



# Uyaqhmis

February 2025 Issue 78

**Huu-ay-aht to have new  
Culture Centre in  
Spring 2026**



PM41913515

# Important Dates to Remember

BC Family Day	Offices Closed, Monday, February 17
Good Friday	Offices Closed, Friday, April 18
Easter Monday	Office Closed, Monday, April 21
Victoria Day	Office Closed, Monday, May 19
National Indigenous People's Day	Office Closed, Friday, June 20
Canada Day	Office Closed, Tuesday, July 1
House of Huu-ay-aht 25th anniversary celebration	Saturday, July 5
BC Day	Office Closed, Monday, August 4
2025 HFN Days	Friday, August 15 - Saturday, August 16
Labour Day	Office Closed, Monday, September 1
Truth & Reconciliation Day	Office Closed, Tuesday, September 30
Thanksgiving	Office Closed, Monday, October 14
Remembrance Day	Office Closed, Tuesday, November 11
2025 Annual People's Assembly	Saturday, November 22 Look out for Special Assembly Announcement
Winter Break	Office Closed, December 22 - January 2

To stay up to date on events please visit our website at [www.huuayaht.org/events/](http://www.huuayaht.org/events/)



huu ay aht

ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

Huu-ay-aht envisions a strong, self-determining, self-reliant and sustainable Nation. ʔiisaak, Hišuk ma čawak, and ʔuuʔaʔuk guide us as we work together to foster a safe, healthy, and sustainable Nation, where our culture, language, spirituality, and economy flourish.

### Huu-ay-aht First Nations Wellness Statement

Our citizens are grounded in our culture, teachings, and sacred principles. Through healing, wellness, celebration, and the understanding of our Treaty, we are connected, empowered, responsible, accountable, and motivated.

Please send all comments and questions to the Huu-ay-aht Communications Department.

[communications@huuayaht.org](mailto:communications@huuayaht.org)  
Mailing Address:  
Huu-ay-aht First Nations  
4644 Adelaide Street,  
Port Alberni, BC  
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[www.huuayaht.org](http://www.huuayaht.org)  
for the latest news and events, job postings, and a digital archive of Uyaqhmis

Keep up to date with Uyaqhmis on social media:  
@HuuayahtFN



Huu-ay-aht First Nations Facebook page



# Huu-ay-aht First Nations Congratulates all 2024 Graduates



## ʕatiqʕateʕic ʔahkuu

(You are acknowledged with this)

## Congratulations to Huu-ay-aht 2024 Graduates!

### High School Graduates

**Clinton Nookemus** - Ditidaht Community School  
**Seth Nookemus** - ADSS  
**Sadie Unger** - Victoria  
**Mason Watts** - ADSS  
**Ashton Sears** - Victoria  
**Kali Zimmer** - Cranbrook  
**Lily Johnson** - Eighth Avenue LC  
**Anne-Tanisha Seitcher** - Victoria  
**Andrew Clappis Jr.** - ADSS  
**Jimmy Cook Jr.** - Eighth Avenue LC  
**Diego Dennis** - Delta  
**Shaun Dennis** - Vancouver  
**Sophia Duhamel** - Victoria  
**Maliya Eardley** - Parksville  
**Dominic Fraser** - Eighth Avenue LC  
**Julius Joe** - Eighth Avenue LC

### Post Secondary Graduates

**Victoria Nookemus** - Crisis Response & Mental Health Worker, Discovery College  
**Becki Nookemis** - Masters in Social Work, University of Toronto  
**Irene Peters** - Culinary Arts Certificate Program, VIU  
**Harry Brossault** - Fundamentals of Forest Harvesting, VIU  
**Nakya Zimmer** - BSc Pharmacy, UBC  
**Laura Johnson** - Health Care Assistant, NIC  
**Holly Johnson** - Professional Cook 1 & 2, NIC

### Daycare Graduates

**Maverick Hardie** - Port Alberni Paawats  
**Joshua Clappis** - Port Alberni Paawats  
**Jake Po** - Port Alberni Paawats  
**Junior Charles** - Port Alberni Paawats  
**Frankie Tomren** - Port Alberni Paawats  
**Mathias Penzin** - Port Alberni Paawats  
**Memphis Edwards** - Anacla Paawats  
**Ellis Logan** - Anacla Paawats

## Child & Family Wellness receives a Grant for Workshops

The Huu-ay-aht Child and Family Wellness Department has successfully received a \$50,000 grant from the Family Violence Prevention Program, titled Making Connections through an Indigenous Lens.

With this funding, Child and Family Wellness plans to develop four six-week workshops focused on various forms of violence, including emotional, psychological, physical, financial, spiritual, and sexual abuse.

The ultimate goal is to help citizens gain a better understanding of the interconnections between mental health, substance use, and violence.

This grant supports the objectives outlined in the strategic plan's pillar Muschuum and Maht Mahs (People and Houses), expressly point 3, which states, "Huu-ay-aht ʔahuuli will be a safe, healthy, thriving community where our people choose to live."

The Child and Family Wellness Department aims to have these workshops available by Spring or Summer this year. Look out for more information on our website and social media.



# Huu-ay-aht Shares Helpful Tips on How to Read Finance Statements

The Huu-ay-aht Finance Department is pleased to announce that the 2024 Audited Financial Statements are now available at [www.huuayaht.org](http://www.huuayaht.org). These statements are an important part of how we report back to citizens about the Nation's financial health and how funds are being managed.

We know that financial reports can sometimes be confusing, so we want to take this opportunity to explain how to read and understand them.

## What Are Audited Financial Statements?

Audited financial statements provide a clear picture of the Nation's finances at the end of the fiscal year. These statements follow **Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS)**, which are the official rules that all governments in Canada use to prepare their financial reports. This ensures that all financial information is presented in a consistent and reliable way.

## Key Parts of the Financial Statements

There are three main sections to focus on when reviewing the financial statements:

### 1. Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)

Think of this as a snapshot of the Nation's finances at a specific point in time. It shows:

- **What the Nation owns (assets)** – This includes cash, investments, land, buildings, and equipment.

- **What the Nation owes (liabilities)** – These are debts or

financial commitments such as loans or unpaid invoices.

- **Net financial position** – This is the difference between financial assets and liabilities and helps show the Nation's financial strength excluding physical assets.

Additionally, the **Statement of Financial Position** separates **non-financial assets** from **financial assets** to clarify what the Nation owns. Non-financial assets represent investments valued based on their **physical worth** rather than their market resale value. This includes assets such as the **crab fishing licence, capital infrastructure (e.g., buildings, roads, and equipment), and prepaid expenses.**

The **Accumulated Surplus** line reflects the Nation's overall financial position by adding up **all assets (both financial and non-financial)** and subtracting **liabilities**. This provides a clear picture of the Nation's net equity, or total financial strength.

### 2. Statement of Operations (Income Statement)

This report shows how much money came in and how much was spent during the year. It includes:

- **Revenue** – Funds received from taxes, grants, business income, and other sources.

- **Expenses** – Money spent on programs, salaries, and services.

- **Annual surplus or deficit** – If revenue is higher than expenses, the Nation has a surplus. If expenses are higher

than revenue, there is a deficit.

This report should be interpreted slightly differently than an income statement that is used for a household or a business because the intent is not to maximize profit or increase the annual surplus. Instead, the nation seeks out how to leverage the revenue coming in to maximize the quality of the services delivered to its Citizens. A best practice for a government is to keep the expenses as close to the revenue amount as possible so that the nation is using the funding it has been provided for delivery of services.

However, a best practice is also to take into consideration future use of revenue funding as the revenue amounts may not always be consistent across multiple years. Increases to savings (sometimes called reserves in government language) should often be planned to allow for the savings to generate future revenue for the nation regardless of what funding is coming from Canada or the Province of British Columbia.

One additional aspect to note, is that what the Nation spends on the construction of physical infrastructure is excluded from this report and is documented in the Statement of Financial Position and the accompanying notes to the financial statements.

These methods of how the financials are presented are based on those Public Sector Accounting Standards mentioned above.

### 3. Notes to the Financial Statements

*Continued on Page 5*

# Huu-ay-aht Financial Statements Available on HFN Website

Continued from Page 4

The notes provide extra details to explain the numbers in the financial statements. They give important information about funding agreements, investments, and accounting policies. Reading the notes helps to better understand the full financial picture.

## Why This Matters

By reviewing these statements, citizens can see where the Na-

tion's money is coming from and how it is being used to support programs, services, and future growth. Transparency in financial reporting helps build trust and ensures responsible financial management.

These numbers are also used to help the Nation better prepare for future budgeting activities. While they do not directly tie to budgeting in an exact format, historical trends of how much

spending has occurred to deliver services should be used in formulating future cost estimates, thus allowing for the budget to be as accurate as possible. Improved reporting for the financial statements can lead to better budgeting.

If you have any questions about the 2024 Audited Financial Statements, please let us know and we would be happy to provide additional clarification.

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## Huu-ay-aht and Parks Canada Work Against Invasive Species

Invasive species are plants, animals, or organisms that are not native to a specific area and can cause harm to local ecosystems. They often outcompete native species for resources, disrupt habitats, and contribute to a decline in biodiversity. Removing invasive species is essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the land.

At the end of January, the Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) Lands and Natural Resources Department partnered with Parks Canada to address the growing

concern about invasive species on Huu-ay-aht territory. This collaboration focused on identifying the most problematic species and determining the best methods for their removal.

Ian Cruickshank, an expert from Parks Canada, spent two days in Anacla training the Lands and Resources staff and Huu-ay-aht Guardians on how to correctly identify and remove invasive species. The group learned to distinguish between invasive plants and native species, as well as the best techniques for removing them without harming

the surrounding environment.

A key activity took place at Keeha Beach, where the group worked together to remove invasive beachgrass, a species that threatens the fragile dune ecosystem by outcompeting native vegetation.

This hands-on training is crucial because removing invasive species without proper knowledge can lead to mistakes, such as confusing invasive plants with native ones. Such errors could inadvertently damage the environment.



Photo taken during Invasive Species Training. The group visited Keeha Beach to remove invasive beachgrass (Photo by Kevin Peters).

# Huu-ay-aht to See New and Improved Infrastructure in 2025

The long-anticipated culture centre project has officially begun and is set to be completed in the Spring of 2026.

Although the project took off in 2019, the team is excited to see it finally come to life.

Located along the main road between Upper Anacla and Bamfield on Huu-ay-aht Treaty Settlement Lands, this centre will serve as an information hub for visitors to the region, feature artifact displays, and house a retail section for tourists.

A key aspect of the centre will be its role in reconnecting the Huu-ay-aht people with their traditional heritage, including the return of significant artifacts to their ḥahuuḥi (traditional territory).

Among these will be the welcome figures, currently stored at the Royal BC Museum, which will be returned to Huu-ay-aht.

Additionally, the centre will provide a welcoming point for visitors, with maps and tour information available to help them explore the area. The project



The House of Huu-ay-aht located in Upper Anacla.

has been supported by several dedicated individuals, including the Infrastructure and Economic Development Teams, along with Huu-ay-aht Councillor Edward R. Johnson, who has been instrumental in guiding the initiative forward.

In a related update, the House of Huu-ay-aht is undergoing a major renovation in preparation for its 25th anniversary celebration in July 2025. Renovation

work will begin in the coming weeks, with an anticipated completion date of June 15, 2025. Planned upgrades include a new roof, a renovated gymnasium floor, kitchen improvements, and bathroom upgrades. The Huu-ay-aht Infrastructure Team, along with various stakeholders, have been working hard to plan and implement these changes, ensuring the House of Huu-ay-aht is ready for the upcoming milestone.

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## Huu-ay-aht First Nations Secured \$1.0 Million to Study Tribunal

On February 10, 2025, Huu-ay-aht First Nations announced they have secured \$1.0 Million for a Weaving Justice Grant from the Law Foundation of British Columbia. With this funding, Huu-ay-aht will study and review its Tribunal process.

Huu-ay-aht successfully received one of the available grants, the Cedar Grant, a four-year grant of \$250,000 per year. Huu-ay-aht has appointed Dr Heather Castleden (HEC Lab) as Project Lead. Her team will focus on four phases: 1. Research the Tribunal process, 2. Recommend evidence-in-

formed reforms to the Tribunal Act, 3. Develop community-wide educational resources related to any Huu-ay-aht approved changes, and 4. Implement new trauma-informed protocols to support Tribunal applications in the future.

The study of the Huu-ay-aht Tribunal intends to break the colonial legal traditions and embed Huu-ay-aht Values and the Three Sacred Principles.

ʔiisaak (respect), ʔuuʔaḥuk (taking care of), and hiḥuk ma cawak (ev-

everything is connected) will guide this project and build on the rich history Huu-ay-aht is working to build for a bright future for generations to come.

During this process, Huu-ay-aht Government and Citizens will have the opportunity to participate in this project through invited interviews and community engagement, where input and feedback will be valuable. Please look out for Community Engagement details.

See full story at [www.huuayaht.org](http://www.huuayaht.org).

# Huu-ay-aht Executive Council Approves Continued Closure of Kiiḡin

The Huu-ay-aht Executive Council passed a motion on Thursday, December 19, confirming that the Ancient Village of Kiiḡin will remain closed to the public. This decision includes the temporary suspension of Kiiḡin Tours, which had been offered both privately and by the Nation, until further notice.

Huu-ay-aht is actively working on an exciting new research and development initiative aimed at enhancing and reimagining the Kiiḡin Tours experience. Over the years, Kiiḡin has operated under the Huu-ay-aht Economic Development Department, and the temporary closure in 2024 has provided an opportunity to focus on capacity building and long-term strategic planning.

As the Nation looks ahead to 2025, Huu-ay-aht remains committed to creating a sustainable and enriched Kiiḡin Tours program. In collaboration with



Photo taken of ancient village and National Historical Site Kiiḡin

Huu-ay-aht Group of Businesses and Legacy Tourism Group, the Nation is conducting comprehensive studies to ensure the preservation of this National Historic Site while enhancing the cultural and educational experience for future visitors.

The public is reminded that

access to Kiiḡin remains restricted without explicit permission from Huu-ay-aht. Unauthorized tours or activities at Kiiḡin are strictly prohibited. The Nation will not assume responsibility for any accidents, damages, or liabilities arising from unauthorized access or actions.

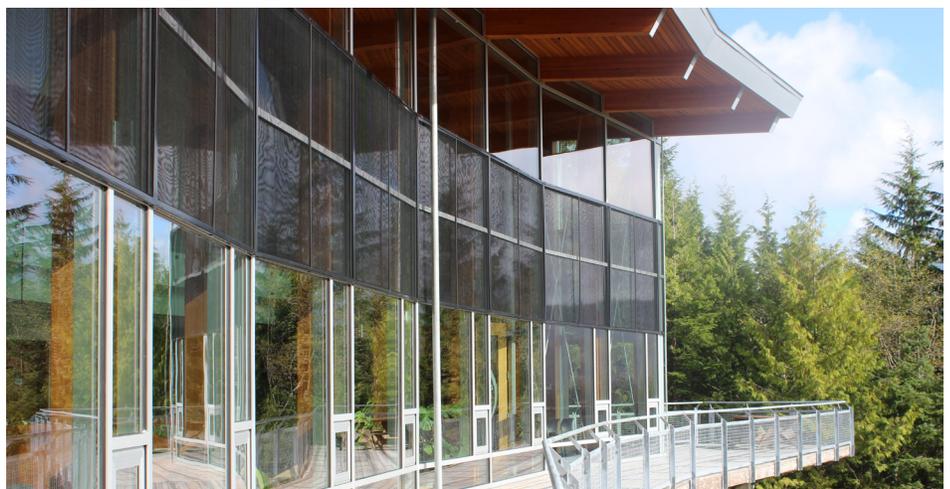
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## Huu-ay-aht Youth Gain Work Experience at Huu-ay-aht Government

During the summer 2024, Huu-ay-aht First Nations employed seven youths in various departments to help them gain work experience and explore potential career paths for the future.

The participants included Zyliss Dick, Nolan Nookemus, and Issaiah Dennis, who worked in the Lands and Natural Resources department; Emily Kosteniuk at the Port Alberni Paawats; Victoria Williams at the Anacla Paawats; Vanessa Young in Finance; and Daniel Speck in Culture.

Overall, the youth performed exceptionally well, acquiring new skills, building relationships, and



The Anacla Government Office located in Upper Anacla.

providing valuable support.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations looks forward to future opportunities

for youth to work in the Government Office. Look out for job postings leading up to the Summer.



huu ay aht  
ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

## Huu-ay-aht First Nations

# New Staff Members Join Huu-ay-aht First Nations



Stephen Evans

Stephen Evans is an experienced economic development professional, specializing in business startup and working with First Nations. Previously, Stephen was working as a Business Development Manager for a First Nation-owned development corporation, located within the Lower Mainland. During this time, Stephen temporarily managed start-up teams, drafted budgets/proforma projections, obtained funding and reported progress back to the Board of Directors. Stephen is currently finishing up the final Applied Research Project (ARP) required to meet the requirements of an MBA in Community Economic Development, offered through Cape Breton University. The research will be focused on Indigenous forestry and its impact on sustainability and benefits to local communities. Stephen is driven by a desire to contribute towards increasing own-source revenues, as means to facilitate bottom-up economic development and the implementation of community initiatives.

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Celine Sauvé

Celine Sauvé has joined the Child and Family Wellness Team as a Protection and Family Support Liaison Worker. Celine has her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Diploma in Addictions and Substance Use from Vancouver Island University. In September, Celine will be started her Master's in Counselling with Athabasca University. Her previous work experience is supporting women and children who are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Celine is also a certified trauma-informed yoga teacher and has some training in expressive arts and somatic therapies which is something she would love to explore even more once she achieves her master's degree. On Celine's spare time she enjoys gardening, yoga, reading, baking, and being outside either hiking or crocheting on her deck.

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Victoria Nookemus

Victoria (Vikky) Nookemus is Huu-ay-aht First Nations new Outreach worker. She has just completed the Crisis Response and Mental Health Certificate and is excited to start this new position and work with and for Huu-ay-aht Citizens. Vikky completed her practicum with the Port Alberni Shelter Society at the Shelter on 8th Ave., Sobering Center, Safe Injection Site, and the Therapeutic Recovery Community (TRC) Farm, where she got the opportunity to meet new people and hear some of their life stories. When Vikky is not working, she enjoys relaxing nights, crafting different things from vinyl decals and heat transfers on her Cricut, beading, and drawing and painting.

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Savannah Lincez

Savannah Lincez is the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) currently working at Paawats in Anacla. She has an ECE certificate and a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, and with both of these, Savannah has been able to work in daycare and out-of-school-care as well as in the classroom as a teacher for the past 12 years. Some of her teaching philosophies include bringing the natural world into our learning space, making meaningful connections together and leading with kindness. On her off-time, Savannah likes to explore the beach, walk her dog Novak with her partner Sean or cuddle up with a cozy blanket and a good movie. Savannah looks forward to all the learning, sharing, and growing she will be doing at Paawats!



# New Staff Members Join Huu-ay-aht First Nations Con't



Kosta McHale

Kosta McHale is the Infrastructure and Capital Projects Specialist. He administers contracts, agreements, budgets, and procurement. Supports the Director of Infrastructure and Capital Projects and other departmental management staff. Over the years of his career, he's had the opportunity to work as a Heavy-Duty Technician in the Forestry and Construction Industry where he excelled at Hydraulic and Electronic Diagnostics and repairs. Moving on to the City of Port Alberni to work as a Heavy-Duty Technician at Public Works, supporting all departments, solid waste, sewer and water. He then moved on to a Facilities Maintenance Coordinator where he took on all City facilities and their assets, budgets and minor project management. He also spent 10 years with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC). His education includes, Red Seal Heavy Duty Technician. Municipal Occupational Health and Safety Training, Workplace Violence, Bullying and harassment, and Workplace Inspections. When Kosta is not working he enjoys the piano, guitar, and reading.

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Honey Johnson

Honey Johnson is the Acting H̱aw̱iḥ Clerk, where she plays a vital role in supporting the H̱aw̱iḥ Council by coordinating H̱aw̱iḥ meetings, handling travel arrangements, and booking accommodations when needed. She also assists with organizing Citizenship Committee meetings to ensure everything runs smoothly. With approximately seven years of experience in administration, Honey is no stranger to providing organizational support. This is her second opportunity to work for her Nation, a community that has supported her through both challenges and triumphs. She finds great fulfillment in being able to give back to her Nation, and the role allows her to stay deeply connected to her cultural roots. Outside of her professional responsibilities, Honey enjoys binge-watching shows with her boyfriend, spending quality time with her niece, and engaging in self-care activities that bring her joy and relaxation.

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hinatinyis

hinatinyis is the Language Coordinator, where she leads efforts to revitalize and preserve the nuučaaḥuḥ language. In her role, she is responsible for creating a long-term language plan, developing online classes for people to learn at their own pace, and collaborating with fluent speakers to create another blue language book. Additionally, hinatinyis is involved in developing laws and policies related to the nuučaaḥuḥ language. Previously, hinatinyis worked with the Nation in the Communications department and served as the Language and History Coordinator. She graduated from the University of Victoria in 2020 with a Diploma in Indigenous Language Revitalization. Throughout her learning journey, she had the honour of being mentored by the late numaqimiyis?aqsup Angie Joe, which deeply influenced her dedication to language preservation. Outside of her professional role, hinatinyis is a musician who enjoys singing karaoke, playing piano, and watching musicals. She is also passionate about video games, and she and her husband maintain a collection of retro consoles.



## A Bureaucracy Within a Bureaucracy': The Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Relationships under the Maa-nulth Treaty

Prepared by: tašii?akqin ʔuyaqhmisukqin (Our Journey, Our Story) Research Team and Advisory Committee Update

**Background:** Since 2014, the tašii?akqin ʔuyaqhmisukqin (Our Journey, Our Story) research team and Research Advisory Committee has heard firsthand how frustrating and dysfunctional negotiations and now the implementation of the Maa-nulth Treaty has been with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). Despite being part of Canada, we continuously heard that the deep ceded colonial dynamics including a 'bunker mentality' and DFO operating as a 'bureaucracy within a bureaucracy' create challenging relationships. In 2022, we were directed to conduct research interviews with implementation teams, including DFO, to look into our fourth priority research item: the relationship huuŋii?ath has with treaty partners (e.g., Canada and BC governments) and how these relationships can be improved. After much discussion with the Research Advisory Committee and agreeing on key themes that emerged from the over 25 hours of interview material with implementation teams, in May 2024 a full research paper sharing our findings was approved by huuŋii?ath Elected Executive Council. While we wait for our full paper to be released, we are here sharing a summary of our findings.

**Context:** For Coastal First Nations reserve creation was and remains tied to what

colonial authorities define as 'fisheries'—90% of nuučaan' uł reserves were directly linked to fisheries. Fisheries is a concept that departs from nuučaan' uł worldviews, including hišuk ma ćawak, since it is rooted in a conservation and management framework that silos knowledges and species, versus seeing them as intimately connected and governed by ʔawii? atak ʔaw' iih. The importance of fisheries and the oceans to Coastal Nation's lifeways was used as justification in the 1800s to draw up 'postage stamp size' reserves and, in the early 1900s, to substantially reduce huuŋii?ath reserve sizes (e.g., through the [McKenna-McBride Commission of 1913-1916](#)), a point that [Chief Louis Nookemiis](#) often shared. Additionally, huuŋii?ath and all nuučaan' ułath never ceded fishing responsibilities or rights, commercial or otherwise; this right was upheld in the [Ahousaht et al. v. Canada \[2021\]](#), for which [huuŋii?ath has 'me-too' provisions through the Maa-nulth Treaty](#) due to having to drop out of the formal litigation to move forward with treaty.

As a modern treaty First Nation, fisheries are particularly challenging since the treaty establishes a Nation-to-Nation partnership. A [report commissioned from Ratcliffe and Company](#), however, summarizes the dynamic of fisheries

with modern treaties: "Reconciliation appears to be impossible unless Canada revises its rigid policies respecting the negotiation of commercial fishing opportunities in modern treaties" ([Rich & Haines, 2017, p. 14](#)). Building from this context, we present three summary themes that emerged from our research into the relationship between DFO and Maa-nulth Treaty Nations.

### Theme One: Reconciliation, Modern Treaty Making, and Commercial Fishing

The lack of recognition of commercial fisheries potential in the Maa-nulth Treaty is an example of the incompatibility with DFO's perception and culture in regards to Indigenous rights and responsibilities, including failure to recognize nuučaan' uł law and ʔawii? atak ʔaw' iih. Legal practitioners who have analyzed commercial fishing rights and the Maa-nulth Treaty further this point:

"Reconciliation requires that First Nations whose cultures and economies have depended on fisheries since long before contact, maintain a share of these fisheries. This share must be provided in a way that recognizes their distinct cultural and economic requirements, which are significantly different than those of the general commercial fishery" ([Rich & Haines, 2017, p. 14](#)).

In our research, Maa-nulth legal-council discussed the difficulty creating functional relationships with DFO due to the Department's culture: "just sitting down with DFO representatives, it was such a different dynamic from every other negotiation table I sit at... there's just a different culture that I think is so deeply rooted that that's why you hear the complaints you do."

Recognizing that many huuḡiiḡath musčim live away from huuḡiiḡath ḡaḡuuli, ḡaaniicačišḡ commented on how traditional foods, specifically fish, connect musčim living away from home with their homelands and culture: "you look at our urban people, they're the ones that need traditional foods, they're the ones that need our culture to bring themselves home and to find out who they are and where they come from, as well as come out of this residential school loop of drugs and alcohol". When viewed in this light, the dysfunctional relationship with DFO is more than just an issue with bureaucracy; it is a barrier to huuḡiiḡath and nuučaan'ulath full self-determination in the shadow of inter-generational harms caused by colonialism.

### **Theme Two: A 'Bureaucracy within a Bureaucracy': Relationships Through the Maa-nulth Treaty**

Initially, DFO struggled to meet the conditions of treaty within a reasonable timeline. For instance, in the first years of implementation, Maa-nulth Nations sought to trigger the divergent catch provision in the Harvesting Agreement to access allocated sockeye salmon outside of domestic fishing

areas. Although there are clear processes for these provisions to be triggered (and nuučaan'ul protocols for fishing outside of ḡaḡuuli), Maa-nulth Nations were told that they were not 'proving their effort to fish' in their Domestic Fishing Area.

The hierarchical nature of DFO and immensity of its bureaucracy is particularly challenging given the culture of the department and its roots within conservation paradigms. Even if relationships with region offices are friendly, this means little due to the need for Ottawa-level decisions. Additionally, the tendency to shuffle staff within DFO is particularly challenging for Maa-nulth Nations. Rather than moving forward on topics, Maa-nulth Nations continually have to educate new DFO representatives. As ḡaaniicačišḡ shared: "there's challenges and these challenges are tough because DFO keeps changing their characters". A representative for DFO affirmed this tendency stating that "it is fairly normal" even for high-level positions, such as Canada's DFO co-Chair for Maa-nulth's Joint Fisheries Committee, "to see a three-year turnover". Even during the time that we wrote this paper, DFO's Co-chair of MTS' Joint Fisheries Committee left their role, with an acting director appointed prior to a new Director beginning.

### **Theme Three: nuučaan'ul Knowledges and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans**

The [Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard's \(Minister Murray\) 2021 mandate letter from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau](#) states "we must move faster on the path of reconciliation

with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples". Trudeau also points to the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and provides a list of commitments to the Minister of DFO. There is no mention of treaty rights or Aboriginal rights, let alone Indigenous law, in the mandate letter. What does exist is the directive to: "Work with Indigenous partners to better integrate traditional knowledge into planning and policy decisions" ([Office of the Prime Minister, 2021](#)). Through our research, however, ḡaaniicačišḡ and others who spoke with us shared many examples of how Indigenous knowledges are diminished in interactions with DFO, running counter to the mandated commitments.

Summary: Repeatedly, policy is pointed to as a barrier against effective treaty relations. Yet, DFO and Canada are the ones that write these policies. As the [Ratcliffe Report on Commercial Fishing Rights and Modern Treaties](#) reflect: "It is important to note that these policies...are purely a consequence of policy decisions by Canada. They are not necessary for conservation or proper fisheries management" (p. 12).

Questions about our research? Contact Research co-leads Onyx Sloan Morgan at [onyx.sloanmorgan@ubc.ca](mailto:onyx.sloanmorgan@ubc.ca) or (250) 508-3410; and Heather Castleden at [cas-tleden@uvic.ca](mailto:cas-tleden@uvic.ca) or (902) 489-2414.

Links to materials referenced above:

Office of the Prime Minister. (2021, December 16). Minister of Fisheries, Oceans

and the Canadian Coast Guard Mandate Letter. <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/12/16/minister-fisheries-oceans-and-canadian-coast-guard-mandate-letter>

Rich, J., & Haines, D. (2017). Commercial Fisheries: Should Commercial Fishing Rights be Included in Modern Treaties. Ratcliffe & Company LLP. <https://www.ratcliff.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Commercial-Fisheries-Should-Commercial-Fishing-Rights-Be-Included-In-Modern-Treaties-Pros-Cons-And-Alternatives-Ratcliff.pdf>

**Glossary**

ḥaḥuuli – traditional territories

ḥawil – hereditary leader within nuučaañuḥ government structures (singular)  
 ḥawiiḥ – hereditary leaders within nuučaañuḥ government structures (plural)  
 ḥawilḥatak ḥawiiḥ – traditional governance, “law of the hereditary leaders”  
 musčim – citizens  
 mamaḥni – people who travel on a boat and who have no land; often used now in reference to ‘white settlers’  
 t’aaq-wiihak – fishing with the permission of ḥawiiḥ  
 ḥišuk ma čawak – everything is one; a notion of the interconnected, interdependent, and reciprocal relationship between the people, the land, and the wider worlds in a physical,

spiritual, and social sense  
 ʔuuʔaḥuk – taking care of; in this context, this is about taking care of present and future generations as well as taking care of the resources provided by the land and the natural world  
 ʔiisaak – greater respect; personal and collective respect for the community and its people, traditional knowledge, the natural world, the metaphysical world, and other peoples and communities.  
 nuučaañuḥ – people along the mountain; a self-designation and recognition of territories for Nuuchah-nulth Nations in response to attempts at colonial classification  
 huuḥiiʔaḥ – the people of huuḥiiʔ; Huu-ay-aht

## Global Affairs Canada Tours Huu-ay-aht Trade Operations

On Friday, February 7, representatives from Global Affairs Canada’s Indigenous Engagement team and Indo-Pacific Branch toured Huu-ay-aht First Nation’s trade operations, which include the Oyster Farm and TimberTiles production. These industries are significant economic drivers for the community and reflect a deep commitment to sustainability and ethical sourcing.

“These business projects represent Huu-ay-aht Group of Business’s value-added strategy to maximize the return for Huu-ay-aht from the natural resources within the ḥaḥuuli” said Patrick Schmidt, CEO, Huu-ay-aht Group of Businesses.

Huu-ay-aht’s oyster farming operation, based in Bamfield BC, is a prime example of responsible aquaculture. Currently, the Oyster Farms have a limited shipping radius, but an exciting development is underway: the farm will soon be employing new processing technology. This equipment will allow for more significant expansion and robust shipping opportunities, further establishing Huu-ay-aht as a key player in the sustainable seafood market.

Additionally, the TimberTiles operation in Port Alberni is another standout. Sourcing wood from the region, including Huu-ay-aht ḥaḥuuli (territory), this operation is a testament to the Nation’s ability to manage its natural resources responsibly. Huu-ay-aht has partnered with local owners to market these high-quality TimberTiles, promot-



Left to right: Mark Stephens (CAO, Maa-nulth Treaty Society), Anna Hore (Coordinator, Maa-nulth Treaty Society), Patrick Schmidt (CEO, HGB), Jillian LeBlanc (Senior Treaty Advisor, HFN), Gary Wilson, Daniel Holton (Global Affairs Canada), Kingson Lim (Global Affairs Canada) (Photo provided by Jillian LeBlanc).

ing environmental stewardship and economic prosperity.

As the tour with Global Affairs Canada demonstrated, Huu-ay-aht is preserving its cultural heritage and actively building a sustainable and profitable future. With expanding operations and a focus on ethical business practices, Huu-ay-aht is positioning itself as a reliable and responsible business partner. For inquiries, please contact Huu-ay-aht Group of Businesses (HGB) or Huu-ay-aht Government (HFN). Patrick Schmidt, CEO, HGB, [patrick.s@huyuayaht.com](mailto:patrick.s@huyuayaht.com), 778-421-2663 or Amanda-Lee Cunningham, Communications Manager, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, 250-720-7776, [amanda.c@huyuayaht.org](mailto:amanda.c@huyuayaht.org).