

Smoke Signals

Lhut Beh Nehudanih – They Told Us By Smoke



Volume 6, Issue 03

Tsin•tel Oo•za ʔɪD' ɁC (March)



**Saik'uz News: Reflections on
the Hunters Forum, Conference
Highlights, and Upcoming Events**

Education, Training & Employment Updates
March & April Outlook: Cultural Days, ICBC
Mobile Services, and Career Fair 2026

Stay Tuned: Water and Fish Forum 2026

**From the Field to the
Forum: Restoring Land
Rights and Planning for
Our Future Resources**

Updates on Traditional Laws,
Territory Monitoring
and the Hunter's Forum

Governance and Land & Resources Department Update

Hoping you are all staying warm.

Field Operations and Monitors Program

The environmental monitors and field crew were busy throughout February with the following activities:

Cultural Preservation:

Erik and Caleb continue to hunt furbearers for Rodney, who is preparing displays for the new Cultural Building.

Traditional Skills: These pelts will also be available for tanning if community members would like to learn the process.

Community Support:

Monitors are currently cutting trails and providing wood for Elders in the community.

Data Management:

The team is undergoing training in the portal to store our departmental data.

Environmental

Response: The team responded to the CN rail derailment and provided professional recommendations for restoration.

Governance & Healing:

James is supporting healing fire events and the Traditional Governance Oversight Committee (TGOC) teams.



Engagement: The team attended and contributed to the recent Hunter's Forum.

Governance Update

Overview

We are continuing our work to regain jurisdiction over our

children and to co-manage decision-making regarding our territory. Elected Leadership and Traditional Governance are working together to build a Saik'uz governance system that ensures greater community involvement.

The Clan meetings and the Traditional Governance Oversight Committee (TGOC) are essential to this work. We are in the early stages and warmly welcome community participation. Currently, Kelsey is participating in Jurisdiction meetings.

Key Publications

The Land Package:

This is in its final stage of development and is currently being printed. We hope to have copies available to present soon.

The Balhats Book: This has been sent out for formatting and printing bids. We anticipate this process will take up to six weeks; once finished, both printed and digital copies will be available for clan

members.

Save the Date: Community Update Meeting

The governance team will be presenting on March 12th. We welcome everyone to attend as we share our recent progress, including a report on the Hunter's Forum and other exciting developments!

TGOC & Keyoh Meetings

About the TGOC

The Traditional Governance Oversight Committee (TGOC) consists of Saik'uz family representatives who possess knowledge of the traditional territory, our people, and our practices.

The purpose of the TGOC is to:

- Bring traditional governance into practice.
- Work with the elected government and the Land and Resources department.
- Offer guidance and provide traditional and current knowledge about Saik'uz territory.

If you would like to know who your family representative is, please

contact Amber Teed or Kelsey Antoine.

February & March Report

On February 3rd, 4th, and 5th, the Saik'uz Land and Resources Department hosted its first-ever Hunter's Forum. The forum was intended to align several key projects:

- Responding to BC regarding wildlife allocation and Limited Entry Hunting tags for non-Indigenous hunters.
- Preparing a Harvest Calendar to identify dates for harvesting and times for "peaceful enjoyment" by Saik'uz members.
- Supporting Land Use Planning to identify areas needing protection from development to support habitat.
- Discussing permission letters for non-Saik'uz Status hunters wishing to exercise rights in Saik'uz Keyoh.

Note: Saik'uz Members can exercise their Rights at any time in Saik'uz

Keyoh. Discussions focused specifically on restrictions for non-Indigenous licensed hunters and non-member Status hunters.

Forum Highlights

Day 1: Focused on BC's methods for estimating wildlife populations, which determine how many hunting and guiding tags are issued.

Day 2: Discussed why Saik'uz views BC's methods as inferior. Technical staff presented better ways to track animal populations and travel patterns. We also reviewed options for issuing permission letters to status hunters.

Day 3: Focused on reaching a consensus for immediate protections to reduce pressure from non-Indigenous hunters in October. Recommendations included 400m "no-hunting zones" on major FSRs.

These recommendations will be brought back to the TGOC and the community. Additionally, a **Fish and Water Forum** is planned for early May.

Education, Training & Employment

Below, you'll find a roundup of our upcoming events designed to support and inspire you.

MARCH

11 & 25

WEDNESDAY

Cultural Day

Cultural Day on March 11 and 25 which are both on a Wednesday.

Venue: Saik'uz Band Office • The Gathering Place

Time: 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM

MARCH

17 – 18

TUESDAY – WEDNESDAY

ICBC Mobile Office

ICBC will be back in community offering a range of services to Saik'uz members and their families, whether you live on-or off-reserve.

Venue: Saik'uz Band Office • Meeting Room

Time: 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

APRIL

13

MONDAY

Career Fair 2026

This event offers a valuable opportunity for professionals and graduates to connect directly with top employers and educational institutions. Attendees are encouraged to explore diverse career options and should bring multiple copies of their resume to share with recruiters.

Venue: Saik'uz Band Office • Meeting Room

Time: 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM



Guide our Economic Future!

We are seeking member and non-member individuals to join the boards of SFN's economic development corporations, **Tin Toh Forest Products** and **Tagi Resources**, and our Business Accountability Committee.



Seeking Roles For

- Community Position
- Industry Experience
- Business Development

Board members receive stipends and are covered by professional liability insurance.

Saik'uz member submissions will be considered for all roles.

Only Saik'uz status members are eligible for the Community Position.

What You'll Do

- Ask questions and provide insight
- Ensure decisions support the best interests of Saik'uz and the region
- Guide progress in a good way aligned with Saik'uz values

How to Apply

Send the following to **edo@saikuz.com**:

- Your full name & contact info (phone + email)
- If you are a status member of Saik'uz First Nation
- A detailed summary of your background and relevant experience

The Mental Wellness Program invites you to:

The Good Medicine Series

Focusing on Grief and Loss



DATE

March 10 -12

TIME

8:30am - 4:00pm

LOCATION

Nadleh Whut'en Yah

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Door prizes
- Drumming
- Sacred Fire

Topics

- Foundations of grief and loss
- Safety planning with others
- Coping strategies

Support & Resources

- Support services available
- Opportunities to connect with community resource
- Therapeutic activities
- Breakout session

Who's invited?

Open to individuals dealing with grief and loss and individuals supporting loved ones dealing with grief and loss

To sign up:

Scan the QR Code
<https://bit.ly/4r9YaNr>





SAIK'UZ TERRITORY

UNGULATES & FUR BEARERS



SAIK'UZ
FIRST
NATION

HABITAT / CULTURAL USE



UN-GU-LATE

Ungulate

01

(1) (adjective) having or resembling hoofs; (2) (noun) any of a number of mammals with hooves that are superficially similar but not necessarily closely related taxonomically

Moose

Moose are considered a staple traditional food sources for Saik'uz people. Moosemeat (dunitsun) is prepared fresh, dried and jarred. In addition, the bone and antlers (duniide) are used for tools and the hides are the principle source for the construction of traditional dress, footwear, drums, rattles and ropes. The stripped hair was used for bedding and also utilized for dog harnesses being stuffed inside to act as a cushion to prevent soreness on the dogs shoulders while they pulled.

The hunting territories of Saik'uz are the prime moose habitats of British Columbia with central BC hosting over 70% of the provinces population.

The largest member of the deer family include three species of moose; Northwestern, - located in central BC, Alaskan - in the northwest corner of BC, and Shiras- in the southeast kootney area of BC.

An adult male is nearly 2m in height and can weigh up to 500kg, with females slightly smaller up to 420kg. Only the males have antlers that grow each year starting in April and shed in mid November to March.

The older the bull is, the larger their antlers will be and at 10 years of age will have reached their largest potential, however size and points does not determine age.

Yearling bulls will start with two to three points but the large number of points and the antler palm are seen on only large mature bulls. The older bulls are more likely to shed the very large antler early with only young bulls hanging on to them in spring.

Moose live in a relatively small area travelling within a seasonal home range of 5-10 square km but some migratory moose will travel further. Unlike Elk and Bighorn sheep, moose do not have hierarchies and do not defend home ranges. Cows (duni'at) are however, very protective of their young and in the first year of the calves life will be dangerous if challenged.

DAKELH

Duni

Mating season occurs from September to November by the more mature bulls but yearling bulls are capable of breeding. After 8 months newborn moose calves (duniyaz) weighing 10-16 kgs are welcomed with mosting single births, moose twins (lhunedoh) occurring only 10-20% of the time.

The government of BC has estimated the moose population at between 115,000 - 192,000 and have the population numbers in the Omineca region as stable between 23,500 - 39,000. (2022).

Many Saik'uz hunters have suggested that the moose population has been declining due to industry interference in their habitat and overhunting, they have practiced strict hunting to ensure the population grows.

The conservation programs of BC use studies including helicopter counts to determine population inventory and have created a Framework for Moose Management (2015) and a strategy to help restore moose populations in BC (2016).

There is continued participation with Saik'uz Lands & Resources teams to monitor population's within the territory.

Moose are susceptible to starvation especially in winter when snowfall is excessive, disease especially tick infections can be very hard on moose.

Saik'uz hunters have noted that the decrease of balsam stands increases the tick problem as rubbing on balsam deters ticks.



Community Connections & Forward Planning: March 2026 Update

This month's update from Elected Council member Melanie Labatch covers a range of vital community initiatives, from advocating for federal funding to upcoming local events:

I begin this submission with a heavy heart for the precious losses in our community and for the families who are grieving.

May God bless Stephanie's soul and wrap around her family with peace and comfort. May God bless Mark's soul and his family. May they all be comforted with wonderful memories that help them through the low times and may we be extra kind to one another.

Community Forums and Governance

Saik'uz Hunters Forum

The beginning of February saw the Saik'uz Hunters Forum. Over three days, the community was welcomed to hear what provincial representatives are doing and how they create their guidelines.

- The province explained

their methods for determining hunting regulations within our territory, including moose allocation based on the amount needed to sustain a thriving population.

- It was a vital reminder to provincial staff that they are on unceded territory.
- We need a stronger voice at the provincial level regarding all happenings within our territory, as well as awareness of neighboring territories—wildlife moves!



Hunters Forum

Our Gathering Conference

Chief Priscilla and I attended the "Our Gathering" conference with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) in Vancouver, where Nations from across BC met with government officials.

- We held a side meeting with ISC and provincial/federal workers to discuss the cost overruns for the new Health Centre building.
- We also discussed support for upcoming capital projects, including the new firehall and daycare.

Updates on Specific Claims

I recently learned about "Specific Claims"—a process where villages seek compensation when

original reserves were reduced by the federal government. For example, one of our reserve pockets was reduced from 12 acres to about 5 acres.

- **Funding Cuts:** The federal government's budget for this program was recently reduced from \$33 million to just \$4 million.
- **Action Needed:** Nations across BC are asking for this funding to be restored. I encourage all members to sign a letter to the federal government requesting the restoration of these funds. Letters will be available at the next community engagement meeting.

Strategic Planning and Agreements

Conference Participation

Many conferences we attend have designated spaces for youth and elders to participate, with most costs being reimbursable to the Band. If you are a youth or elder who would like to be considered for future conferences, please let a member of Council know.

Learning Our Ways Conference

Linda and I attended the "Learning Our Ways" conference with the Wet'suwet'en people. We learned about the Witset village model, where a separate education society manages everything from Head Start to post-secondary schooling. Their focus on language has been so successful that former students are now teaching the language to children.

Daycare Invitation

Our local daycare has an open invitation for community members to visit the children and share their knowledge or stories.



At the head start conference, Linda making at cedar headband.

Upcoming Events and Connections

- **Healing Fire in PG:** I attend the healing fire in Prince George on the second Wednesday of each month (the next is March 11th). I usually bake and go to connect; please feel free to join me.
- **"Saik'uz and Settlers" Screening:** On Sunday, March 8, at 2:00 PM, the Good Neighbor Committee is hosting a showing of the 2011 play Saik'uz and Settlers at the Grand Reo Theatre.
- **Transportation:** A bus provided by the District of Vanderhoof will be available to provide rides from the village. Please watch for posters for more details.

I hope everyone is well. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.

In wellness,

Melanie Labatch
Grouse Clan,
Elected Council



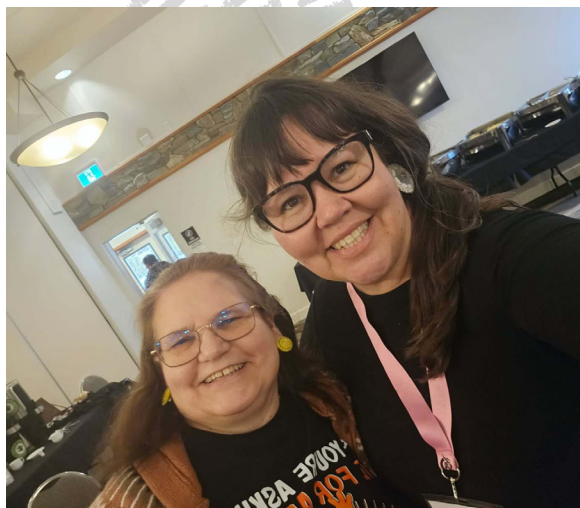
The shawl gifted to Jordan when she was leaving her position as health manager.



Mark with two med students last year. He taught them to make bannock and they brought him flowers later.



Miss Aubs with her door prize won scarf at the community engagement.



Linda Derryman and Melanie Labatch.



Mel, Alecsus and Marta. Alecsus is daughter of Caroline Antoine, granddaughter of Terry Johnny and Vern Antoine, great granddaughter of Madeline and Alec johnny and Maggie Antoine. Alecsus has been raised in Vancouver and Marta is her bestie. Alecsus just turned 17 and shared a birthday with her grandma Madeline.



Nadleh and Stellat'en drumming and singing at the Cougars Indigenous night.

March 2026 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

March 12, 2026
4:30 pm to 7 pm

The Gathering Place,
Saik'uz Band Office

This Month's Update will be about
Governance/Governance Manual





PHRASE OF THE MONTH

A, lagafi ka'nuszun

◁ ㄅㄣㄩ ▶ ㄆㄣˊㄣㄨˊㄙㄨㄣ

Yes, I'll have a coffee.

(Literal translation: Yes, coffee, I want.)

A (◁) - Yes

Lagafi (ㄅㄣㄩ ▶) - Coffee

ka'nuszun (ㄆㄣˊㄣㄨˊㄙㄨㄣ) - I want

Willy McIntosh • 17th

Miranda Louie • 23rd

Warren Holmes • 25th

Mariah Sullivan • 29th

Rodney Teed • 30th

Courtney Woodland • 30th

Keisha Thomas • 16th

James Duncan • 31st

Nathan Patrick • 12th



MARCH CELEBRANTS



Membership Transfer Notice

We are issuing a formal correction regarding the member transfer announcement published in the previous edition of Smoke Signals.

Please be advised that the information regarding the family of James Duncan was inaccurate. We would like to clarify that none of the following individuals have transferred:

- Ryder Duncan
- Kingston Duncan
- Remy Duncan
- James Bidal
- Noah Bidal
- Brenda Matsuda

Saik'uz First Nation is currently in the process of developing a new, comprehensive Membership Code. This initiative is a priority to ensure our membership and transfer processes remain fair, consistent, and sustainable for the long-term well-being of our Nation.

Notice of Temporary Suspension

Effective immediately, Saik'uz First Nation is pausing the intake and processing of all Band Member Transfers. This temporary suspension will remain in effect until the new Membership Code has been finalized and formally adopted.

We understand that this update may impact those awaiting decisions. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we dedicate the necessary time to build a robust framework that best serves our community's future.

Further updates will be provided as we reach significant milestones in this development process. For any questions regarding this notice, please contact the Administration Office.

Social Assistance Reminders

Notice: Annual Social Assistance Renewals (March 2026)

Annual renewals for Social Assistance are now underway. To ensure you remain eligible for your April S.A. benefits, all clients must schedule an appointment to renew their files this month.

Required Documents

- Please bring the following to your appointment:
- Bank Statements: Complete statements for January and February.
- Direct Deposit: Current direct deposit forms.
- Identification: Two (2) pieces of valid ID.

ID Renewal Support (ICBC On-Site)

If your identification has expired, ICBC will be visiting the Band Office to assist with renewals:

- Dates: March 17 & 18
- Time: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
- Cost: Social Development will cover the renewal fees during this time.

Office Closure Notice

The Social Development office will be closed for training on the following dates:

- Tuesday, March 10
- Wednesday, March 11
- Thursday, March 12

How to Book Your Appointment

Contact the Social Development office to schedule:

Phone: 250-567-9293 (Ext. 207)
Email: social.manager@saikuz.com



ICBC MOBILE OFFICE



March 17 – 18
10 am – 3 pm



Band Office
Meeting Room



ICBC will be back in community offering a range of services to Saik'uz members and their families, whether you live on- or off-reserve.

Driver Licensing:

- Learner's Knowledge Test: \$15 per attempt (Walk-ins welcome as time permits)
- Learner's License: \$10
- Driver's License Renewal: 5-year renewal for \$75
- Reinstatement Fee: \$250

ID Services:

- BCID: \$35 for your first card, \$15 to renew
- Medical Services Cards are free (for ages 18.5 years and up)

Other:

- Free Signs and Signals Test

Important Notes & Requirements

Identification:

- Primary and Secondary IDs are required for all services.
- Under 19? If you are writing the Knowledge Test, you must bring a parent or guardian to sign a consent form.

Please contact the Education Department before the event for any questions about accepted ID. Social Development will cover the ID renewal cost for social assistance clients with expired ID

Contact

- Phone: 250-567-9293
- Email: education@saikuz.com



SAIK'UZ
FIRST
NATION

WATER & FISH FORUM



Members harvesting fish



Join us at the Band Office

MAY 5-7, 2026

Identify cultural values around lakes and rivers.
Building a response to BC Water Licensing &
Saik'uz monitoring program.



MORE INFORMATION

KELSEY ANTOINE (250)567-9293



Are We Reaching You?

a communications survey

At Saik'uz First Nation, we want to ensure that the information you receive is timely, relevant, and easy to find. This survey is designed to audit our current communication channels—from emails to town halls—to see what's working and what isn't.

Your feedback will directly influence our 2026 communication strategy to help reduce digital noise and keep everyone better informed.

Member Communication Preferences Survey





Share Your Stories, Ideas, and More!

This is your personal invitation to contribute to our next issue of Smoke Signals. We're always on the lookout for fresh perspectives, engaging content, and exciting new things happening in and around our community. Whether it's a personal essay, a photo series, a local hero spotlight, or an advertisement for your unique offering, your contribution could be exactly what our readers are looking for.

To submit your work, please email it to **communications@saikuz.com** with **"Smoke Signals"** included in the subject line.

Saik'uz First Nation

135 Joseph Street Saik'uz, BC V0J 3A1
(250) 567-9293
band.office@saikuz.com