that cares and wants to see the Nation and organization succeed.

The Community Comprehensive Plan (CCP) received significant discussion. This is the foundation and building block of the Nation. Nation-led and member-led priorities and needs. Direction beyond the now.

This should be the starting point for how governance work moves forward. Not governance deciding for members. Governance working WITH members.

Here's the question: how do we do community strategic planning with governance and members? How do we build together instead of building for?

These planning sessions represent the first steps for budgeting and programming for the next 12 months and beyond. Not just administrative housekeeping. The foundation for how we serve.

The CAO evaluation process serves a specific purpose: ensuring we provide clear and attainable guidance. Ensuring our goals and vision remain firm. That we don't limit capacity and potential by moving goalposts when they don't meet individual Council values.

If we ask for something, we need to mean it. If we set direction, we need to hold it. Otherwise we're not leading. We're limiting.

### **Reflection**

December closed the year with clarity about what governance needs to center. Not external validation. Not permission from systems that arrived after we were already here.

Natural law. The covenant our ancestors made. Connection to all living things.

Build from there.

**Hu sukil q̣ukni,**  
Darcy Fisher