

Volume 25 Issue 1

FEBRUARY 2025

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EV'S 283rd Issue!



BC ELDERS COMMUNICATION CENTER SOCIETY

ELDERS VOICE

**2025 CULTURAL HOST NEEDED FOR
THE ELDERS GATHERING, VANCOUVER
AUGUST 26-27, 2025 PLEASE READ PG. 20**

**Annual Elders Gathering Dates:
EVENT: August 26-27, 2025
(Group Leader Check-In Monday, August 25).
Location: Vancouver Convention Centre**

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

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CRISIS HELP LINE INFORMATION

BCECCS GRATITUDE LIST

Support Fee from Sept. 01, 2023– August 31, 2024

Your support is much appreciated for the provincial elders office!

LEVELS OF SUPPORT

\$15,000 - Thunderbird

\$5,000 - Killer Whale

\$1,500 - Eagle

\$1,000 – Salmon

\$750 – Frog

\$500 – Sisiutl

\$250 - Hummingbird

Hummingbird Level—\$250

Thunderbird Level - \$10,000

1. CREA

1. Osoyoos Indian Band
2. Leqamel First Nation
3. Whispering Pines/Clinton Band

Killer Whale Level - \$5,000

1.

Eagle Level - \$1,500

1.

SALMON LEVEL - \$1,000

1.

FROG LEVEL - \$750

1.

SISIUTL LEVEL - \$500

1. Aqam
2. BC Assoc. Community Response Networks
3. Lyackson First Nation
4. Cheryl's Trading Post

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Detail from "Salmon's Feathers" ©Clayton Gauthier 2020



Are you having legal issues?

Such as issues about:

- Roommates
- Loans or debts
- Strata property
- Sharing intimate images

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- Accident benefits
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Call **1-844-322-2292**

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An Indigenous-Owned Model for Sustainable Tourism

How the Klahoose converted a closed BC fishing lodge into a place to immerse in nature and culture.

Abby Francis 6 Dec 2024 from The Tyee

Stepping off of a small boat and onto the dock at the Klahoose Wilderness Resort ushers visitors into a world of lush green forests and towering mountains. Upon leaving the water's edge, they're enveloped by the sounds of the Klahoose First Nation's traditional drumming songs, featuring backing vocals by nearby ravens and songbirds.

The Indigenous-owned resort is located northwest of the Klahoose First Nation village on Cortes Island, B.C., and lies within the nation's traditional territory in the Homfray Channel. It's accessible only by water or seaplane and is a roughly 60-minute boat ride north of Lund, B.C.

Chris Tait, tourism manager at Klahoose Wilderness Resort, said the goal is to invest in tourism as a means for the Klahoose First Nation to take on a greater role in managing their territory and protecting the environment. By offering experience-based tourism, he said, the resort attracts guests who are seeking meaningful experiences — and can afford to travel to find them.

Built in 2008, the site was originally called the Homfray Lodge, before it was shut down and sold in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic halted travel. A year later, it reopened as the Klahoose Wilderness Resort and now has a workforce of 18 people — about 70 per cent of whom are Indigenous from Klahoose or neighbouring First Nations.

"The resort was reimagined as a destination focused on ecotourism and Indigenous tourism, rather than traditional activity-based tourism like fishing or boating," Tait said.

Guests of the resort get to choose between two curated experience packages: Discover Klahoose or Grizzly Bears of Toba Inlet.

Discover Klahoose is a three-to-four-night experience with prices starting at \$2,895 per person. It includes tours of the rugged coastal landscape, as well as whale, bird and bear watching. Meals are included and emphasize local ingredients, such as fresh seafood and wild mushrooms. Guests are also invited to partake in cultural activities such as drumming, singing, cedar weaving and canoeing.

The Grizzly Bears of Toba Inlet package offers a similar three-to-four-night stay but starts at \$3,495. Days 2 and 3 of this experience are spent grizzly bear touring.

To cap it all off, both packages include access to a wood-fired sauna, a dock for swimming and paddle boards, as well as a boat transfer from Lund.

Tours of Klahoose territory are part of the resort's offerings and are led in a manner to minimize impacts on local wildlife, Tait said.

For example, during the resort's whale watching tours, boats and tour groups are kept at a safe distance from the marine mammals.

Tait added the resort is a member of the North Island Marine Mammals Stewardship Association, a non-profit that works to protect marine life and ecotourism around northern Vancouver Island.

During the resort's grizzly bear tours, Tait said, guests observe the animals from viewing towers set up along the Toba Inlet, where the grizzlies congregate to hunt for salmon.

"We're not just going into the forest and stumbling upon bears; we're actually going to watch bears while they're eating salmon in their natural habitat," he said.

A people-forward approach

Klemkwateki Randy Louie, a member of the Klahoose and Malahat nations, started working as a cultural interpreter at the resort four years ago and called the role a "paradise job."

His day's work ranges from greeting visitors to sharing stories or songs to guiding tours through the nation's territory.

"I get to socialize with guests, talking about the history and stories, or teach them about the Coast Salish ways. It feels like a dream," Klemkwateki said.

"I've always wanted to learn how to speak on behalf of my family, of Klahoose. I told my family that, and they kind of bumped me into tourism and gave me this job here."

Previously, Klemkwateki was a drummer and singer for 35 years with a long house of spiritual dancers for Klahoose, he said. "For 29 years of it, I was learning how to hand down those teachings to the younger generations."

"It was perfect timing for me to start working here."

In the future, Tait said, the resort will need even more Elders, youth and other community members to help run it during its increasingly busy operational season from May to October.

"Economic reconciliation means hiring local staff, as many as we can," he said.

Currently, September, the resort's busiest month because it's the peak of grizzly bear season, is fully booked as early as July.

When it comes to running a sustainable tourism business, Tait said, there's more to it than just measuring your carbon footprint.

"It's also about people. And making sure that when we do a tour, it's guided by a local person. Ideally, a Klahoose person," he said. "Versus people coming up with their own boat, or a company coming in and not even knowing whose territory they're coming into."

An industry-wide shift

Across B.C., a number of experiences similar to the Klahoose resort's can be found, such as Homalco Wildlife and Cultural Tours, an Indigenous-owned tourism company located only a few islands away.

While Klahoose includes an optional \$10 fee for guests to contribute to the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund, Homalco donates a portion of the cost of its tours towards animal conservation.

Klahoose's centring of culture is also catching on with other Indigenous-owned tourism businesses. Tait said he has spoken to a number of lodges that are trying to transition away from a focus on a specific activity, such as fishing or skiing, and towards Indigenous culture sharing.

"If you are a fishing lodge, you can start adding in some cultural experiences, such as a traditional salmon bake on the beach, as opposed to having a regular salmon on a barbecue," he said.

Wherever this change is happening, Tait said, it's important that it's led by Indigenous staff.

"People want to learn about other people, and having that human connection makes any travel experience meaningful," Tait said.

Standing on the dock at the Klahoose Wilderness Resort, small talk between guests and staff indicates another trip has come to an end. After the final song and some traditional cedar brushing, the resort's cultural interpreters wish guests a final farewell as their boat begins its familiar journey back to Lund.

Klemkwateki said that at the end of a trip, it's not uncommon for his drumming to provoke a few teary eyes in guests.

"Through all of the stories they get, it makes them feel like they're part of a family when they're here. And then we send them off back home," he said.

[Editor's note: This article runs in a new section of The Tyee called 'What Works: The Business of a Healthy Bioregion,' where you'll find profiles of people creating the low-carbon, regenerative economy we need from Alaska to central California. Find out more about this project and its funders, Magic Canoe and the Salmon Nation Trust.] [Tyee]

Vancouver Island First Nation whose chief met Capt. Cook files claim against B.C.

by Dirk Meissner, The Canadian Press

A Vancouver Island First Nation whose people were the first to greet European explorers in the region almost 250 years ago is taking British Columbia to court, seeking title to its traditional territories and financial compensation.

The Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation filed a claim Thursday in B.C. Supreme Court seeking a return of decision-making, resource and ecological stewardship, said Chief Mike Maquinna, a descendent of the former Chief Maquinna who met British explorer Capt. James Cook in 1776.

Crown-authorized forest industry activities approved by the province without the consent of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation have resulted in cultural, economic and environmental impacts, he said at a news conference on Thursday.

“Our people, the Mowachaht/Muchalaht, have endured many hardships since first meeting Capt. Cook, who was the explorer who first came into our territory,” said Maquinna.

“As a result of the explorations of our territory, the natural resources of our lands have been taken. We want to correct rights and wrongs here and hopefully as time goes on this will show that Mowachaht/Muchalaht has been infringed upon since time of contact.”

Capt. Cook and Chief Maquinna met in March 1776 at the traditional Mowachaht/Muchalaht whale-hunting village of Yuquot, later named Friendly Cove by Cook.

The Parks Canada website says Yuquot was designated a national historic site in 1923 as the ancestral home of the First Nation, which was continuously occupied for more than 4,300 years and the centre of their social, political and economic world.

The Parks Canada website says the village became the capital for all 17 tribes of the Nootka Sound region.

Maquinna said the province has been acting as the sole decision-making authority in the Gold River-Tahsis areas of northern Vancouver Island, especially with regards to the forest resource, without the consent of his nation.

Hereditary Chief Jerry Jack said the claim seeks title to about 430,000 hectares of land on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island and an amount of financial compensation to be determined by the court.

“It is common knowledge we were here long before Capt. Cook and now we have to go to court and definitively prove that,” he said. “I don’t like that we have to prove that we owned it before he showed up to my territory, to my beach.”

The land title case does not make any claims against private land owners, homeowners or recreational hunting and fishing operators, said Jack.

Premier David Eby said the B.C. government prefers negotiated land-claims settlements rather than become involved in lengthy, expensive court cases, but the Mowachaht/Muchalaht have the right to take that route.

“We have no problem with them doing that,” he said at an unrelated news conference in Langley. “We’d rather sit down and find a path forward.”

The 15-page notice of claim seeks declarations that the First Nation has Aboriginal title to its lands and that B.C.’s Forest Act and Land Act will no longer apply to Mowachaht/Muchalaht lands once title is declared.

Jack said the nation decided against pursuing formal treaty talks with the federal and provincial government years ago and has been planning the land title court case “for many decades.”

**JOKE: What did the horse say after it tripped?
Help! I’ve fallen and can’t giddy up!**

First Nations leaders blast feds for attributing deficit overrun to Indigenous legal claims

Statement 'harkened back to the colonial mindset to villainize First Nations,' says

Anishinabek Nation

Brett Forester · CBC News · Posted: Dec 18, 2024

First Nations leaders are blasting the federal government and calling for an apology after Ottawa attributed its latest deficit overrun to Indigenous legal claims against the Crown.

On Monday, the minority Liberals tabled their annual fall economic statement in the House of Commons amid a political uproar sparked when the person slated to deliver it abruptly quit, plunging the ruling party into chaos.

Before resigning, former finance minister and deputy prime minister Chrystia Freeland promised to keep the federal deficit at or below \$40 billion in 2023-24, but the statement revealed a deficit of \$61.9 billion.

The Finance Department attributed the overshoot mainly to a "significant one-time" expense of \$16.4 billion for settling Indigenous legal claims — something the grand council chief of the Anishinabek Nation swiftly and strongly condemned.

The comment was "utterly ridiculous" and "harkened back to the colonial mindset to villainize" and scapegoat First Nations, said Linda Debassige in a Tuesday news release.

"This type of slander is utterly shameful when the government said that there is no more important relationship than the one with First Nations."

Debassige, whose organization advocates for 39 First Nations in Ontario, called it preposterous and a deflection from reality for the Liberal government to explain its deficit by referencing these hard-won settlements.

The Assembly of First Nations, an advocacy organization representing chiefs countrywide, also took exception to the explanation for the deficit.

"These statements are misleading as these claims are a result of Canada failing to meet its obligations to First Nations," said National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak in a statement Tuesday.

"Instead of spending resources on legal battles that question our inherent rights, the government must prioritize sustained, targeted investments that will grow the Canadian economy and advance reconciliation."

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) said the turmoil and political infighting in the House of Commons both before and after Freeland's sudden resignation "is not just disruptive — it's dangerous."

"It diverts attention from the critical issues affecting the most vulnerable," said acting grand chief Betsy Kennedy in a news release.

"This government's failure to address First Nations' priorities in the fall economic statement is a betrayal of its commitment to reconciliation."

The tumult in the capital only exacerbates the frustration of First Nations, whose critical needs remain un-addressed amid the political instability, AMC said.

While the economic statement may point to the exponential increase in spending for First Nations over the last 10 years, large amounts are connected to claims won through the courts, the release continued.

The Finance Department responded with an emailed statement.

"The federal government is committed to its work in redressing historical wrongs towards Indigenous Peoples, and recognizes, from a fiscal management perspective, that we must improve how we anticipate and account for claims moving forward," the department said.

A question of liability

At issue are what are known in accounting as "contingent liabilities."

Contingent liabilities are recorded when government lawyers believe Canada is likely to lose in court and the claim has a dollar value attached to it, resulting in a strong probability of future payment, the parliamentary budget officer has said.

he figure is thus Ottawa's best guess at how much the Crown stands to lose through specific claims, comprehensive land claims and lawsuits, of which the two departments governing Indigenous affairs had about 1,152 against them at this time last year.

CBC Indigenous previously reported these estimated future liabilities owed to Indigenous people have grown nearly sevenfold under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — to \$76 billion in 2023 from \$11 billion in 2015 — causing consternation and concern for Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux.

"As shown in recent years, expenses related to the provision for contingent liabilities can have a large impact on the federal government's budgetary balance," Giroux wrote in a July 2024 report.

The contingent liabilities decreased to \$56.6 billion in 2024, a drop of more than \$20 billion in just one year, according to the 2024 public accounts released Tuesday, a decrease the Finance Department said is "largely due to settlement agreements being reached."

In other words, it appears the contingent liabilities only encompass probable future payments as claims wind through courts, tribunals and negotiations, not finalized settlements.

The department won't say which claims led the government to book \$16.4 billion in liabilities. The expenses for contingent liabilities relate to active litigation and may also be the subject of ongoing negotiations, the department said.

From: bubblestranslation.com

Revealed: The One Word That's the Same in Every Language

When expanding a business abroad, marketers have the difficult task of applying global brand values to a localised marketing campaign. Translation is a significant part of this process, but the subtle differences between words and their equivalents make it a challenge for direct translation to unite a global brand with its local audiences.

However, a recent study may have some shed light on why marketers are struggling to successfully translate their message from country to country; every other word is different and the meaning and associations that go with them bring many subtle differences that need to be factored in to any translation work.

One Single Word

According to scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, there is only one word in existence that's the same in every language, and that word is 'huh'. By recording segments of informal language from across five continents, the scientists have revealed that the word 'huh' is the same in 31 different languages, making it the most universally understood term in the world.

The researchers have suggested that the reason 'huh' is the only word to have spontaneously adopted the same meaning in almost every language is because there is no other word that is capable of filling its place. According to the study, 'huh' is the only word capable of stating that there is a problem, signalling that it has to do with a lack of knowledge and asking for a response without being aware of what that response may be.

Implications for Global Marketing

Although many have argued that 'huh' is more of a noise than a word, this research can be applied to the process of translating brand messages for use overseas. In many cases direct translation won't work, and will simply leave companies with a message that's irrelevant or confusing to other cultures. However, words and colloquialisms like 'huh' could be one way of tapping into truly universal marketing that appeals across cultures.

With the introduction of social media sites it's becoming increasingly necessary for contrasting cultures to develop universal terms that effectively translate from country to country while remaining within the restricted character limits that dictate much of our communication.

While the complexity of language renders terms like 'huh' extremely rare, this new age process of rapid language development could see an increase in the number of colloquialisms understood across borders and across seas, which is good news for marketers and people across the world seeking greater understanding and unity.

This boy hurt in collision didn't have an Indian status card, so Ottawa wouldn't pay for medical evacuation

Family, health-care workers call for changes to Non-Insured Health Benefits program

The family of a seven-year-old boy from Deer Lake First Nation who was denied medical transportation coverage because he didn't yet have an Indian status card is calling for changes to Ottawa's Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program.

Jordan Harper was seriously injured, and his grandmother died, in January in a head-on collision with another vehicle on the winter road near the northwestern Ontario community. The Grade 2 student was airlifted to the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre, where two metal rods were put in his leg.

Last month, Jordan was supposed to have the rods removed, but his family was waiting for NIHB staff to book a scheduled medical evacuation from Deer Lake to Thunder Bay.

"His leg was all swollen from the rods," said Aretta Meekis, who described her stepson as smart and outgoing.

The family said they were told Jordan wasn't covered under NIHB because he didn't have an Indian status card, something his late grandmother — who was his primary caregiver — had been trying to get him.

"I was just crying that one day because they refused — they still refused the medevac and he was just in pain," his stepmom said. "He just turned seven, like, how can you refuse a child?"

About 1,100 people live in Deer Lake, a remote community that can only be accessed by plane or winter road.

After waiting more than a week to get him out of the community, the Oji-Cree First Nation's tribal council, Keewaytinook Okimakanak, paid to send him to Thunder Bay for the rod-removal surgery.

"We're hearing stories like that all over — community chiefs paying for things, health directors paying for things," said Monica Hemeon, vice-president of regional services for the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA).

SLFNHA provides health services to 33 First Nations — 28 of them are remote.

"We're hearing stories like that all over — community chiefs paying for things, health directors paying for things."- Monica Hemeon, SLFNHA

The NIHB program provides coverage to First Nations and Inuit people across Canada for a number of health benefits that aren't already covered under social programs, private insurance plans, or provincial or territorial health insurance.

This includes medical transportation to access services that aren't available in their communities.

In order to qualify, clients must live in Canada and be at least one of the following:

- A First Nations person registered under the Indian Act — known as a status Indian.
- An Inuk recognized by an Inuit land claim organization.
- A child under two years old whose parent is eligible under the NIHB.

Jordan's stepmom questions why, considering the urgency of the care Jordan needed, an exception couldn't be made while his family finished completing his status Indian card application. The process is still in the works — the family's efforts to get him the card were delayed as they dealt with the accident.

A spokesperson for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) told CBC in an email that it "is working diligently to improve NIHB medical transportation services in the Sioux Lookout area."

Jordan's family, however, said the change can't come quickly enough.

Miscommunications, missed appointments

Brad Meekis is a band councillor for Deer Lake First Nation who oversees the health portfolio in his community. He said miscommunications between NIHB staff and Deer Lake's nursing station regularly result in travel not being booked and appointments being cancelled.

"Once the referrals are made to NIHB, they say that they don't receive the referrals from our nursing station.

"Some of our people miss critical appointments like this. Sometimes they wait numerous years before they're seen again."

Amanda Meekis, who works at Deer Lake's nursing station, is responsible for managing medical travel requests and sending referrals to NIHB staff, which involves a lot of paperwork and advocacy for community members. She said she often spends hours on hold with NIHB employees and sometimes has negative interactions with them.

"Sometimes, they just hang up on me."

She said NIHB staff often ask her detailed questions about the reasons clients need medical transportation, but she can't disclose that information due to patient confidentiality.

"Some of our people miss critical appointments like this. Sometimes they wait numerous years before they're seen again." - Brad Meekis, Deer Lake First Nation band councillor

When people from remote communities miss appointments, "the impact potentially is catastrophic," said Hemeon.

"If someone's meant to go out to see a specialist, and they're getting diagnosed with something at that appointment and they miss that appointment, that diagnosis now is pushed."

ISC boosts staffing to increase capacity

Jennifer Cooper, a spokesperson for ISC, said in an email that an initial meeting was held between the department and SLFNHA in July "to discuss their concerns about the NIHB program."

Since then, a number of meetings have taken place, and ISC said several steps have been taken "to resolve the challenges raised and increase capacity at the Sioux Lookout office." These include:

- Boosting staffing numbers, for a total of 20 employees at the Sioux Lookout NIHB office, to provide additional phone support to reduce wait times.

- The creation of a new senior manager position to lead the team and manage capacity.

"ISC is also adjusting internal processes and governance structures, and streamlining forms and documentation to improve our ability to respond to medical transportation requests," Cooper said.

A bilateral table was also established with SLFNHA "to support regular discussion of gaps and challenges, and actions that can be taken to improve NIHB operations in the Sioux Lookout region."

Need for more support in urban centres

When clients don't show up to appointments, health-care providers become more reluctant in scheduling followups, said Hemeon, even when the situation was beyond their control — like travel not being booked or a plane being cancelled due to inclement weather.

Beyond getting people out of their communities for care, Hemeon said, there's a need for more support once they arrive.

SLFNHA operates three hostels in Sioux Lookout to accommodate people who've travelled there for medical appointments. The organization also offers transportation, translators, patient navigators and other support.

"It's when they have to leave Sioux Lookout that the client tends to have a little bit more trouble navigating the health-care system, especially in bigger urban centres like Thunder Bay, Winnipeg and Toronto," said Hemeon.

Oftentimes, NIHB staff don't reserve accommodations in advance, and patients who don't have credit cards have problems booking taxis and hotel rooms, she said.

SLFNHA is looking at expanding its presence in these urban centres; it's already introduced a transportation program in Thunder Bay.

However, "we have received a very negative response from Indigenous Services Canada and NIHB specifically regarding our desire to move out and into these urban city centres to support our clients more," Hemeon said.

Back in Deer Lake, Jordan is feeling a lot better, said Aretta Meekis.

"He's so happy he can move around freely," she said. "They did such a great job on his leg. He's so happy with the nurses and the doctors."

Jordan has a followup appointment coming up in Thunder Bay. When CBC spoke with Aretta Meekis, she wasn't sure how that trip would be covered.

Her hope is Jordan's story informs others about the challenges people in remote communities face in getting care and that other families don't go through similar situations.

Indigenous family successful in discrimination claim against North Bay Transit

In April 2018 a bus driver prevented Paula Nakogee and her two sons from boarding a bus
Jonathan Migneault · CBC News · Posted: Jan 15, 2025

An Indigenous family has won compensation in a discrimination claim filed at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal against North Bay Transit.

Paula Nakogee and her two adult sons were prevented from boarding a bus in April, 2018 despite having valid passes.

She said they had been shopping and had a number of groceries and even some weights that her son had purchased when they attempted to get on the bus.

She told CBC that the driver looked at her sons, and then looked at her.

"He looked disgusted and just yelled, get out, get out," she said. "I went into complete shock because of the loud voice."

Jamie McGinnis represented the Nakogees at the tribunal hearing.

"The Nakogees suspected it was because they were indigenous because they had a valid bus pass," she said.

"There were more than a dozen other passengers that were able to board without incident except for them."

McGinnis said Paula Nakogee called the North Bay Transit service to complain after the driver prevented her and her sons from boarding the bus.

"And this really only compounded their experience because the investigation itself was flawed and did not leave the Nakogees feeling as though their complaints were taken seriously and properly addressed," she said.

Nakogee later contacted the Human Rights Legal Support Centre, which gave her legal aid and later represented her family at the hearing.

The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario ruled that North Bay Transit must pay \$45,000 in damages, make policy changes, and train staff, after a driver refused to let a family onto a bus because they were Indigenous.

In a statement, Gord Young, a spokesperson for the City of North Bay, said the city takes the matter seriously.

"Corporate policies, procedures and practices continue to evolve since the reported date of incident in keeping with best practices," Young said.

"This includes the addition of video cameras to our bus fleet to provide enhanced protections for all. We will continue to review our processes and services for the purpose of improving them."

Young said the city could not confirm whether or not the bus driver was disciplined or fired due to the incident because the city "does not comment on matters related to labour and employee relations pertaining to individuals."

Nakogee says she is satisfied with the tribunal's decision and feels relieved that her family was heard.

Seal is served: How coastal First Nations are reclaiming their roots by bringing back the hunt

By Nora O'Malley, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter / October 29, 2024

Vancouver Island, BC—Before there was an Island highway connecting the west coast to the rest of Canada and long before there was a food store bringing in fresh supplies, coastal First Nations hunted and ate seal for subsistence.

To bring back this forgotten tradition, young Indigenous men from the Nuu-chah-nulth Youth Warriors Family harvested four harbour seals in October – two from Sarita Bay in Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN) modern treaty territory and two from unceded Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations (TFN) territory.

For most of the Warriors, the whole experience of harbour seal hunting, or kuukuḥwisa ḡuḡuḡiḥ as they say in Nuu-chah-nulth language, was a first.

“There were a lot of emotions and tears of joy and pride in bringing this back and revitalizing this knowledge that’s asleep that existed up and down the coast,” said Spencer Greening (La’goot).

Greening, an Indigenous scholar from the Ts’myen (Tsimshian) People of the Pacific northwest, was trained by his elders in how to hunt seal. He was invited by the Warriors Family to mentor the team and show them how to harvest, gut and butcher the marine mammal as his ancestors did.

“It was a total privilege to be in this territory and mentor like they mentored me,” said Greening.

HFN member Leonard Nookemis, 24, joined fellow Warrior and HFN member Andrew Clappis Jr. with HFN knowledge keeper Tommy Joe and Greening on the hunt in Sarita Bay.

Sporting a wetsuit for the mission, Nookemis says they ventured into a shallow estuary in their little tin boat and saw seals scooting around everywhere.

“Fifteen or 20 popped up. It was a pick which one you want kind of deal,” said Nookemis. “I got to shoot it and had to dive through all his blood. I was snorkeling around trying to find it. It was my first big-game kill.”

“If you make a clean shot on a seal, often they’ll float because of their blubber content and because of the salt. Sometimes they do sink,” Greening noted.

Upon returning to shore, the rest of the Warriors team were called up to help with the butchering.

“We cut open one of the guts and there was a whole spring salmon in there. It just fell right out,” Nookemis shared, adding that the bone was really easy to butcher. “It was way softer than a deer.”

As you take apart a seal, Greening explained, the hide comes off first then the blubber is separated from the hide, cleaned and cubed for rendering into oil. After the blubber, the seal meat is butchered into cuts for jarring and cuts for cooking.

“We used everything we could,” said Greening.

The Warriors will learn how to tan the hides, or pelt, at a future workshop.

Traditionally, seal pelts were used for all sorts of regalia like boots, gloves, earrings and coats. In a 1969 Fisheries and Research Board of Canada report on the harbour seal in B.C., author Michael Bigg wrote that: “Since 1962 this seal has been hunted for its commercially valued pelt. Seal hunters generally receive between \$5 and \$35 for a prime raw pelt and up to \$50 when the demand is high.”

The ecological benefits of hunting seal

In his 1969 report, Bigg states that the harbour seal “gained notoriety from the fishing industry and sports fishermen as a predator on commercially valuable fish species.”

To reduce predation, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans put a bounty on the seal from 1914 to 1964, Bigg reports.

The commercial seal hunt ended in 1967 and the Pacific harbour seal population in B.C. has since increased to around 100,000, according to a Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) species bulletin from 2019.

Greening achieved a Ph.D. from Simon Fraser University by investigating how using Indigenous knowledge and language in stewardship can create more sustainable Canadian land management practices. He’s currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at UVIC in Indigenous Law, specifically around harvesting. He says the plight of wild salmon is another reason why modern-day coastal First Nations are keen on reviving seal hunting practices.

“Salmon stocks and salmon numbers are some of the worst they’ve ever been within memory. Seal and sea lions play a big part of that,” said Greening. “Becoming seal hunters again, we’re introducing ourselves back into the ecosystem as Indigenous people; an ecosystem where we were able to influence and sustain amazing fish populations for millennia. This is just one tool to help salmon populations.”

Community feast

Everything harvested was feasted with community and gifted out.

Rachel Dickens-Greening, a diabetes dietician and Ph.D. candidate at UBC studying land and food systems, spent two days teaching the Warriors how to process and cook the seal for a community feast.

“The act of hunting the seal was just as important as cooking it and gifting it. We fed over 30 people in Opitsaht and there was jarred meat for people to take home,” said Dickens-Greening, a new mother to baby girl Maaya’ol, which means ‘berry of the bears’ in the Ts’msyen language.

Seal meat is very dark, notes Greening, who is Rachel’s husband, and it’s like gelatin when you butcher it.

“But it firms right up once you cook it,” said Dickens-Greening. “Often we are cooking it on a low and slow temperature to get it tender.”

Seal dishes served included ribs, burgers, tacos, seal and gravy, crispy fried heart, liver and onions and a sweet and salty recipe based off a Vietnamese caramelized pork recipe – a favourite amongst the Warriors.

“The plates were empty,” said Nookemis, noting that he thought the seal meat tasted a lot like roast beef. “It was really good.”

One elder shared at the community feast that he hadn’t eaten seal since the 1940s.

The flipper, a delicacy that was traditionally served to chiefs, matriarchs and the highest elder, was scorched and boiled like pigs’ feet.

Seal harvesting rights in B.C.

Status-Indians don’t need a licence and have the right to hunt seal and sea lion in their territory for food, social and ceremonial purposes, according the 2017 Legal Services Society publication ‘A Guide to Aboriginal Harvesting Rights’.

Greening relays that back home in Ts’msyen territory “it’s no questions asked, it’s totally fine, as long as you have status and you’re in your traditional territory.”

As a modern treaty Nation, Huu-ay-aht was required to submit a Wildlife Harvest Plan to DFO and undergo a year-long permissions process to harvest seal, whereas Tla-o-qui-aht went internally for permissions with knowledge holders and the First Nation.

For non-status Indians, Legal Aid says the regulations in B.C. do not recognize your right to hunt, trap, or freshwater fish without a licence, and when it comes to hunting seals, it’s illegal in the province unless you are a status-Indian.

In Eastern Canada however, seal hunters in Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick can seek a personal licence to harvest up to six harp and/or grey seals, according to a recent announcement from DFO.

“Previously, DFO’s Commercial Fisheries Licensing Policy for Eastern Canada only allowed harvesters in Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador to apply for personal-use seal licences,” reads the DFO announcement. “In addition to expanding the personal-use seal harvest into new provinces, amendments to the policy have also incorporated the long-standing practice of requiring harvesters to participate in humane harvesting information sessions.”

DFO went on to say they will work with provinces on options to further expand access to the personal use seal harvest next year.

Nookemis is already looking forward to harvesting his next seal. He says he wants to get a pelt for his grandparents and thinks seal meat could one day be distributed in community just like food fish.

JOKES:

Why was Cinderella so bad at soccer? She kept running away from the ball.

What do you call a well-balanced horse? Stable.

What do you call an angry carrot? A steamed veggie.

Where do polar bears keep their money? In a snowbank.

How do you make an egg roll? You push it!

Tipping guide to Canada: When, where and how much to tip for restaurants, taxis and more

By Daniel Otis Published: January 09, 2025

Navigating the unwritten rules of Canada's tipping culture can be confusing enough for people who live here. For visitors and newcomers from countries where tipping is uncommon, the shifting social norms of when, where and how much to tip can be even less straightforward.

In countries like Canada and the U.S., you're expected to tip your server in settings like dine-in restaurants and bars. For a coffee on-the-go or takeout food, a tip is appreciated but not strictly necessary. Prompts for tips are also increasingly popping up on payment machines in unlikely places like bottle shops and jewellery stores, where there are no established expectations to tip.

"This is a social norm, it is not a rule, there is no law about tipping," University of Guelph professor and food economist Mike von Massow told CTVNews.ca. "To me, the strongest social norm is tipping in a sit-down restaurant. The rest have been sort of fuzzy in the past and have become more broad in recent years, particularly I think because [payment] machines can now make it easy to ask for it."

The case is very different in countries like France, Japan, China and Australia, where workers generally don't depend on tips to make a living.

"With the arrival of [payment] terminals, the pandemic, the manpower shortage, there is an increase in places where we are solicited for tipping," etiquette expert Julie Blais Comeau told CTVNews.ca. "When you're not sure, find out and don't be intimidated by the terminal."

While any advice on tipping is debatable, CTVNews.ca consulted with Blais Comeau and von Massow to create an entirely unofficial guide to tipping in Canada for visitors, newcomers and curious Canadians.

Restaurants – expected – 15 to 20 per cent

Tipping is expected at restaurants at 15 per cent of the bill before tax, or more. A good experience and service can warrant higher tips of 18 or 20 per cent. You may be prompted to tip 25 per cent or more, which is generous but not customary.

Bars – expected – At least \$1 per drink

A tip of about a dollar or more per drink is expected at a bar, or pay 10 to 20 per cent on an entire tab. If ordering food or getting table service, tip like you would at a restaurant.

Takeout food – appreciated – Small change or at least 10 per cent

Tipping for takeout food that you pick up yourself is appreciated, but not usually expected. To acknowledge good service, you can leave your change or a percentage of 10 to 15 per cent or more. Tips are generally not accepted at Canada's larger fast-food chains.

Food delivery – expected – At least \$5 or 10 per cent

Tipping at least 10 per cent for food delivery services is expected, with a minimum of about \$5 for an order. Consider tipping more for fast service, larger orders and during bad weather.

Cafés, coffee shops, bakeries – appreciated – Small change or at least 10 per cent

Tipping your change or at least 10 per cent is appreciated at places like cafes, coffee shops and bakeries.

While not always expected, consider tipping if you're a regular, using a table, or if you have a complicated or specific order.

Taxis and rideshares – expected – 10 to 15 per cent

A tip of about 10 to 15 per cent is expected for taxis and rideshares. When paying cash, round up your payment to at least the nearest five or zero. Consider tipping your driver more for good service, like carrying your heavy bags to the door. For rideshare apps, giving a good review is also important unless there were serious problems with your ride.

Tour guides and hotel staff – appreciated – A few dollars

A tip of about \$5 would be appreciated by a good tour guide, although it is not expected. Hotel bellhops should receive a couple dollars per bag for helping with luggage, up to about \$10. Hotel housekeepers can be tipped daily at \$2 to \$5, depending on how much work you leave them.

Wellness and beauty services – expected – 15 to 20 per cent

A tip of about 15 per cent and up is expected by hairdressers, stylists, barbers, manicurists and estheticians. A tip would also be expected for a spa treatment, but not for treatment from a registered massage therapist providing a medical service.

More tips on tipping

With more tip prompts popping up at unconventional places, both von Massow and Blais Comeau say you should not feel obliged to tip in situations where it is not expected or customary.

"By presenting the terminal in sectors of the economy where tipping does not traditionally exist, there's also another element of a perceived intimidation," Blais Comeau, chief etiquette officer at etiquettejulia.com, said from Gatineau, Que. "You have the option of no tip. Go 'no tip' and don't feel intimidated or cheap, it's your right because it is unconventional."

von Massow says set tip prompts subtly nudge customers towards the middle of a proposed range, because people don't want to be perceived as cheap. And if a payment machine only prompts you to tip more than what's typical, don't be afraid to enter 15 per cent or another number as a custom amount.

"The numbers that show up on the machine are the restaurant's choice, they aren't reflective of what a social norm is," von Massow said. "I think it is also completely reasonable to opt out of those nudge numbers that show up on the point-of-sale machine and say, 'No, I'm going to go back to 15 to 20 per cent.'"

Blais Comeau says there are few situations that would warrant leaving less than the customary percentage or nothing at all when tips are expected, even if your meal and service is bad.

"You could go to 10 per cent, but I would say voice your concern," Blais Comeau said. "You may go to the washroom and find the manager, hostess, and speak to that person, and I'm pretty comfortable to say that they would compensate or do something to make you happy."

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von Massow disagrees and says tips should be seen as a reward for good service.

"Most of us as Canadians feel guilty if we don't tip, we feel the pressure of that social norm, and we will, most of us, if we have a bad experience, might knock a point or two off our tip, but won't go to zero," he said. "But I think if your service has been abysmal, I think it's perfectly reasonable to say, 'If this is a reward for good service, if we're going to position it as that, then in the circumstance of poor service, it's fine not to tip.'"

When in doubt, both Blais Comeau and von Massow say simply ask someone nearby what's customary.

WE ARE WANTING TO HEAR FROM ALL INTERESTED NATIONS BY FEB. 28, 2025

CULTURAL HOST NATION NEEDED

We are looking for groups interested in submitting their names for the opportunity to be the Cultural Host of future Elders Gatherings.

Any submitted names will be used for subsequent years if your group doesn't secure this role the first time...though you will be asked before your name is put back in the hat the following year.

We, the BC Elders Communication Center Society, will remain solely financially responsible for the Annual Elders Gathering.

You will not be asked to fund the event other than to register and pay the fee for your group to attend like every other group/individual does.

The CULTURAL HOST will be responsible for the following:

- Providing the Elder King and Queen for the Gathering chosen by your group (\$1000 honorarium each from us at the closing).
- Finding an ARTIST from your Nation to do the new logo for the event representing your culture. (Prize \$1500).
- You agree to bring your cultural drummers/dancers/singers to the Elders Gathering to perform at the Opening of the event to Usher in Your NATION.

And at the Closing of the Elders Gathering to Honour your outgoing King and Queen and wish safe travels to the Elders Delegates.

Having your King and Queen presented with totes of prizes donated by the Craft and Info Vendors at the closing along with a Framed Logo Print to take back home with them as a memento of their reign.

Please contact Donna Stirling, 2025 Elders Gathering Coordinator at bcelders@telus.net if you would like to put your name in the draw to be the Cultural Host of the 2025 Elders Gathering.

Centuries-old First Nations burial discovered at Campbell River construction site



Human remains and artifacts are estimated to be over 1,000 years old

A First Nations burial site recently unearthed at a Campbell River construction project is estimated to be over 1,000 years old.

The discovery of the burial is not unexpected since that location is well-known as archaeological site, said Brad Rembold of CR Horizon, a developer building an apartment complex at the site along Highway 19A.

"There was a settlement of thousands of people here," he said. "No matter where you dig, you're going to find something."

In 2019, the installation of sewer and water pipes along Highway 19A in the city was interrupted after the discovery of archaeological remains. And more many sites have been discovered over the years.

Rembold's company has been consulting with the Wei Wai Kum, We Wai Kai First Nations, and Homalco First Nation with archaeologists present on-site nearly every day since 2021.

"These sites aren't just located on the beachfront, apparently they are everywhere," he said. "There will be people digging in their backyards finding all sorts of stuff. Campbell River has always been a place people want to come and live."

In the past, archaeological excavations have revealed significant evidence of Campbell River's long-term use as a permanent village and fishing settlement for thousands of years. The burial and construction site are located on the traditional territory of the Homalco First Nation and Ligwítłda'xw First Nations.

Further analysis of the remains is needed before they can be linked to a specific nation. The analysis will include methods, such as carbon dating, examining burial techniques, and identifying any artifacts found in proximity to the remains.

Chief tells forum Lheidli T'enneh is 'open for business'

Colin Slark for the Prince George Citizen Jan 15, 2025

Chief Dolleen Logan said her community has a room set up at the 2025 BC Natural Resources Forum to discuss business opportunities.

With a biofuel facility close to beginning operations and a recently announced wind power project near Hixon, Lheidli T'enneh First Nation Chief Dolleen Logan told the 2025 BC Natural Resources Forum that her community wants to partner with companies looking to “innovate and think differently” on Tuesday, Jan. 14.

On the first night of the forum, the chief told attendees that when former Prince George-Mackenzie Liberal MLA Pat Bell helped create the forum 22 years ago, its purpose was to bring people together to discuss the opportunities to develop the province’s natural resources.

Since then, Logan said, it has evolved to allow for the voices of First Nations to be respected and followed.

“Our purpose is the same as yours, to be partners in creating greater opportunities for our community and our people,” she said. “This is a strong purpose for us.”

Late last year, the BC Government approved nine wind power projects co-owned by First Nations, allowing them to bypass the environmental review process.

One of them is a joint venture between Lheidli T'enneh and Spanish firm Ecoener to put 14 turbines generating up to 140 megawatts near Hixon.

“We’ll help offset the massive call for power in our community and provide new pathways for wind farm projects in our province,” Logan said.

“Our partnerships are key for everyone, but we need to ensure that our partnerships extend beyond short-term financial gain and focus on the opportunity to partner together in greater environmental as well as economic outcomes for future generations.”

She also referenced the biofuel plant her community partnered with Arbios Biotech to build, saying that it recently finished construction and will soon open.

Prosperity for her community, the chief said, includes opportunities to create jobs, build houses, deliver services and build bridges. On that last point, Logan said she means the bridge that is needed to connect two Lheidli T'enneh reserves separated by the Fraser River.

She encouraged forum attendees to consider the value of partnerships and discovering new opportunities while they’re at the event.

The First Nation is set up in Room 202 on the second floor of the Civic Centre during the forum to discuss forestry and other ventures it is interested in pursuing. “Our doors are open and Lheidli T'enneh is always open for business,” the chief said.

Hereditary chief Bill Wilson, father of former cabinet minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, dead

Wilson helped push for Indigenous treaty rights to be enshrined in Constitution in 1980s

The Canadian Press · Posted: Jan 25, 202

Bill Wilson, a hereditary chief and the father of former cabinet minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, has died.

Wilson-Raybould announced his death on social media, saying her father's life was "one of leadership and striving to make change." A cause of death was not released.

The Kwakwaka'wakw hereditary chief once faced off with former prime minister Pierre Trudeau in heated constitutional talks in the 1980s, and eventually helped get Indigenous title to land and treaty rights enshrined in the Constitution.

On one occasion, Wilson told Trudeau that his daughters, Jody and Kory, would become prime ministers one day.

Wilson was born in 1944 in Comox, B.C., according to the Canadian Encyclopedia, and was a lawyer who graduated from the University of B.C. in 1973.

According to the Canadian Bar Association, Wilson was the second-ever Indigenous person to graduate from law school in B.C.

He was also involved with Indigenous rights groups like the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and First Nations Summit (FNS).

The Kwakwaka'wakw hereditary chief was of the Kwakiutl First Nation, located in northeast Vancouver Island.

His daughter Wilson-Raybould served in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet as justice minister and attorney general and briefly as minister of veterans affairs."

He taught us well, and we strive to honour all he gave us by carrying on his work," Wilson-Raybould said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

In a social media post, UBCIC sent its condolences to Wilson's family and First Nation.

"UBCIC is so deeply saddened to hear of Indigenous Title and Rights champion Bill Wilson's passing," it wrote. "He dedicated his life to our fight and was instrumental in the creation of UBCIC and the [First Nations Summit]."

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9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call or text 9-8-8. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline offers support that is:

- bilingual**
- trauma-informed**
- culturally appropriate**
- available to anyone in Canada**

The Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line (1-800-721-0066) is available 24 hours a day for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their residential school experience.

Provided by the Government of British Columbia: People struggling with opioid addiction can call 1-833-804-8111 toll-free for immediate assistance from a dedicated team, including doctors and nurses, who can prescribe life-saving opioid agonist medications.

ANNUAL BC ELDERS GATHERING INFO CORNER

**DATES: THE 2025 ANNUAL ELDERS GATHERING
WILL BE AUGUST 26-27, 2025**

August 25th - Check-in for Group Leaders only

PLACE: Vancouver Convention Centre, East Building