



Uyaqhmis

March 2026 Issue 82

Looking Back and Celebrating One Year of Operations of the ?um?iiqsu Centre



PM41913515

Important Dates to Remember

First Sitting of the 2026 Legislature	Tuesday, March 17
Second & Third Fitting of the 2026 Legislature	Monday, March 30, 2026
Statutory Holiday	Office Closed, Friday, April 3, 2026
Statutory Holiday	Office Closed, Monday, April 6, 2026
Victoria Day	Office Closed, Monday, May 18, 2026
Indigenous People's Day	Office Closed, Monday, June 22, 2026
Canada Day	Office Closed, Wednesday, July 1, 2026
B.C. Day	Office Closed, Monday, August 3
2026 Huu-ay-aht Days	Friday, August 14 - Saturday, August 15
Labour Day	Office Closed, Monday, September 7, 2026
National Day of Truth and Reconciliation	Office Closed, Wednesday, September 30, 2026
Thanksgiving	Office Closed, Monday, October 12, 2026
Remembrance Day	Office Closed, Wednesday, November 11, 2026
Winter Break	Monday, December 21, 2026 - Friday, January 1, 2027

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, hišukma cawak, 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

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www.huuayaht.org

Download and register the Huu-ay-aht First Nations App to receive notifications to your phone.

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[@HuuayahtFN](https://www.instagram.com/HuuayahtFN)



Huu-ay-aht First Nations Facebook page



Community Voices Shape New Huu-ay-aht Language Policy

Throughout January, Huu-ay-aht First Nations moved forward with a comprehensive series of community engagement sessions focused on the future of language revitalization and the development of a formal Language Policy.

The tour, which made stops in Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, and Anacla, focused on defining the role of the Language Coordinator and establishing a framework for protecting cultural knowledge.

A Roadmap for Revitalization

The sessions served as a primary step in creating an administrative language plan. By travelling directly to these communities, the project aimed to reconnect with language learners across Nuu-chah-nulth territory.

These discussions will allow for a direct assessment of what tools are currently effective and where gaps remain, while also facilitating the collection of resources to be translated into local dialect.

A significant component of this new strategy includes the development of an online learning experience accessible to citizens, guests, and employees.

The initiative has already launched a dedicated YouTube channel, @ciiqciqamin, which currently features phonetic lessons. Scan the QR Code to view Youtube Channel

Future content is set to expand into complex linguistic topics such as syllables and sentence structure, alongside broader discussions of the barriers to language revitalization and the healing supports learners need.

Establishing Cultural Safety



Huu-ay-aht First Nations YouTube Channel. Scan the QR code to visit our page or search for @ciiqciqamin on YouTube.

At the heart of the proposed Language Policy is the creation of a consent-based recording framework.

The policy is designed to provide elders and fluent speakers with the confidence to share their knowledge by allowing them to dictate the level of access for their recordings.

Under these guidelines, content can be classified as:

- **Open:** Accessible to the public.
- **Limited:** Restricted to the Huu-ay-aht community.
- **Closed:** Reserved for specific family groups.

By clearly defining the distinction between open and closed cultural practices, the Nation can ensure that teachings are recorded and preserved without compromising sacred or sensitive information.

Unlocking Historical Archives

This policy framework also addresses the repatriation of external research. Linguist Henry Kammler, who has documented Nuu-chah-nulth speakers for decades, has

expressed a desire to return years of audio recordings and notes to the Nation.

The new policy provides the necessary structure to receive this sensitive material, ensuring it is stored securely rather than placed in widely accessible folders.

Long-Term Institutional Protection

The benefits of the policy extend beyond language learning. Other departments, including the Huu-ay-aht Group of Businesses and Economic Development, will gain clear guidelines on what cultural information can be shared with guests.

By codifying these definitions, the Nation ensures that sacred teachings remain protected through institutional policy, safeguarding them for future generations regardless of leadership changes.

Moving forward, the information gathered during the January sessions will inform a series of interviews scheduled for later this year to refine these cultural definitions further.

Huu-ay-aht and B.C. Sign Historic Child and Family Services Agreement



Members of Huu-ay-aht First Nations celebrated a significant milestone on Dec. 16, 2025, by signing a child and family services agreement, known as the yaaʔakapʷin (we are embracing) agreement, with the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development (Photo by Huu-ay-aht Communications).

Huu-ay-aht First Nations and the Province of British Columbia officially signed the yaaʔakapʷin (We Are Embracing) Agreement on December 16, 2025.

Set to take full effect on March 16, 2026, the agreement establishes a new framework for child and family services that prioritizes cultural connection and community involvement.

The agreement is rooted in three sacred Huu-ay-aht principles: ʔiisaak (Greater Respect), ʔuʔaaʔuk (Taking Care Of), and hišukma čawaak (Everything is One).

These values will now guide interactions, planning, and decision-making in child-welfare cases involving Huu-ay-aht children and youth.

The primary goal of the yaaʔakapʷin agreement is to ensure that children remain safely connected to their families, culture,

and community.

By embedding Huu-ay-aht traditions, language, and history into the provincial service model, the agreement seeks to provide more culturally appropriate supports that focus on prevention and on keeping children at home whenever possible.

This signing represents a significant milestone in Huu-ay-aht's journey toward exercising full jurisdiction over child and family services.

The Province has committed \$30,000 to support the implementation of this agreement and the transition toward independent governance in this sector.

Key pillars of the shared agreement include:

- **Enhanced Decision-Making:** Ensuring the Nation has a primary role in planning for its children and families.

- **Prevention First:** Prioritizing services that support family stability to prevent the removal of children from their homes
- **Cultural Continuity:** Guaranteeing that youth in care maintain a strong link to their Huu-ay-aht identity and culture.

The agreement is supported by the Indigenous Self-Government in the Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Bill 38), passed in November 2022. This legislation made British Columbia the first province in Canada to recognize the inherent right of Indigenous Peoples to provide child and family services under their own laws.

By codifying these practices, the yaaʔakapʷin agreement ensures that raising healthy, thriving children remains a fundamental right and a core responsibility of the Huu-ay-aht people, protected by both community law and provincial recognition.

We Are Hiring!

Visit our website for full details

www.huuayaht.org/work-with-us/

Huu-ay-aht Fishers Lead Commercial Milestone in Maa-nulth Treaty Pilot

Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) has taken the lead in the inaugural Maa-nulth commercial fishery pilot, with active fishers now successfully harvesting and selling catch under a historic "Me-Too" treaty agreement.

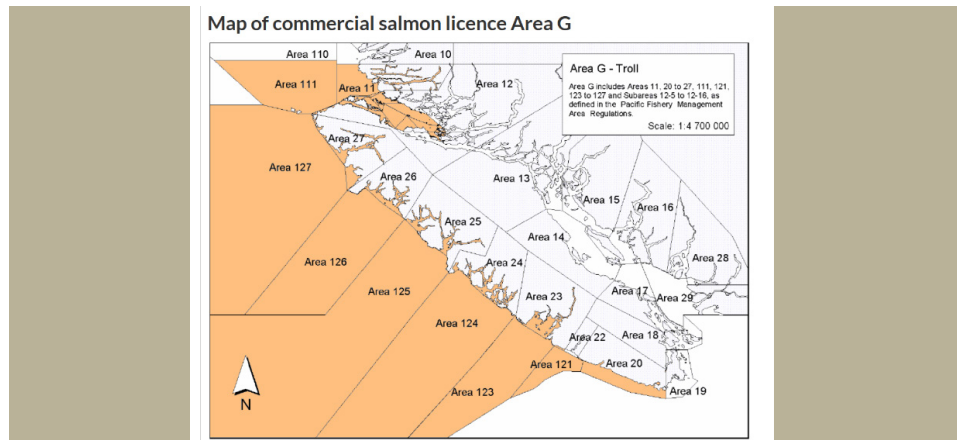
After more than a decade of litigation and negotiations with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), HFN is the first of the Maa-nulth Nations to put the pilot into practice, marking a significant return to the commercial sale of seafood for Treaty Citizens.

The current operations feature a "mosquito fleet" consisting of two active fishers, with four additional fishers designated and ready to mobilize.

While the initial trials in late 2025 saw offloads in Ucluelet, the current catch is being sold directly to Canadian Seafood Processing in Port Alberni.

This supply chain represents a major step toward the Nations' long-term goal of establishing stable, local infrastructure for offloading and payment.

Progress on the water has slowed



Orange areas highlight the allocations of Area G (Map provided by HFN Lands & Natural Resources).

recently due to the realities of the West Coast winter. Fishers are currently contending with temperamental weather and the natural seasonal lull in fish activity. However, project leads expect a significant increase in momentum as the fleet prepares for more favourable conditions and higher fish volumes heading into March.

The pilot program was triggered by the Maa-nulth Treaty's "Me Too" clause, which allows the Nations to benefit from commercial access levels achieved by other First Nations.

Following a successful window in the Area G troll allocation last autumn, which was carefully timed to align with steelhead conservation measures, the Nations are now focused on expanding the program.

Looking ahead, the Maa-nulth Nations aim to secure allocations for a wider variety of species. This expansion is designed to increase seasonality and ensure that seafood harvesting provides a consistent, year-round economic foundation for the community, reclaiming a traditional practice that sustained the Nations for generations.



ʔumʔiiqsu Centre: One-Year Anniversary

Honouring one year of keeping families safe, healthy, and connected

Getting Here

Huu-ay-aht First Nations marks one year of the ʔumʔiiqsu Centre, which opened on January 1, 2025.

The ʔumʔiiqsu Centre is a culturally grounded, trauma-informed space created to support mothers and children, strengthen families, and prevent Indigenous children from entering foster care.

In 2017, the Huu-ay-aht First Nations Social Services Project Report, Safe, Healthy, and Connected: Bringing Huu-ay-aht Children Home, identified the need for a Mother Centre, modelled after the Vancouver Aboriginal Mother Centre.

Centred around the Sacred Principles — ʔiisaak (respect), ʔuʔaakuk (taking care), and hišukma čawaak (everything is one) — the ʔumʔiiqsu Centre supports family unity, healing, and long-term wellness.

Working Together

The ʔumʔiiqsu Centre is made possible through partnerships between Huu-ay-aht First Nations and the Province of British Columbia.

- Up to \$5 million invested by the Province for initial operating costs
- \$10 million from BC Housing through the Building BC: Women's Transition Housing Fund
- \$880,000 in annual operating funding from BC Housing
- Nearly \$800,000 from the Ministry

of Education and Child Care for childcare spaces

- Partnership with the Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC who funded \$651,247.00
- CHRT 41 funded \$3.7 million for construction and \$113,000 for a transportation vehicle.
- The British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society provided funding through its Service Enhancement Grant to furnish the children's playrooms with play materials and to purchase sewing machines and stand-up freezers for the mothers.

Programs & Services

Supportive Housing: 24/7 trauma-informed housing for up to 12 mothers and their children (prenatal–age 12), with private rooms and shared living spaces. Wrap-around programming includes cultural teachings, parenting support, life skills, and emotional wellness.

Transitional Housing: Four independent apartments for families transitioning from supportive housing toward independence.

ʔumʔiiqsu Child Care Centre: An Aboriginal Head Start funded program serving 24 children, rooted in Indigenous values of respect, care, and interconnectedness.

Over The Year

- 19 families supported in living programs

- 6 families in second-stage housing
- 21 children served through childcare

Expanded staff team, including leadership, childcare educators, cooks, and support workers Families supported residents and connected them to activities which supported their emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

Milestones

- **May 2023:** Groundbreaking
- **November 6, 2024:** Construction Completed
- **December 2, 2024:** Possession Date
- **December 3, 2024:** Business License Received
- **December 11, 2024:** Childcare License Received
- **January 1, 2025:** ʔumʔiiqsu Centre Opens
- **January 2, 2025:** ʔumʔiiqsu Childcare Centre Opens

Acknowledgement

Huu-ay-aht First Nations is proud to offer a safe and supportive space for Huu-ay-aht and all Nuu-chah-nulth mothers and children. This project began as a vision inspired by the 2017 Social Service Project recommendations. Its successful first year reflects the dedication and hard work of everyone involved.

Contact: 250-736-5066

Website: www.huuyaht.org/oomiiqsucentre/



ʔumʔiiqsu Centre: Photos Over the Year

Honouring one year of keeping families safe, healthy, and connected

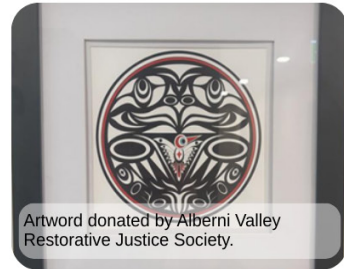
Looking back at cleansing the grounds before ground breaking, site visits during construction, celebrating the grand opening, and artwork that was donated to hang on the ʔumʔiiqsu Centre Walls.



Tseshah and hupačasath First Nations support cleansing the ʔumʔiiqsu property before construction began.



Cultural Area that was built outside ʔumʔiiqsu Centre.



Artwork donated by Alberni Valley Restorative Justice Society.



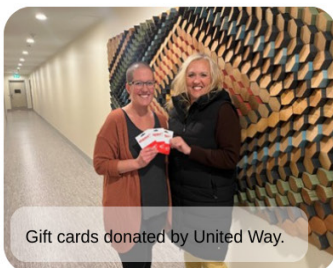
Partners visit ʔumʔiiqsu during construction.



Artwork donated by Maa-nulth Treaty Society.



Artwork donated by ʔawiih Council.



Gift cards donated by United Way.



Huu-ay-aht First Nations gifted plaques at the ʔumʔiiqsu Centre grand opening celebration.

Chief Councillor John A. Jack Speaks in Favour of Bill C-10



February 9 press conference: Debra Febril (Executive Chairperson, Nisga'a Lisims Government), John Alan Jack (Chief Councillor, Huu-ay-aht First Nations), Wilfred Cootes (Chief Councillor, Uchucklesaht Tribe government), Ruth Massie (Chief, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council), and Kiliqvak Kabloona (CEO, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.). (Photo provided by Jillian)

Representing Huu-ay-aht First Nations on Parliament Hill, Elected Chief Councillor Sayaačath John Alan Jack spoke in favour of Bill C-10, An Act respecting the Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation.

Speaking before the Parliamentary Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs on Thursday, February 26, Chief Councillor Jack advocated for the swift passage of Bill C-10, which would establish a dedicated Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation.

For the past 20 years, the Indigenous Nations, a part of the Land Claims Agreement Coalition (LCAC), have been advocating for this Commissioner role within Parliament.

The proposed Commissioner would act as an independent Officer of Parliament, providing impartial oversight to the implementation of modern treaties across Canada.

Chief Councillor Jack highlighted that modern treaties are complex, "whole-of-government" agreements that create thousands of obligations across various departments.

"Federal implementation efforts

have too often been uneven, inconsistent, and poorly coordinated," Chief Councillor Jack told the committee. "It is not for lack of goodwill, but rather that levels of awareness and sustained follow-through can vary widely across many institutions."

The push for Bill C-10 is part of a greater national effort by the Land Claims Agreements Coalition (LCAC).

Earlier this month, on February 9, Jack joined leaders from the Nisga'a Lisims Government, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and Uchucklesaht Tribe Government in Ottawa to urge all political parties to move the bill past its second reading.

The LCAC points out in a press release from February 9 that Modern Treaties cover nearly 45% of Canada's land and sea mass.

Proponents argue that the bill is non-partisan and essential for economic certainty and constitutional integrity.

For Huu-ay-aht First Nations, the stakes are about more than just legal compliance; they are about the

future of our people.

"If we can spend less time concerned about the efficacy of our government-to-government relationships, then we can spend more time working together to address the very real social and economic challenges that all our people face," Chief Councillor Jack stated.

He concluded his testimony with a clear call to action: pass Bill C-10 swiftly and without major amendment to "deliver the results that modern treaties were meant to enable and ennoble."

To view the full February 26 session or the LCAC press release, please visit our latest news on www.huuayaht.org or scan the QR code.



Huu-ay-aht Youth Swiftwater Training Leads to Participation in Fisheries Initiatives

In the rushing currents of the Rosseau River and the misty banks of Sugsaw Creek, a new generation of Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) stewards is taking command.

In the autumn of 2025, a group of dedicated youth successfully bridged the gap between high-tech rescue training and ancient cultural traditions, ensuring the survival of the salmon that sustain their territory.

The journey began in late October 2025 in Nanaimo. Under the guidance of Stewardship Program Advisor Daniel Zayonc, four Huu-ay-aht youth, Victoria Williams, Vanessa Young, Zyliss Dick, and Seth Nookemus, completed a rigorous three-day Swiftwater Rescue Technician course.

For these young technicians, the training is more than a certification; it is a vital toolkit for the dangerous, high-stakes environment of the fall salmon run.

Whether navigating the powerful Sarita Falls or the winding reaches of the Pachena, Klanawa, and Fredrick rivers, these skills allow the HFN Fisheries team to move safely where the water is strongest.

The impact of this training was immediate. Returning to the territory, the team deployed across several river systems to conduct essential salmon counts.

On the Rosseau River, Vanessa Young and Victoria Williams donned immersion gear to swim with the Coho, providing eye-level data necessary for accurate population estimates.

At Sarita Falls, the team of Vanessa Young, Scott Cheyne, Seth Nookemus, and Zyliss Dick monitored returning stocks.



(Left to right) Victoria Williams, Vanessa Young, Seth Nookemus, and Zyliss Dick in Swiftwater training gear. (Photo by Daniel Zayonc)

These numbers do more than track environmental health; they are the backbone of the Sarita River Economic Fishery.

By estimating returning spawners, the youth are helping to prove the feasibility of sustainable commercial opportunities for their Nation.

As the calendar turned to November, the focus shifted to the Sugsaw Hatchery, located at the mouth of Sugsaw Creek. Here, the work became a delicate dance of science and tradition.

Using seine nets, the team harvested Chum salmon for broodstock, the "seed" for future generations.

The process is meticulous. Tom Joe and Vanessa Young worked side by side to harvest eggs from the females and milt from the males. The two are mixed for exactly 60 seconds, then rinsed and placed into incubation trays.

These trays utilize flowing water to simulate the natural rhythm of the riverbed, protecting the vulnerable embryos until they hatch.

While the hatchery work ensures the next generation of fish, the team also looks backward to ana-

lyze the current population.

Each adult fish is measured for length, and tissue clips are taken for analysis by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to monitor the genetic diversity of the Sugsaw Chum.

Meanwhile, Victoria Williams and Tom Joe walked the upper reaches of Sugsaw Creek, counting the spawning pairs that had successfully made their way upstream to complete their life cycle.

In keeping with the Huu-ay-aht tradition, no part of the salmon was wasted. Once the breeding process was complete, the fish were dispatched and prepared for the smokehouse.

Under the expert eye of Shawn Mack, the Chum were smoked over alder wood, providing a traditional food source for the community.

As Mack noted, while some prefer other species, "Chum makes the best smoked salmon!"

Through these efforts, the Huu-ay-aht youth have proven that modern technical expertise and traditional stewardship are not separate paths. Still, a single, powerful current is driving the Nation toward a sustainable future.

Celebrating 25 Years of the House of Huu-ay-aht

At sunrise on July 26, 2025, Executive Councillor Łicitath Edward R. Johnson and tuqwii Cory Howard Sr. performed a cleansing ceremony to begin the 25th Anniversary celebrations of the House of Huu-ay-aht.

An estimated 400 people attended the gathering, representing eight First Nations: Huu-ay-aht, Uchucklesaht, Nisga'a, YuuŁu?ii?ath (Ucluelet), Mowachaht/Muchalaht, Tse-shaht, Hupačasath, and Ditidaht. It was a powerful day of remembrance, recognition, and resilience.

Honouring the History of the House

Edward shared the powerful origin story of the House of Huu-ay-aht, which reminded citizens, staff, and visitors that this place was built for gathering, sharing, reconciliation, and joy.

He credited Kelly Dennis and aniicačist Larry Johnson for sourcing the giant spruce beams from the Klanawa watershed in Ditidaht Territory, which was made possible through a respectful agreement with the Ditidaht First Nation to log the trees selectively.

Over 200 metres of cedar logs, valued at more than \$500,000, were required, sourced from the Sarita dry-land sort.

Edward described the original House of Huu-ay-aht opening celebration in July 2000 as "truly magical."

A canoe was brought through the back door as a gift from the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation to replace one that had capsized at čimatasuŁ (Cape Beale Point).

A song about being careful coming through the inside pas-



Citizens and guests sharing a meal at the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the House of Huu-ay-aht in Anacġa (Photo by Huu-ay-aht Communications).

sage at čimatasuŁ out of the fog was sung. Permission to sing the čimatasuŁ song was gifted to the Mowachaht/Muchalaht Nation.

Connections to KiiŁin and Cultural Legacy

Executive Councillor ņaasiimis?aksup Stella Peters acknowledged the late architect David Spearing, recalling the time she brought him and his wife Diane, along with the late Łiišin (Spencer Peters) and Robert Dennis Sr., to KiiŁin to observe how longhouse structures were traditionally built.

This visit inspired the design of the House of Huu-ay-aht, which was constructed in a similar style using traditional posts and beams.

Stella further recognized construction company owner, Dave Knappet and his team, as well as the many Huu-ay-aht Citizens who contributed to the project from its beginning to its completion.

Honouring Those Who Built the House

Acknowledgements were made for the many people who helped

build the House: The late Ralph Johnson and the late Oscar Nookemus were instrumental in peeling logs and passing their knowledge to others.

Leslie Cook, the late Danny Joseph, and the late Darryl Nookemus also contributed as skilled log peelers. While Patrick Nookemus, Malcolm Richards, and the late Herbie Nelson Jr. worked as dedicated labourers. Lonnie Nookemus contributed both as a labourer and a carpenter.

Charlie Clappis, who began as an apprentice, earned his Red Seal certification. Kelly Dennis, a logger, was responsible for falling the trees in a way that prevented them from breaking apart.

As with all harvested materials, a prayer is offered; however, for something as significant as the trees destined for the House of Huu-ay-aht, a far greater ceremony was required.

This sacred preparation marked the trees' journey, establishing a deep spiritual connection was led by Willie Sport.

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Coming Together to Share Memories as Family and Friends

Continued from page 10

After 25 years of being built, the House of Huu-ay-aht has recently undergone upgrades that included a new gym floor, enhanced support posts and exterior lighting, renovated kitchen and bathrooms, and a new roof and skylight.

Project Leadership and Support

Crystal Clappis played a leading role as Project Manager, ensuring the schedule stayed on track.

The late David Spearing served as the architect, Roger Yager as the contractor's representative, and Gabriel Hipolite Williams as the carver.

Zig van Akker was actively involved on the ground in building the House of Huu-ay-aht, recalling, "I have shivers on my arms" when remembering the experience of working with the community.

Cultural Expressions and Ceremonies

A delicious lunch and dinner were prepared by Rhiannon Rich-

ards, Phyllis Williams, Liz Isaak, and other, with help from youth who served elders and assisted with cleanup.

A special treat *tućup* (sea urchins), *haayıştup* (chiton), and *suuħaa* (spring salmon) was provided by Stephen Smith, Carter Burtlake, and Huu-ay-aht Warriors.

After lunch, songs and dances from Huu-ay-aht and visiting Nations, including Tshshaht and Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nations, were performed. Reflecting the cultural depth of the gathering.

Qiic Qiica delivered a powerful speech, reflecting on a century of cultural suppression and the enduring importance of potlatches to First Nations identity.

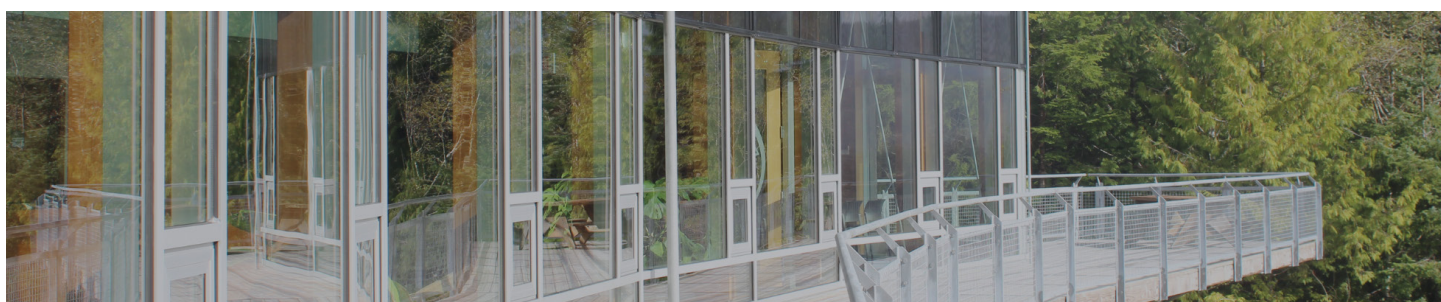
"We are still here," Qiic Qiica declared, calling Huu-ay-aht people a "people of resilience [who] thrive and survive."

Qiic Qiica also shared a personal reflection, speaking of his family ties to Ucluelet grounding the performance in family lineage

and community ties.

Overall, Huu-ay-aht First Nations would like to share our immense gratitude to everyone who supported all stages of the development of the House of Huu-ay-aht, as well as those who could join us to celebrate, and the House of Huu-ay-aht 25th Anniversary Celebration Planning Committee, volunteers, kitchen crew, and youth, whose dedication made the event a profound and memorable success.

To view YouTube Video of the days events, please visit our channel @HFNCommunications or scan the QR code.



Learn what Executive Council have been up to!

Monthly reports are available on our website.

SCAN ME



huu ay aht

ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

www.huayaht.org

Huu-ay-aht hosts Mount Underwood Wildfire Special Engagement



Elected Chief Councillor John Alan Jack gifting Ditidaht Elected Chief Councillor Judi Thomas receiving a plaque of recognition for her support during the fire. (Photo by Communications)

On Sunday, February 22, Huu-ay-aht First Nations held a special community engagement to update citizens on the effects of the Mount Underwood Fire that occurred in August of 2025.

The community engagement also included a special acknowledgement event, in which Huu-ay-aht held a ceremony recognizing the dedication and hard work of those who supported the Mount Underwood Wildfire response.

Chief Councillor John Alan Jack opened the event by explaining that the gathering was intended to acknowledge the solidarity shown throughout the emergency, provide updates, reflect on lessons learned, and create space for discussion and questions.

The elected Chief Councillor of the Ditidaht First Nation, Judi Thomas, recognized the strong leadership demonstrated by John Alan Jack and the Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN), as well as the support of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

Their coordinated efforts helped

bring people together during a challenging time. Judi Thomas, a strong advocate for wildfire management, spoke about the emotional toll of the emergency.

She described the grief and loss of connection experienced by families, along with the challenges of limited access to groceries and hospital services. She also highlighted the difficulties residents faced when forced to use back roads through Youbou to access Anacla and Bamfield.

Sean Flickinger, Emergency Program Coordinator, delivered a detailed presentation summarizing the Mount Underwood Wildfire. His slideshow outlined the emergencies triggered by the fire, the organizations and Huu-ay-aht personnel involved in the Emergency Operations Centre, the impacts on the community, the response efforts undertaken by Huu-ay-aht, and the key lessons learned.

Executive Councillor Stella Peters acknowledged the Lady Rose Marine Services for providing free boat transportation six days a week to support Bamfield and the surrounding community during the wildfire emergency,

helping maintain critical access when road travel was disrupted.

Bob Beckett, ACRD Director of Electoral Area "A" (Bamfield) spoke about the profound social and economic challenges communities face during emergencies.

He expressed his appreciation for how Huu-ay-aht First Nations hosted the event to recognize the hard work and dedication of staff and volunteers from HFN, the ACRD, the City of Port Alberni, and the EOC.

He also gave special recognition to Karen Haugen, Huu-ay-aht Executive Director, for her outstanding contributions.

The ceremony concluded with Chief Councillor John Alan Jack presenting plaques to Huu-ay-aht First Nations staff, citizens, and supporting organizations in recognition of their contributions to the Mount Underwood Wildfire Emergency Operations.

The event wrapped up with a shared lunch prepared by Shawn Mack, offering attendees an opportunity to connect and reflect together.