

Fall Newsletter



Tahltan
Band Council



2021

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF

CHIEF

CARMEN MCPHEE

My Council and I heard your concerns about the desire for more communications and are doing something about it. It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you our first Tahltan Band Council Quarterly Newsletter.



Covid Relief: Shortly after being elected on November 27, 2021, TBC made an application for COVID-19 Security Funding – from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) (previously INAC) – that had a submission deadline of November 30th. We applied and the Tahltan Band was successful. This funding was used to keep our community safe, including for gate security, hand sanitiser, face masks, food cards, and payments for Elders. In addition, we provided food hampers to folks in Telegraph Creek, who were isolated due to no road access. For those in Dease Lake and outside of Territory, we provided gift cards.

FNESC Grant: This grant is used to assist our youth who live on reserve but go to school off reserve. We applied for this funding because many of our youth who attend the Tahltan School had missed school due to COVID-19. Each child received an iPad to help them with their studies and to ensure they have the tools necessary to complete their schoolwork; more specifically, the initiative was to help children at home with reading, writing and math.

Telegraph Road: This past year many of us have worked tirelessly to ensure people living in Telegraph Creek have not suffered due to road closures caused by washouts. I have worked with Industry as well the Ministry of Transportation, Lakes District Maintenance, and our staff and contractors to manage road construction and repair. We have one more year of work on the Telegraph Creek Road, as well a plan to reroute around Tahltan. We promise to keep you involved every step of the way.

The Tahltan Band extends our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who helped during our time of need. Due to the forest fires, the road washout was severe as there was no vegetation to soak up the excess water. Helicopters and planes were dispatched to deliver, food, gas, medicine, passengers, and mail. The support we received helped to ensure the spirits of our community remained strong.



FROM THE BAND

BAND COUNCIL

CURTIS RATTRAY

Youth and Education Report: I am working on youth programming for several different places, including School District 87, Tahltan Band, Stikine Minor Hockey Association, and Tū'dese'chō Wholistic Indigenous Leadership Development Society (TWILD). Through these individual organisations, I am providing consistent messaging to the youth: **they are valued.**

“ Our priority is to put the child as the centre through actions, not campaign slogans.

This is important to membership because we are providing Tahltan youth with the leadership skills, knowledge, and understanding needed for a strong and resilient Tahltan Nation.

The Stikine School District is committed to creating a Tahltan curriculum and Tahltan culture and language content to meet provincial learning outcomes. The Tahltan curriculum is land-based learning that focuses on Tahltan culture, worldview, and values. Student cultural learning is enhanced with after school youth programming; like the Tene Mehodihi program from TWILD. Soon we will have regular sports, movie, and culture nights for the youth once it is safe to do so.

The Tahltan Band Council (TBC) has not been very active in the education of Tahltan children within the schools. The current Chief and Council will change this by providing political and cultural leadership. The TBC has created a Youth and Education Committee which will provide recommendations as to the direction of the Tahltan Band's role in education and youth programming.



We are seeking community members to help support our youth. If you would like to become involved in the youth programming and or the Tahltan Band Council's Youth and Education Committee, please contact me.



BAND MANAGER

SHANA DENNIS

My name is Shana Dennis, I am a member of the Tahltan Nation and currently employed with the Tahltan Band as the Band Manager. I am excited to be back and look forward to strengthening our team and maintaining relationships with community members, funding agencies and industry by strategic planning, implementation of community plans and sound financial management.

COVID-19: The COVID-19 pandemic has been the primary focus for the Tahltan Band since the pandemic started and continues to be as safety is our number one priority. The Tahltan Band coordinates two Emergency committees, one in each of Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek and it also participates on the Tahltan Nation Emergency Management Committee (EMC). Everyone has worked tirelessly for the past two years on keeping our communities safe and the Tahltan Band is proud of the work done and appreciates everyone's efforts to date.

The Tahltan Band implemented a new initiative that included the supporting of off reserve band members with COVID-19 food security. This initiative was new to the Tahltan Band and was successful; indeed, we were able to reach and support a great number of members off reserve. The Tahltan Band staff that worked on this did an amazing job!

Tahltan Band Council Governance Training was completed April 2021 via Zoom. This training was two days and provided council with the following;

- Introduction to and overview of the roles and responsibilities of Chief and Council as a whole
- The roles and responsibilities of Chief
- The roles and responsibilities of Council members
- The roles and responsibilities and desirable qualifications of the Band Manager
- Working towards a respectful workplace
- How to create and manage effective committees
- Running effective meetings
- The Planning process



Strategic Plan - Review and Update: The newly elected Chief and Council has spent time reviewing the Tahltan Band Strategic Plan and updating it with the Tahltan Band Management team. We are proud to announce that the focus of the newly elected Chief and Council and the Tahltan Band Management team – until November 2022 – are the following;

Health and Wellness

All Council members identified health and wellness as our top priority for the coming year. They would like to champion supports for mental health and wellness. Connected to health and wellness, Council would like to explore options for assuming jurisdiction over child welfare, either in part or whole.

Council wishes to focus on four specific areas connected to health and wellness:

1. Updating the Health Plan, shifting focus to wellness
2. Exploring how to combine culture, language, ceremony, and wellness
3. Engaging Elders, supporting their wellness through centring them in the process of integrating language, culture, and ceremony in wellness approaches
4. After care for post-treatment

Education and Training

Council will work to increase funding and opportunities for education and training and to improve education outcomes for members. Central to the education and training goals is developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Tahltan Central Government (TCG), Tahltan Band and Iskut Band regarding funding and training; promoting the educational needs of Tahltan members in School District #87 and working towards full jurisdiction over education in our Territory.

The proportion of students to the amount of funding that School District #87 receives is significant. The Tahltan Band Council wants to develop an Education Agreement with the District to ensure transparency and accountability for how the District is using its funds, and to ensure that the culture and language of the majority of the students in the District, who are Tahltan, are reflected in the curriculum. An inclusive curriculum should also encourage interest in pursuing employment outside of the mining industry and develop essential skills through on-the-land and trades related activities.

To accomplish these goals, Council identified four priorities:

1. Update the Education Policy
2. Work with the Iskut Band and TCG to increase funding for education and training and expand training opportunities for community members
3. Develop a Local Education Agreement with SD#87
4. Work towards full jurisdiction over education for the 3 Nations

FROM OUR STAFF

HEALTH DIRECTOR CHRISTINE BALL

Summit Trail Project: As a result of the 2018 fire, which burned through our area and left extreme dead-fall, the trail could not be accessed. Since then, a bit at a time, some men in the community who are passionate about re-opening the trail up to their favorite hunting grounds have been working to re-open the trail. The trail is often referred to as their “food basket”, including great berry picking and medicines in that area.

The Men’s Program is providing the resources to open a good trail and to also build a 16’ x 16’ cabin at the top. This cabin will be used by many in the community. It is so nice to hear the excitement in the community to be able to access Summit once again.

Funding from many sources is being used for this important work, including:

“ I hope and pray to see you on the trail to Summit, one day.

- ▶ FNHA – On the Land funding
- ▶ FNHA – Men’s Program funding
- ▶ Culture camp funding from sources such as mining camps
- ▶ SWWG – Men’s program funding



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE DIRECTOR

LORETTA SORT

Dzenes Hoti'e, K'idin ushye (Bright light shining on the mountain side). My English name is Loretta Quock Sort and I come from the Tsesk'iye Clan and my parents are Etegal Ta' & Edosti (Robert & Gladys Quock Sr.) I took the Language Coordinator position with the Tahltan Band back in September 2012.

I have a lot of plans that I want to accomplish in my role. To name a few:

- ▶ Teach Tahltan language classes within our community during the evenings.
- ▶ Regalia sewing classes during the evenings and one day during the weekend
- ▶ Start a dance group
- ▶ Work with a Youth Worker at the Rec Centre to have art classes for our younger generation
- ▶ Work with Strong Start to support our Tahltan language
- ▶ Label the Tahltan Centre Store with our Tahltan language
- ▶ Put the Tahltan alphabet up at the Band Office, Clinic, Store, 3 Sisters, and Rec Centre buildings to make our Tahltan language visible to our people
- ▶ Work with Tahltan School and Tahltan Language teacher – Pauline Hawkins
- ▶ Work with Tahltan Band Council Youth and Education Committee on the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement via Zoom meetings
- ▶ Replace the single stop sign here in Telegraph Creek from English to Tahltan – Nodindi
- ▶ Start recording our Elders and their stories
- ▶ Hire two other workers to work with me with this program
- ▶ Investigate how other First Nations are integrating their language into their community

Some of these things will unfortunately be put on hold because of COVID-19, but I am committed to making them happen sooner or later. I am so looking forward to being at home and working with our people.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
HEATHER HAWKINS

I would like to tell you about the important work that I have been doing with the Tahltan Band.

I currently manage the income assistance/assisted living programs. The Income Assistance Program is designed to help our members that reside on reserve who require income assistance as they are unable to temporarily acquire meaningful employment. Through this program I can help our members with their employment and education goals.

The Assisted Living Program provides funding for non-medical social support services. Homemaker Services provides financial assistance for non-medical personal care for adults who need assistance with daily living. These services range from housekeeping, meal preparation and attendant care, to community supports such as adult care, meals on wheels, psycho-social programs, short-term respite care for caregivers and non-health transportation. It is important to note these services do not include major home repairs. Essentially, the objective of the Homemaker Services Program is to support and enhance the dignity and independence of physically disabled, mentally disabled, or elderly adults, and to assist them to remain in their own communities with family and friends and to avoid institutionalisation.

I also want to highlight the work I have been doing with our community care team. This team is comprised of the managers and staff of the Tahltan Band and Tahltan Mobile Support Team (MST). We work together to ensure the well-being of health wellness, promote positive mental health, and provide addiction services for our Tahltan Band members. It has been a great and rewarding experience working with this team.

SAFEHOUSE MANAGER
TRENA MARION

On National Indigenous Peoples Day, the Safehouse staff cooked a traditional lunch for the community, with our Elder Flora Reid making head cheese. There was Indian Bingo, which was a huge success. Right after Literacy Camp we hosted a Sewing Camp, where Penny Louie and Carmen Dennis came in to teach traditional sewing. There were about 40+ people in attendance. In August we taught some ladies how to can stewed tomatoes, salsa, peaches, and beets.



Every month the staff bake bread for our Elders and single men in our community. During the winter months we also include other baked goods. We would like to host a weekend every month to teach traditional sewing.

The Safehouse has books, puzzles, games, and craft supplies for our community members to access.

The Health Program hired some men in our community to hunt for the Elders. We helped butcher moose and deliver it to each Elder in our community. We would like to harvest another moose in the coming months for our Elders and our programs for the summer months. Our goal is to get the youth involved in helping with cutting up the meat and distributing it to the Elders.

Please remember we are here for you.
 Any of our community members is encouraged to reach out to the Safehouse for help.

- There is staff **available 24/7**
- **The Crisis Line** is toll free 1 888 414 2836

KUWEGAHN JUSTICE MANAGER
MELVA QUOCK

Greetings fellow community members. I am honored to give an update on all the great work that our program continues to do to keep our communities safe and provide mental wellness, as we continue living through COVID-19.

COVID-19 Vaccine Site: Our staff continues to provide COVID-19 testing at our Dease Lake site (Peoples Haven building) and to provide area support to members who are in isolation.

Summit Trail: Due to the 2018 wildfire that swept through Telegraph Creek, we lost the root structure from destroyed vegetation, which caused severe slides and washouts. Excessively large snow-pack in the back country last winter also contributed to this. Summit Trail is a traditional trail that was used by our ancestors to gather and hunt. With our members continual use over the years, but with little upkeep, we noticed we started losing the trail to overgrowth.

A group of men who frequent the trail in the summertime and early fall brought it to our attention and with dialogue between Tahltan Health and

our program we agreed to provide resources to start trail work. It was also a great opportunity to get the men out on the land, and a good start to the men's Wellness Program.

Thank you to the Tahltan Band for the use of the backhoe for the heavy work. Once that section was completed, the guys moved on to the hard work of clearing heavy fallen trees, removing undergrowth, corridor trees across deep mud holes, fixing washouts, and clearing debris caused by land slides and water erosion away from parts of the trail.

The upkeep of this trail will be ongoing. The idea is to connect the trail to the Muddy Lake Road and erect small wellness camps throughout our Territory to get our people back out on the land and give them the opportunity to support one another on their healing journey.

Drum Making: Richard Jackson played a huge role, by inviting Elder Norman Retasket, whom he met at the Kamloops Event, to participate. Norman made drums for the Warrior Walkers for Healing which he presented in Tk'emlúps (Kamloops). Norman came to Tahltan Territory to share his skills in drum making with our three communities. This event was well accepted, and our members went away with some beautiful drums and a new friendship. At the time, our communities were struggling with their wellbeing and bringing Elder Norman Retasket was a godsend to them.

They had great discussions, shared their stories, but most of all they had some great laughs. The plan is to bring him back again to share and mentor other community members in drum making.

Kamloops Warrior Walk

I would like to give recognition to our community member James Henryu for following through with his vision to walk to Kamloops in memory of the 215 children that were discovered on the Kamloops Residential School grounds. As Jamie talked more about his vision with his family and friends, the decision to walk from Whitehorse Yukon came to life. What an amazing and honorable event this turned out to be. So many communities and cities along the way greeted them with so much love, kindness, and phenomenal support. We are truly grateful for the new friendships and rekindled relationship this brought to our residential school survivors.

Our program contributed by hiring a coordinator to organise the arrival of the walkers and to get the community members who participated in this historical event to and from Tk'emlúps (Kamloops) safely. A huge thank you to our member Zena Quock for doing an outstanding job in making this event a success. We would also like to give thanks to all the survivors and their families who made the long trek, we honor you and celebrate you. A huge thank you to Tk'emlúps for hosting and receiving us and allowing us to honor the memory of the 215 children found.



Right: Jamie Henry and Chief Carmen at the Kamloops Warrior Walk.

Below: Warrior walkers in Kamloops, BC after walking from Whitehorse.



CAPITAL MANAGER

FEDDIE LOUIE

The Economic Development Department has provided financial support to each business to assist with the costs of maintaining their herds of horses since 2020 and will give that support again this year for winter feed.

LEDSP Economic Development Program 2021/22

The Economic Development program focuses on supporting the Band's business through COVID-19. Tahltan Centre and the Riversong Café and Motel were also supported through this program. Additionally, it provided financial support for two member businesses that are 100% dependent on tourism, as COVID-19 has decimated the big game outfitting industry, leaving two Tahltan outfits in financial stress. The Economic Development Department has provided financial support to each business to assist with the costs of maintaining their herds of horses since 2020 and will give that support again this year for winter feed.

Tahltan Centre Store

A new store building is being designed and cost comparisons on different types of construction is in progress; for example, stick-build, concrete blocks, log, metal or modular. A draft report will be presented by early December 2021, with community engagement planned.

Next steps: Finalise design and secure funds for construction in Spring 2023.

Riversong Café & Motel

Riversong remained closed for the 2021/22 season due to road washout, limiting access to downtown. The renovations are complete, and the building was put into care and maintenance. Road access will determine the plan for Riversong going forward.

Capital

Nine units rebuild: Nine housing units are complete with final inspections completed on September 28, 2021. The new contractors have addressed all deficiencies and units have been turned over to housing. Final report, cost analysis and maintenance manuals are still outstanding. I expect to have this project completed by the end of December.

5-plex Nursing Residence

This project is completed, with the final inspection completed on September 28, 2021. There are a few deficiencies to be addressed and the project is over budget due to the owners adding items after the contract was signed. It was turned over to the owners in Spring 2021 and is occupied. The project final report is to be completed by the end of December.

Roofs

Points North Roofing came to Telegraph Creek this past July and replaced the roofs of the Band Office, Safehouse, Duplex, three residential homes and the Peoples Haven in Dease Lake.

Water System Upgrade

This project is on-going. The search for a new location for the water reservoir is underway. The manganese filtration system is being designed.

Emergency Drainage

This project is under construction, with AXIS constructing the holding pond and the culvert install from IR6 down the embankment to Telegraph Creek. Tahltan Band O&M Department will construct the ditching and culvert install from the top of the hill, along Kenny Frank's driveway, along Highway #51 to the settling pond.

Emergency Creek/Pumphouse

The final design for this repair is 95% complete and construction is underway. The plan is to replace a twin culvert near the pumphouse, and armor the creek banks up stream and downstream. Also, we will rebuild the road to cross the creek.

IR 13

The final design is underway, clearing and grubbing to be conducted during winter 2021 and construction of IR 13 to commence spring of 2022.

Head Start Building

The Head Start building is complete and has been turned over to the Health Department. The final report will be completed by December 2021.

Elder's Centre

The preliminary design is completed and has Council's approval. This unit will arrive in the community in the Spring of 2022, it has just been ordered and set to arrive in six months.

Community Ditching and Drainage

This capital project has been postponed until 2022, due to the emergency projects that took precedent.

HOUSING MANAGER

TENEAL NOLE

Tahltan Housing has been working hard with the members of the Tahltan Band and Stikine Housing to ensure safe housing is available for members of the Tahltan Band.

We currently run two programs on and off reserve.

Stikine Housing: This housing is 100% self-sustainable and cannot obtain funding to do maintenance. This will come from the support of the members living in the housing. To ensure this program is running effectively we must ensure that all tenants are doing their part in reporting maintenance issues to the Housing Manager and that we are collecting rent. Stikine Housing works closely with BC Tenancy Branch. We have an amazing screening process that allows for us to make choices for tenant selection based on background checks on tenants.

On-reserve: Over the past few years I have been working on upgrading heating sources in identified homes. We also are currently working on mould remediation for several homes. My goal is to create a plan moving forward that includes upgrading our memberships homes because of the health and safety items recorded in our inspections.

Items that have been done to date are:

- **All furnaces:** Wood/electric/propane were all updated in Dease Lake.
- **2018-2019:** Six septic systems have been replaced on IR 9. Stikine Housing had some septic systems repaired and or replaced and cleared of willow roots. Some waterlines and plumbing completed.
- **2019/2020:** Identified six furnaces in total were replaced on IR 6.
- **2019/2020:** Mould remediation for seven identified homes in Telegraph Creek.
- **2020:** Approved for 90km from CMHC for eight homes with different needs, and septic replacement in Elder's complex.
- **2021:** Renovations on units being completed, needs for housing being identified. Proper ventilation being installed in Stikine Housing, identified homes are having window replacements.

Plan for 2022:

For years I have been gathering home reports and entering the relevant data into our system. The purpose of this is to identify what our members need and to create a priority list for these homes. I am aware that some members want to have work done in their homes; however, I am required to prioritise requests. It is critical we maintain a transparent and fair work-plan for management, senior management, and all our members.

I am also working on rent collections and would like to host sessions for members to understand the importance of rent collection; indeed, it is my intention to obtain the support from a specialist in the housing field to help the band work to build a self-sustaining program with clear guidelines that do not change.

OFFICE MANAGER DEASE LAKE
KIM ROWE

The Peoples Haven is an office with programs that are administrated by the Tahltan Band.

The following programs operate out of the office:

**Wellness/Strengthening
Families/Youth Support**

Throughout the past quarter we have supported members in our community that are at-risk, have MCFD involvement, single parents, single income households that are in crisis and in need of support. This funding is topped up through other sources such as MCFD and DL SWWG. We had a 14-day literacy camp in Dease Lake but was only able to run it for 10 days due to COVID-19. We provided packages to households for children and provided support where needed.

Our Youth Support Program will be changing due to the current youth worker having left October 18 and will be re-assessed to meet the needs for our children and youth. We partnered with other programs to provide activities, transportation to Berry Camp, etc.



**Building Blocks/Keda Yaze Kime
Learning Centre**

Building Blocks supports at-risk families in our community for children aged 0–6, and this year is focused on Early Childhood Education certification and licensing our daycare for ages 30 months–5 years, for 16 children. Currently Dease Lake SWWG and another program supports these initiatives.

► **Ku'we Gahn Justice:**

Ku'we Gahn Justice provides support to clients in Dease Lake, Good Hope Lake, Iskut and Telegraph Creek. Court support, supervision, applications for legal aid, Family Court, and other supports needed to keep our clients and communities safe are provided.

► **Community Based Victim Services:**

Community Based Victim Services provides support to community members from Dease Lake, Good Hope Lake, Iskut and Telegraph Creek, helping when needed and/or requested by community members, RCMP, other services.

- Community Health Resource/ Elder support
- Dease Lake Post Office
- Tahltan MST-every other month
- Tahltan Band/Stikine Housing
- COVID-19 testing, support and response





Tahltan
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