



Uyaqhmis

July 2025

Issue 80

**Huu-ay-aht Economic Development
Takes Strides Towards Future Plans**



PM41913515

Important Dates to Remember

Canada Day	Office Closed, Tuesday, July 1
House of Huu-ay-aht 25th anniversary celebration	Saturday, July 26
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/



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
Mailing Address:
Huu-ay-aht First Nations
4644 Adelaide Street,
Port Alberni, BC
V9Y 6N4

www.huuayaht.org
for the latest news and events, job postings, and a digital archive of Uyaq̓hmis

Keep up to date with Uyaq̓hmis on social media:
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Huu-ay-aht First Nations Facebook page



Pachena Bay Whalers Score Big On And Off The Court

The Pachena Bay Whalers basketball team is making waves on and off the court. Thanks to a bold new design by Cierra Nookemus, the team now sports custom uniforms purchased with the support of the ḥawiiḥ Council, Suzuki Marine, and Breakers Marine. The uniforms represent a significant boost for the community program, which has steadily built a presence in Anacla.

The Whalers typically play weekly at the House of Huu-ay-aht every Tuesday evening from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Recently, they have moved to Bamfield Community School until renovations at the House of Huu-ay-aht are complete. The team comprises Huu-ay-aht citizens and friends from across Vancouver Island.

The current lineup features Huu-ay-aht Citizens such as Seth Nookemus, Nolan Nookemus, Issiah Dennis, Ed Johnson Jr., and Simon Gurney. Rounding out the team are Carter Burtlake, Greg Hook, and Daniel Zayonc from Bamfield, as well as Nisga'a friends Franky and Jamaal.

The Whalers recently showcased their new look and strong team spirit at the Tseshaht Light-



Pachena Whalers at Tseshaht Lighting Annual May Long Basketball Tournament in Port Alberni (Photo provided by Daniel Zayonc).

ning Annual May Long Basketball Tournament, held at Alberni District Secondary School. After an exciting run, the Whalers finished 7th out of 21 teams, their best result in three years. The team played five hard-fought games in the double-elimination tournament, with the following results: Ucluelet (Loss), Mavs (Win), Maaqtusiis (Win), Ucluelet (Win), and Outsiders (Loss).

A special highlight of the weekend was Huu-ay-aht Citizen Simon Gurney receiving an All-Star award for his outstanding performance throughout the tournament. The Whalers returned to Anacla proud, tired, and inspired, especially as they look forward to play-

ing on the new floor at the House of Huu-ay-aht.

The team extends heartfelt thanks to all the fans who cheered them on, both in the gym and online. Community spirit was also strong across divisions, with other Huu-ay-aht players competing over the weekend, including Chase Young, who won the Most Inspirational award for his age group, Natalie Clappis, and Jenelle Johnson-Sabbas.

With renewed energy and momentum, the Pachena Bay Whalers continue to represent the Nation with pride, proving once again the power of sport to unite people.

Families Gather For Fun At Glenwood Centre Family Night

On May 27, 2025, Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) Child and Family Wellness (CFW) team hosted a Family Fun Night at the Glenwood Centre in Port Alberni, bringing together citizens and families for an evening of laughter, connection, and play.

The event welcomed 20 children and their caregivers, along with five dedicated HFN staff members who supported and took part in the event.

Families enjoyed pizza together and spent the evening colouring, playing

board games, and running around in the big open space. Laughter and smiles filled the room as everyone made happy memories.

The success of the evening left everyone smiling and prompted everyone to ask when the next one would be.

HFN is excited to announce that another Family Night is planned for September, this time at Echo Pool. While the date and time are still to be announced, families can look forward to another evening filled with fun and

togetherness. Be sure to keep an eye out for our social media updates.



Cedar Roses that staff made for the 2023 Annual Peoples Assembly (Photo by Communications Archive).

Huu-ay-aht Warriors Compete In The 6th Annual Warrior Games

The Huu-ay-aht Warrior team recently competed in the 6th Annual Warrior Games at the end of May.

This year, the games were hosted in the mountainous territory of Ehattesaht, approximately a six-hour drive north of Anacla.

Five Huu-ay-aht team members Issiah Dennis, Chase Young, Landon Wares, Jordan Oppel, and Ryder Flanagan, represented our Nation, competing against seven other participating Nations and groups: Ka:'yu:k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h', Ehattesaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Yuułu?i?ath, Uchucklesaht, the Port Alberni Multi-Nation team, and Ditidaht.

The Warrior Games are modelled after tupaati (traditional marriage activities) and include events such as the forest run, archery, slingshot, hatchet

throw, log balance, feather swim, and a fire-starting challenge.

Highlights from this year's competition include:

- Issiah Dennis earned a podium finish in both the forest run and log balance.
- Jordan Oppel and Landon Wares swept first and second place in the hatchet throw.
- Ryder Flanagan and Chase Young showed great perseverance and teamwork during the fire-starting challenge.

The competition remained fierce throughout the weekend, with four teams in contention for the trophy heading into the final event. Ultimately, the Huu-ay-aht Warriors earned a proud 3rd place finish, behind the Tla-o-qui-aht and

Yuułu?i?ath teams.

A significant part of the weekend involved reconnecting with past Huu-ay-aht Warrior team members, including Brody and Jimmy Joseph, as well as Andrew Clappis Jr., and meeting new Warriors from other Nations.

Special recognition goes to Andrew Clappis Jr., who helped organize the weekend while also leading the Port Alberni Multi-Nation team to their first-ever Warrior Games appearance.

Finally, kudos to all the participating Nations and youth. It takes pride and courage to explore new territories and bring respectful excitement to these events. The Huu-ay-aht Warriors are already looking forward to next year's games so they can get the trophy home to Huu-ay-aht.



Some members of the Huu-ay-aht Warriors pose together by a river the evening before the game (Photo provided by Carter Burtlake).

Cultural Centre And Community Field Progress In Anacla

Exciting developments are taking shape in Anacla as construction progresses on two major community projects, the HUU-AY-AHT Cultural Centre and the new playing field in Upper Anacla.

Construction at the Cultural Centre is well underway. Footings and foundation walls were poured in May 2025, and work has begun on the under-slab plumbing and perimeter drain.

The next step will be backfilling the foundation and pouring the concrete slab on grade. Prefabricated wall panels are expected to arrive in mid-June, after which the building will go up quickly.

Set to open in spring 2026, the Centre will include:

- 3,360 sq. ft. of indoor space (single-storey)
- Four distinct areas:
 - Treasure Room
 - Retail Space
 - Multi-purpose Space
 - Covered Outdoor Work space (823 sq. ft.)



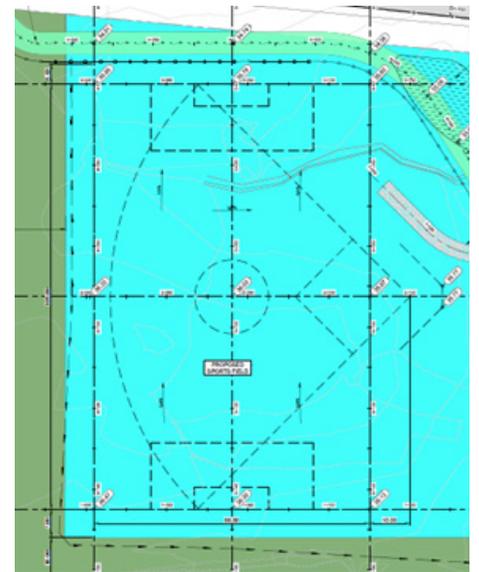
Digital design of the Cultrual Centre that is being built in Anacla (Photo provided by Brian McClure).

A key feature of the Centre will be the return of the Welcoming Figures, currently housed at the Royal BC Museum, which will be brought home once the building opens.

Additional work is also nearing completion on the new playing field in Upper Anacla, scheduled for completion by late summer 2025. The field will offer a full-size ball diamond and soccer field, providing much-needed recreational space for the community. While a washroom facility is planned for the site, its construction date is still to be determined.

The final grading of the field will be completed by the beginning of July 2025, followed by the application of hydroseeding. A built-in sprinkler system will ensure the new grass is established quickly and grows strong.

Together, these projects mark essential steps in building a stronger, more vibrant community, supporting both cultural revitalization and healthy, active living.



Blueprint of Upper Anacla playing field (Photo Provided by Brian McClure).

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 **DOWNLOAD NOW**  

In the first month since launching the HUU-AY-AHT App, we've had a total of 303 users. Of these, 122 are registered users, and 181 are unregistered users. This means that 181 people are not receiving up-to-date information.

Please note that after downloading the app, it is essential to check your email for a verification message after signing up. You must verify your account before you can log in and start receiving real-time notifications from HUU-AY-AHT First Nations.

Huu-ay-aht Approves Economic, Territorial, & Cultural Plans

Huu-ay-aht First Nations is moving forward with purpose and unity, having approved three cornerstone plans that will guide development across the Nation over the next 30 years. Together, the Community Economic Development Plan (CEDP), the Framework Plan, and the Kiiḡin Research and Development Report outline a bold, community-rooted vision that balances cultural revitalization, economic self-sufficiency, and sustainable growth throughout Huu-ay-aht territory.

Community Economic Development Plan (2025–2028)

The newly approved four-year CEDP is a practical, actionable roadmap designed to stimulate growth while supporting community well-being. Developed over the past year through extensive engagement, including citizen surveys, local workshops, and Economic Development Summits in Port Alberni and Anacla, the plan reflects the voices and visions of Huu-ay-aht citizens.

Key goals include:

- Creating good-paying jobs in forestry, aquaculture, clean energy, and value-added sectors
- Growing Huu-ay-aht-owned businesses and fostering Indigenous entrepreneurship
- Expanding tourism through culture- and language-based experiences
- Investing in housing, child-care, and wraparound services to help bring more citizens home
- Creating training and workforce development opportunities to empower citizens of all ages

The CEDP aligns with the

Nation's Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP), Huu-ay-aht Strategic Plan, HFN Economic Development Act and supports the broader goal of reclaiming economic sovereignty. With clear performance indicators and timelines, the plan sets the stage for immediate action on job creation, infrastructure development, and business expansion.

The initiative was led by Economic Development Officer Piyush Pushkarna, with support from consultants John Watson and Chris Fields, joint collaboration of HFN's various departments, Huu-ay-aht Group of Businesses under the guidance of the Executive Council and ḡawiiḡ Council.

Huu-ay-aht Adopts Historic Framework Plan

Huu-ay-aht's Framework Plan is a visionary, long-term planning tool that outlines how the Nation will grow and thrive across its ḡahuuḡi (traditional territory) over the next 20 to 30 years. Officially adopted by the Executive Council, the plan was developed in close partnership with citizens, hereditary leaders, and technical advisors, drawing on sacred teachings and community priorities.

Grounded in the Huu-ay-aht principles of ḡiisaak (respect), ḡuuḡaḡuk (taking care of), and Hiḡuk ma ḡawak (everything is connected), the plan emphasizes:

- The creation of healthy, sustainable communities that support Huu-ay-aht citizens living on their land
- Balanced development that respects ecosystems and sacred cultural sites

• Opportunities for learning,

employment, and gathering spaces

- Improved territorial connectivity via roads, waterways, and trails
- Protection of identity and heritage through place-based design and cultural celebration

Citizen input was central to the process, with engagement sessions held across Vancouver Island and the mainland, as well as online. The plan builds on completed infrastructure, such as the Bamfield Main Road upgrade (2023), which reconnected remote parts of the territory and opened access to key development zones.

Rather than being a rigid construction schedule, the Framework Plan acts as a living blueprint, adaptable to evolving needs while staying rooted in core values and long-term governance structures.

Revitalizing Cultural Tourism: Kiiḡin Tours Relaunch Planned for 2026

The Nation's efforts to reconnect with its history and foster economic opportunity have come together in the newly completed Kiiḡin Research and Development Project, which outlines the complete relaunch of Kiiḡin Tours by 2026. The revitalized tours will honour this sacredness while sharing its stories through a respectful, educational lens.

Key goals of the relaunch include:

- Respectful public interpretation of the cultural and historical significance of Kiiḡin

Continue on page 7

Kiixin Tours Planned To Relaunch In 2026

Continued from page 6

- Training Huu-ay-aht youth and citizens in cultural interpretation, storytelling, and operations
- Aligning with regional tourism initiatives, including the Anacla Visitor Centre and trail system expansion
- Creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in Indigenous-led tourism

Unlike previous years, the relaunch will be managed by the Huu-ay-aht Group of Businesses (HGB), ensuring a professional tourism operation with deep cultural oversight and citizen involvement.

The project also launched a Youth Engagement Initiative, starting with a workshop held in Anacla on Monday, May 26. Several youths have already stepped forward to participate in guided tours, media development, and future training.

In 2025, participants will receive specialized training in areas such as cultural protocols and heritage preservation, visitor engagement and safety, and media and education-focused programming.

These young leaders will play key roles when Kiixin Tours officially launches in 2026, making the initiative both an economic opportunity and a powerful tool for cultural transmission.

Together, these three interconnected plans—the CEDP, Framework Plan, and Kiixin Report—reflect a growing momentum across the Nation. They represent a shared commitment to responsible development, cultural revitalization, and community well-being.

Whether through building infrastructure, investing in youth, or protecting the land, Huu-ay-aht First Nations is asserting its vision of self-determination and prosperity grounded in tradition.

To access the complete plans or learn how to get involved, please scan the QR codes provided or visit huuayaht.org. You can also contact the Port Alberni Huu-ay-aht Government Office at 250-723-0100.



QR Code For CEDP



QR Code For Framework Plan



QR Code For Kiixin Research and Development Project



Huu-ay-aht First Nations
Welcome to our
ḥaḥuuti Video



Scan the QR code or visit www.huuayaht.org

Huu-ay-aht Launches Tribunal Act Reform Project

The Tribunal Act is a formal process that operates independently from Huu-ay-aht Government to ensure government decision-making is lawful and in the best interests of Huu-ay-aht, and to provide for the just, timely, cost-effective, and final resolution of Huu-ay-aht disputes. Decisions are binding and enforceable under BC Administrative Tribunal Standards.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations identified a need to revitalize the Tribunal Act to reflect Huu-ay-aht laws, values, and principles.

The Nation applied for and recently received a “Weaving Justice” grant from the Law Foundation of BC to do a four-year project to undertake research, develop educational materials, and provide recommendations to the Law and Policy Development Committee concerning potential reform of the Tribunal Act.

To celebrate, Huu-ay-aht First Nations held Community Engagement Sessions from Monday, May 26 – Thursday, May 29, 2025, where an introduction to the Project, Team, and Advisory Circle was provided.

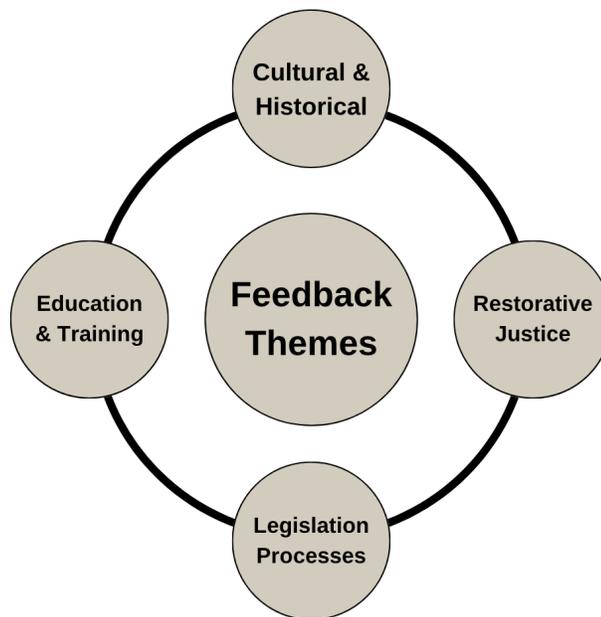
Advisory Circle:

- **Chair of the Law and Policy Development Committee:** Stephen Rayner

- **A ḥaw̓iiḥ representative appointed by the ḥaw̓iiḥ Council:** Tommy Happynook

- **Huu-ay-aht First Nation Tribunal Member:** Andrea Pettigrew

- **A Huu-ay-aht Elder ap-**



These are the four themes that were discovered during the engagement process of the Tribunal Community engagements (Provided by the Huu-ay-aht Tribunal Project Team).

pointed by the nanaaniiqsu:
Jack Cook

- **Two Huu-ay-aht Citizens:** Angela Wesley and Kiana Mio

Project Team:

- **Executive Director:** Karen Haugen

- **Project Lead:** Heather Castleden

- **Project Coordinator:** Open position, applications being accepted until July 9, 2025.

- **Summer Student Intern:** Kiana Mio

Community Engagement Sessions:

Huu-ay-aht provided a meal and the project team delivered presentations in Vancouver, Port Alberni, Victoria, and Anacla, which are home to significant numbers of Huu-ay-aht people.

The Advisory Circle and project team then facilitated discussions amongst citizens in attendance. Four distinct themes came from citizen questions and comments.

A report providing details on these themes is available on the Huu-ay-aht website under “Tribunal Project”.

ḷeko (thank you) to all the Citizens who participated and shared knowledge with us, it provided us with important conversations and dialogue.

Thank you for sharing your time and meaningful feedback with us. Your comments and questions will help to ensure that our work reflects the needs and voices of our citizens.

We look forward to continuing our work together to understand the current Tribunal Act. Please watch for updates at www.huuayaht.org or reach out to heather.c@huuayaht.org for more information.

LANGUAGE CORNER

Action Words

Mood Endings

The Nuu-chah-nulth language uses suffixes or mood endings to create full sentences.

These endings tell us who we are talking about, when it happened, and many other pieces of useful information.

Question Ending

I	-ḥa•s
You	-ḥa•k
He, She, It	-ḥa•
We	-ḥin
You All	-ḥa•suu
They	-ḥa•ʔat

It's important to remember that while using these endings to make sentences you must also use the syllables rule.

nunuuk - singing
huuṭhuuṭa - dancing

Rule

When you see this symbol •
You stretch the vowel if the root word only is one syllable long.

suu - holding it
suuḥaak - Are you holding it?
haʔuk - hungry
haʔukḥak - Are you hungry?

Letters

- ḥ deep h - like cleaning your glasses
- ṭ hissing L sound
- uu Long u sound

From last issue

ʔaapḥiisitaameʔic
ʔaap ḥii si ta me ʔic

Huu-ay-aht Land Use Regulations Amendments Project

Hišimlín (We are all together). We're excited to share with you the launch of the Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) Land Use Regulations Amendments Project, which is a significant step forward for our community following the adoption of the Framework Plan. It is with the spirit and intent of taking care of our ɥahuuḷi that we move this project forward! We will keep citizens informed about this Project through Newsletters, Huu-ay-aht First Nations App updates, and on our website where you can learn why we're undertaking this work, who's helping to move it forward, how long it will take, and how you can get involved.

What is this project about and why are we doing it?

ʔaaʔaayiṣaɥaɥaɥalín (we have lots to do). Huu-ay-aht has over 8,250 hectares of land within our Treaty settlement boundaries. Guided by our key policy frameworks: 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, Hišuk ma čawak Integrated Resource Management Plan, Community Economic Development Plan, and our Framework Plan. This project will update four regulations under the Huu-ay-aht Community Planning and Development Act, which includes our:

- 1. Land Use Plan Regulation:** This document outlines our long-term vision for land use and development within our ɥahuuḷi, and all other regulations must align with it.
- 2. Zoning Regulation:** This document establishes guidelines for the types of development that can occur in specific areas, as well as the permitted uses and construction methods for each property.
- 3. Development and Building Permit Regulation:** This document outlines the steps applicants must take to develop land in our ɥahuuḷi.
- 4. The Residential Lease Regulation:** This document explains the steps required to establish residential leases on our ɥahuuḷi.

Who is helping to move this project forward?

łiłičaḷukwiṭasin (we will be steering our canoe in the right direction). This project is led by HFN Lands and Natural Resources Department, with oversight from the Executive and ɥawíiḥ Councils and support from a working group comprising staff from multiple departments. Huu-ay-aht has also hired Firelight, an Indigenous-owned and led consulting firm, to help support the project with planning and technical support services. Firelight collaborates with Indigenous governments and organizations throughout BC and Canada. You can learn more about them, the values that guide their work, and the services they provide at <https://firelight.ca>.

How long will the project take and how can I be involved?

ɥaačatiḷ ʔaaqḷin haaɥin (We'll invite others). Launched in May 2025, this year-long project is scheduled for completion in April 2026. During this time, we will host a series of virtual and in-person citizen engagement opportunities to reach out to and hear from as many citizens as possible. We will also share project updates openly and regularly to spotlight how your input is helping shape the proposed amendments, ensuring they reflect the real needs of our citizens and their daily lives. There are several ways to stay informed and get involved, including visiting the Huu-ay-aht app or website, attending citizen engagement opportunities, and staying informed by reading the newsletters.



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Bamfield Community School Shines At paawacimłna?u

On Wednesday, June 4, the staff and students of Bamfield Community School proudly participated in the paawacimłna?u – Nesting Moon Gathering (Springfest), an annual celebration held at the Alberni Athletic Hall in Port Alberni.

This event brought together various communities to share in culture, connection, and celebration.

A group of 17 students from grades 2 through 9 travelled from Bamfield to Port Alberni to perform the song and dance titled “The Partner.” While many of the students felt nervous about per-

forming in front of a large audience, their courage and efforts truly shone.

As they danced and sang, the energy in the hall transformed. The crowd clapped, cheered, and celebrated with them, creating an uplifting and joyful atmosphere that reflected the spirit of the gathering.

Since the end of spring break, Vanessa Sabbas, Huu-ay-aht First Nation Education Coordinator, has been visiting Bamfield Community School every Tuesday and Thursday to provide cultural and language support, academic help, and outreach. Alongside Cory

Howard Sr. and Daniel Jack, she assists students in learning traditional songs and dances, as well as language lessons that include the Nuu-chah-nulth alphabet sounds, numbers, animals, colours, and common phrases.

“It’s truly heartwarming to witness the growth and dedication of these young learners. Keep up the fantastic work!” says Vanessa Sabbas.

Additionally, she offers in-class academic support in one-on-one or small group settings and communicates with parents and caregivers to share student progress and celebrate their growth.

Congrats To All Huu-ay-aht Grads From Daycare to Post-Secondary



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ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

ʔatiqʂi?ate?ic ?aḥkuu

(You are acknowledged with this)

Congratulations to Huu-ay-aht 2025 Graduates!

Secondary School Graduates

Tehya Anderson - Reynolds Secondary School, Victoria
Keona Charles - Britannia Secondary School, Vancouver
Issiah Dennis - Bamfield Community School
Matthew Dennis - Wellington Secondary School, Nanaimo
Charles George Jr. - Wsanec Secondary School, W Saanich
Eli Ginger - ADSS, Port Alberni
Hendrix Johnson-Turgeon - ADSS, Port Alberni
Jacqueline Johnson-Turgeon - Eighth Ave. Learning Centre
Sheila Mickey - ILC Saanichton, Saanich
Olivia Peters - Dover Bay Secondary School, Nanaimo
Makayla Robinson - Eighth Ave. Learning Centre
Roland Unger - Edward Milne Community School, Sooke
George Weir - ILC Saanichton, Saanich
Sonora Williams - Ladysmith Secondary
Victoria Williams - Bamfield Community School
Vanessa Young - Bamfield Community School

Post-Secondary Graduates

Eileen Amber-Lynn - Diploma: Community, Family and Child Studies, Camosun College
Arianna Johnson-Sabbas - Indigenous College Preparation Certificate, Camosun College
Hayden Johnson-Turgeon - Auto Service Technician, NIC
Jennifer Joseph - Master of Arts in in Counselling Psychology, Yorkville University
Randy Wong - Auto Service Technician, VIU
Quintin Johnson-Sears - Auto Service Technician, Camosun College

Daycare Graduates

Port Alberni Paawats

Adonis Jules
Violet Patenaude
Daymen Skyler-Williams
Riverleigh (River) Martin
Elizabeth (Lizzy) Blondahl
Kylo Knighton-Lamb

Anacla Paawats

Selena Pye
Cassandra Charleson
Willow Nookemus



In the 2024-2025 school year, Huu-ay-aht celebrates 16 secondary school graduates, six post-secondary graduates, and nine Paawats graduates. The Huu-ay-aht First Nations Government extends heartfelt congratulations to all graduates. We are proud of your accomplishments and wish you continued success in all your future endeavors.



Inside Look: The Team Crafting the Reports You Read

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



Kiana Mio

Background information about yourself:

I've worked in different roles connected to community, including with the Indigenous Relations team at YVR, and Elder Care for Tsawwassen First Nations. I was raised in Ladner and Tsawwassen with my Musqueam family.

Why did you join this research committee?

I joined this committee because I wanted to be a part of community-led research. Through work experience, I've witnessed how decisions get made at higher levels. I think it's

important that community voices are brought into those spaces early and often to understand what is working, and what needs improvement. I really enjoy my time with the other members of the Research Advisory; we have a cool group!

What does treaty and the research project on Treaty Implementation mean to you?

We have a great opportunity being free from the confines of the Indian Act. It's important that we set this foundation now for the next generation to rebuild our connections and strength with our stories, history and responsibilities to each other and our ḥaḥuuli.



Sektis (Jeff Cook)

Background information about yourself:

My name is Sektis (Jeff Cook). I was born and raised in Port Alberni and lived in huuḥii?ath communities

during the summer holidays since I was in residential schools for 13 years. In 1986, I became the second chief of Yaaluuwaštakamaḥ house through my grandmother, Mary Moses. In 2022, I passed my seat onto my daughter Yaalthuuaa-uks (Sherri Cook), who is holding the seat for her son, Wiit-sauu (Fredrick Cook). After graduation I worked in the forestry industry for 40 years. I've recently retired and have become more active in my community by sitting on various committees. I was also Elected Chief Councillor of huuḥii?ath First Nations in 2011 during the first four years of treaty implementation.

Why did you join this research committee?

I was appointed onto this committee as the ḥawiiḥ representative in 2021. Once I passed on my seat, I was asked to stay on the Research Committee

as one of the Elder representatives. I find sitting on this committee rewarding since we are active—all committee members come from different ages and live in different regions. We all have input, ideas, suggestions, and experiences that help to inform and guide our research and our discussions.

What does treaty and the research project on Treaty Implementation mean to you?

As huuḥii?ath, we are leading the way with treaty implementation. We are learning things along the way and doing the hard work of improving implementation for future generations. This Research Committee has tried to elevate this work through research, including publishing research papers that are public and document some of our challenges and successes. We have had a great support team on our committee.



Get to Know Some Members Of The Team Behind the Reports

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



hinatinyis (Brittany Coté)

Background information about yourself:

I am a huuŋii?ath woman with ties to Ucluelet, Toquaht, and Serpent River. I have been an

active member of our community who is passionate about self-governance since 2014. My father, Larry Johnson, raised me with a strong sense of justice and love for the coast. My mother, Darlene Leonew, taught me to take care of others and the importance of family. I am an aunty, an eldest daughter, and an agent of change.

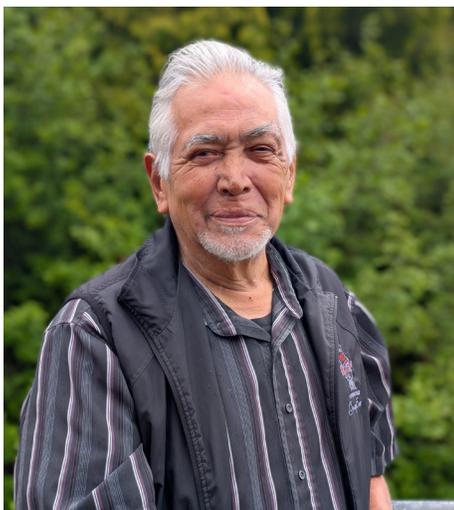
Why did you join this research committee?

I have always been interested in Indigenous sovereignty and since this committee was dedicated to reviewing Treaty Implementation it felt like a natural fit. I was grateful to be invited to be a Port Alberni representative and have enjoyed the ever-growing and changing nature of how we conduct research and support the Nation. huuŋii?ath have

been world-leading with Treaty Implementation through our many accomplishments and it's an honour to bear witness through this research project.

What does treaty and the research project on Treaty Implementation mean to you?

Treaty Implementation to me is an opportunity. It gives us room to make mistakes and learn from them. We can review what isn't working and have the authority to update our laws and policies. It's a chance to create meaningful change that is custom built to our needs as a community. A voice at the table to advocate for our nation on a provincial and federal level. An opportunity to walk between two worlds, the one our ancestors live in and the one our children will inherit.



Simon Dennis

Background information about yourself:

I'm a proud huuŋii?ath. I'm a father, grandfather, and great grandfather. I'm proudly married to a wonderful Anishinaabe woman, Sylvia. She's helped me a lot to accept what happened and find the courage to change. I am a Survivor. I've gone through a lot of restrictions through colonization. I went to Poundmaker Cree Nation in 1978 for 30 days and I left 17 years later!

Why did you join this re-

search committee?

I'm on this RAC to learn more about Treaty and to contribute to Treaty implementation so that it is a benefit to all huuŋii?ath musčim.

What does treaty and the research project on Treaty Implementation mean to you?

What Treaty means to me is that it is us, as huuŋii?ath, gathering together, to be more self-governing. But we still have a long way to go. I really want inclusion, not exclusion.

Students & Youth Workers Join Huu-ay-aht For The Summer

This summer, Huu-ay-aht First Nations is excited to welcome 15 enthusiastic youth and students into our 2025 Summer Employment Program.

These young Citizens are joining us in various departments and business operations, gaining valuable work experience, new skills, and a deeper understanding of Nation governance and services.

Each participant identified areas of interest and preferred work locations such as Anacla, Bamfield, and Port Alberni.

While placement depends on operational needs, we've done our best to match youth with departments where they can learn, contribute, and grow professionally.

Whether they are returning to school in the fall (Students) or entering the workforce full-time (Youth), each of these individuals brings energy, ambition, and pride in their Nation.

Meet this year's group of summer workers:

• **Isaak Johnson:** Isaak Johnson, 20, is working at the Port Alberni Visitor Centre this summer. He graduated from Nanaimo District Secondary School in 2022 and plans to pursue further post-secondary education shortly. In his free time, Isaak enjoys hiking, running, working out, and occasionally drawing.

Isaak chose to work for the Nation this summer to gain new experience in a field he is less familiar with. He is eager to expand his understanding of the Nation and hopes the knowledge and skills he gains will support his future goals and personal growth.

• **Seth Nookemus:** Seth Nooke-

mus, 19, will be working in Anacla as a Junior Guide for Kiiḡin, shadowing other guides to learn about the role to support with future tours. Seth is the child of Georgie Nookemus Jr. and Rose White. Seth is looking forward to understanding the role of a guide and deepening his knowledge of Huu-ay-aht history and culture while building confidence in sharing that knowledge with future visitors to Kiiḡin.

• **Victoria Williams:** Victoria Williams, 18, will be returning to work this summer at the Anacla Paawats. Her mother is Phyllis Williams, and her father is Duane Nookemis. She is returning to Anacla Paawats as she is interested in gaining more experience in this field of work.

• **Vanessa Young:** Vanessa Young, 17, will be working with Communications and supporting administration in Anacla. She is the daughter of Kristen Young and Patrick Nookemus, and she has two younger siblings. In her spare time, Vanessa enjoys camping, walking the beach, and spending time with her friends. She is excited to be working in these departments as it is a great learning experience and is an area of work she is interested in.

• **Duane Ajay Dennis:** Duane Ajay Dennis, 15, will be working as a Guardian this summer. His parents are Phillip Dennis Sr. and Katherine Frank. Duane is excited to work in the homelands as a Guardian and looks forward to learning more about the job and the land.

• **Emily Kosteniuk:** Emily Kosteniuk, 17, will be working with both the Communications Department and the Administration Team. She is the daughter of the late June Williams and Sean Kosteniuk and has one older brother, also named Sean. Emily currently attends

Eighth Avenue Learning Centre and enjoys spending her free time with her family, crafting, beading, and playing with her cat, Shadow.

After working with the Nation last summer, Emily decided to return for another season. She found the experience meaningful and appreciated the sense of purpose it gave her, helping her stay motivated and engaged throughout the summer. She's excited to contribute again and learn in her new role.

• **Sydney Nookemus:** Sydney Nookemus, 15, will be working at the Port Alberni Paawats. Her parents are James and Annette Nookemus. She selected to work at Paawats to gain knowledge in the field and connect with her nation this summer.

• **Daniel Speck:** Daniel Speck, 16, will be working with Cultural again this summer. He is the son of Hazel Cook and Donald Speck and attends North Island Secondary School, where he enjoys classes like Social Studies and English. In his free time, Daniel likes to play Dungeons & Dragons, video games, read, and cook.

This is Daniel's second summer working for the Nation. He returned to the position after a positive experience last year, where he gained valuable skills and deepened his connection to his culture. Daniel is looking forward to continuing that growth and contributing to his community again this summer.

• **Hailey Jacob:** Hailey Jacob, 17, will be working with the Culture and Language team this summer. She is the daughter of Susan Cook and Jason Jacob, and her siblings are Ethan Cook, Teigan Peterson, Sterling Peterson, and Kirsten Peterson. Hailey will be entering Grade 12 in the 2025–2026 school year.

15 Youth and Students Take On Work Experience This Summer

Hailey enjoys a variety of activities, including hockey, slo-pitch, volleyball, singing, dancing, and drawing. She brings energy, creativity, and a strong sense of community to her role this summer.

She chose to work for the Nation this summer to deepen her connection with her culture and community. Having already explored her St'át'imc heritage on her father's side, Hailey is eager to learn more about her Nation and was inspired by the positive experience her cousin Daniel had in the program last year.

• **Lily Johnson:** Lily Johnson, 19, is working at the Port Alberni ʔumʔiiqsu Child Care Centre for the summer. A proud member of Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Lily is the daughter of Karla Johnson and granddaughter of Barbara Johnson. She was recently accepted into the Early Childhood Education program at North Island College, which she will begin in September.

Lily previously worked at Paawats last summer and enjoyed the experience, which deepened her passion for working with children. In her free time, she enjoys gaming on PC and PlayStation, biking around town, and spending time with her sister, Alyssa.

This summer, Lily is excited to return to support her community and help create a fun, safe, and nurturing environment for children. She believes in the importance of making kids feel seen, heard, and cared for, especially during the summer months when they're growing, learning, and forming lasting memories. Lily looks forward to gaining more experience and serving as a positive role model for Huu-ay-aht's youngest citizens.

• **Nolan Nookemus:** Nolan

Nookemus, 15, will be working with the Lands and Natural Resources department. His parents are Kristen Young and Patrick Nookemus. He has two sisters Vanessa Young and Tauri Young. He is entering grade ten and enjoys playing basketball and hockey in his free time. Nolan is excited to work for the Nation this summer to learn new skills and gain a deeper understanding of Huu-ay-aht territory. He looks forward to contributing to the stewardship of the land while expanding his knowledge and experience.

• **Kiana Mio:** Kiana Mio, 29, is a summer intern working on the Tribunal Project. She comes from the Joe family and is the daughter of Clint and Natane Mio. Kiana is the eldest of two siblings, with her ʔukwiiqsu (younger brother), Timothy. Her late grandfather, Isaac Joe, was the son of Peter and Odelia Joe, and Peter was the son of Kenneth and Susie "Opetchesah" Alexander. On her paternal grandfather's side, her family has roots in Italy.

Kiana is currently completing her fourth year in the Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice Program at the University of British Columbia.

A true outdoor enthusiast, whether it's summer or winter, she loves to be by the water with a tent, a campfire, and some snacks. She is excited to be working with the Nation this summer, particularly on the Tribunal Project, as it allows her to connect directly with citizens and helps ensure their voices are meaningfully reflected in the work. Kiana is also grateful for the chance to learn from Nation staff and community members and values the time she is spending close to home with her Joe family.

• **Issiah Dennis:** Issiah Dennis,

17, is back for his second summer with Lands and Natural Resources. His mother is Louella Dennis, and his grandfather is Clarence Dennis. In Issiah's free time, he likes to play basketball. Issiah wanted to work for the Nation this summer for work experience and to discover what he would like to pursue for a future career. Issiah is really excited to be getting involved and to have this hands-on experience.

• **Leonard Nookemis:** Leonard Nookemis, 25, will be working with the Lands and Natural Resources department in Anacla this summer. He is the son of Rowena Cook and is eager to deepen his knowledge of the land and develop a better understanding of the work done by the department.

• **Charli Brown:** Charli Brown, 17, will be working with Community & Citizen Services this summer, supporting Education, Events, and the Girls Program. She is excited to gain her first work experience and is eager learning more about her Nation. Charli hopes this opportunity will help her build confidence, develop new skills, and support her transition from high school to post-secondary education after she completes her Grade 12 in the 2025-2026 school year, starting in September. Overall, she looks forward to continuing to connect with her culture while exploring future career possibilities.

This program is more than just a job, it's an opportunity for youth to connect with their community, gain hands-on experience, and contribute to the future of the Huu-ay-aht Nation.

Please join us in welcoming these young leaders and supporting them throughout their summer journey!

Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Hosts Entrepreneurship Workshop

More than 35 citizens from the Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ (Ucluelet) First Nation, the Uchuck-lesahṭ Tribe Government, and the Nuuchah-nulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC) participated in an engaging and informative Entrepreneurship Workshop on June 24, 2025. The workshop took place at the Barclay Hotel in Port Alberni, on the traditional territory of the Tse-shahṭ and Hupacasath First Nations. The goal of the Entrepreneurship Workshop was an initiative to build a strong collaborative foundation of entrepreneurship across our communities.

The NEDC, who hosted the workshop, offers financing and loan programs and business advisory services to Indigenous entrepreneurs and First Nations community-owned businesses on Vancouver Island. The NEDC invited speakers were previous NEDC clients and are successful entrepreneurs from our communities who came to share their journey, challenges, hard work, and results/success stories.

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Future Entrepreneurs attend workshop hosted by NEDC (Photo by Piyush Pushkarna).

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Led by the NEDC team, the workshop topics included an introduction to entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial mindset, understanding the sacrifices and rewards around business ownership, and addressed the common myths around business ownership. The NEDC team also provided an overview of support and services they provide, and recounted inspiring stories from local Vancouver Island Indigenous entrepreneurs.

The leadership and support for the Entrepreneurship Workshop provided by the team at NEDC workshop was well received. “The energy in the room was amazing and it was clear that the content really resonated with the participants”, reported Piyush Pushkarna, Huu-ay-aht First Nations Economic Development Officer.

We hope that more Nuuchah-nulth Nations will join the next session, planned for September 2025, as we continue to work towards a strong foundation of entrepreneurship across our communities. For more information about Huu-ay-aht Entrepreneurship opportunities, please contact Piyush Pushkarna, Economic Development Officer, at email piyush.p@huuayaht.org or phone 250-723-0100.



Executive Council Monthly Reports are available for viewing on our website



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