



The Annual Elders Gathering  
2025 CULTURAL HOST IS  
Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw  
Siiyúxwa - The Squamish Nation Elders

Annual Elders Gathering Dates:

EVENT: August 26-27, 2025

(Group Leader Check-In Monday, August 25).

Location: Vancouver Convention Centre

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL MOTHERS

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# 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**

**Disclaimer:** Health articles, etc. are provided as a courtesy and neither the BC Elders Communication Center Society's Board. Members or anyone working on its behalf mean this information to be used to replace your doctor's and other professional's advice. You should contact your family physician or health care worker for all health care matters. Info is provided in the Elders Voice for your reference only. And opinions contained in this publication are not those of Donna Stirling.



# Are you having legal issues?

Such as issues about:

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

## Do you have a dispute with ICBC?

About:

- Accident benefits
- Responsibility for an accident

**The Civil Resolution Tribunal can resolve many types of disputes.**

- Make a claim using paper or online forms
- Ask for a fee waiver if you have low income
- You don't have to have a lawyer
- A CRT Navigator is available to help you through the process by phone or email

Call **1-844-322-2292**

or visit **[civilresolutionbc.ca](http://civilresolutionbc.ca)**

CRT: 1-844-322-2292  
[civilresolutionbc.ca](http://civilresolutionbc.ca)

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Canadian  
Red Cross

# FRIENDLY CALLS

The Friendly Calls program matches people over 18 years old with trained Red Cross personnel who connect with them regularly over the phone to check-in, provide emotional support, encourage healthy coping strategies, and suggest well-being resources and community connections to other existing services.

Make a connection,  
one *call* at a *time*.



Call 1-833-979-9779 toll-free from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. local time on weekdays or visit [redcross.ca/friendlycalls](https://redcross.ca/friendlycalls) to sign up, refer someone who could benefit from Friendly Calls or to become a volunteer.

The Friendly Calls program is safe, accessible, free, and available nationwide.

## F.A.Q.

### Who can participate in the Friendly Calls program?

No matter where you live in Canada, the Friendly Calls program is open to anyone over the age of 18 who could benefit from greater connection, or may have limited social and family links, and can receive regular support over the phone for encouragement and the power of feeling heard.

### What skills do Friendly Calls volunteers require?

It's easy to become a Friendly Calls volunteer — all they need to bring is kindness, compassion, and up to a few hours weekly. The Canadian Red Cross will provide training and ongoing support from experts to ensure they feel confident and prepared to make a positive impact in their community - one call at a time.

### How long do Friendly Calls usually last?

The frequency and length of phone calls is tailored to suit a participant's individual needs. Generally, phone calls occur on a weekly basis and can last anywhere from 20 to 60 minutes.

### What if the participant needs more than emotional support?

Red Cross personnel can provide additional support, including enhanced coping strategies and community connections to other existing services, including crisis lines providing urgent mental health support such as Crisis Services Canada or the Hope for Wellness Helpline for Indigenous peoples.

### What languages are being offered?

Currently, phone calls are being conducted in English and French.

For more answers to frequently asked questions, please visit [redcross.ca/friendlycalls](https://redcross.ca/friendlycalls).

It's more than just a phone call, it's about *connections* and *community*.

## **NEW RELATIONSHIP TRUST**

### **Elders Grant**

The Elder Grant program supports BC First Nations elder groups by funding activities that enhance cultural connections, emotional health, physical well-being, mobility, inclusion, and belonging. Our goal is to ensure elders have meaningful experiences that enrich their lives and communities.

### **Who Can Apply**

**B.C. First Nations**

**B.C. First Nation Elder Groups**

If you have questions on eligibility, please contact us by email at: [elders@nrtf.ca](mailto:elders@nrtf.ca).

### **Intake Frequency**

The annual intake and approval process will open each calendar year in May and close, the earlier part of December or when the annual funding available has been exhausted.

### **Funding Amount**

**Up to \$8,000 per year**

### **Eligible Funding Activities**

We welcome a variety of projects, as long as they include a BC First Nations element. Whether your initiative supports academic growth, cultural learning, or innovative education, we encourage you to apply. Below are some examples of past projects, but we can't wait to see the ideas you bring forward.

- Weekly language lessons
- Virtual language lessons
- Language immersion sessions
- Reclaiming Our Voice workshops
- Elder language and culture camps
- Annual Elders Gathering participation



- National Elders Gathering attendance
- Cultural storytelling and knowledge sharing
- Traditional medicine and wellness workshops
- Elders' arts and crafts programs

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Can individual Elders apply for this funding directly?**

No, individual Elders cannot apply directly. Applications must come from First Nations elder groups or organizations in BC, who will manage and administer the funds for Elder-focused activities.

### **Can our Elder group receive funding for attending national or annual gatherings?**

Yes, elder groups can receive funding to participate in national or annual Elders Gatherings, provided these gatherings promote cultural connections, knowledge sharing, and community engagement.

### **When will our Elder group receive the funding payments?**

Your Elder group will receive an advance payment upon application approval. The final payment is provided after your group submits and receives approval of the final activity report.

### **How to Apply**

Download, review and complete the Elder Grant Application.

If you have questions or want to discuss a potential project, please contact us at [elders@nrtf.ca](mailto:elders@nrtf.ca) and we will arrange a time to connect with you.

### **Application**

#### **Application submissions**

Open: May 13, 2025

Close: December 05, 2025, or until funds are exhausted – whichever comes first.

## **This First Nation is recruiting its members to do archaeology and prove their oral history is true**

**Chipewyan Prairie First Nation's field school teaches community members about hands-on archaeology**

Chipewyan Prairie First Nation has taken part in archaeological digs in its territory for several years now, according to Shaun Janvier, director of Chipewyan Prairie Industry Relations, who says the work proves what the community's always known.

"The stories that we have are truth. They're not lies. They're not made-up," Janvier said.

"I'm 51 years old and I have stories that date back to my great-great grandfather... Then you do archeology to find out, and it just proves it."

Recently, the Dene community 320 kilometres north of Edmonton decided to host a field school.

Field school allows participants to learn the hands-on parts of archaeology, like excavation and processing artifacts. For the Chipewyan Prairie school, students also got a week of in-class training at the university where they heard lectures from experts.

For members of nearby communities, the process was particularly meaningful, Janvier said, because of their connection to land and its history.

"You're finding artifacts that your ancestors were there," he said.

The process began when community members, along with University of Alberta archaeologists, were researching in the Winefred Lake area.

For non-Indigenous archaeologists like Ave Dersch and William Wadsworth, a PhD candidate who helped lead the field school, drawing on Indigenous knowledge is a key part of their work."

Chipewyan Prairie knows their history already, and they know that they've always been there," Dersch said in an interview with CBC Edmonton's Radio Active.

"Almost exclusively as an archaeologist, you're working on Indigenous heritage context. So we need to also change archaeology to be better," Wadsworth said.

At Winefred Lake, he added, they found "cultural continuity" of the Dene community dating back a few thousand years.

That aligns with what is well-known within the community, Janvier said.

All this led Wadsworth to say he hopes that every First Nation can have its own members working as archaeologists to interpret their findings for their own communities.

That sentiment is echoed by Eldon Yellowhorn, an archaeologist and professor of Indigenous Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, who is from the Piikani Nation in southern Alberta.

Yellowhorn got his own start in archaeology doing field work and says digs like the ones at Winefred Lake can be the starting point for people to begin academic careers.

"I wish more [Indigenous people] would go to university and then become archaeologists who will be able to make valid and accurate claims based on their research and their own cultural knowledge," he said.

That is a crucial part of his own work, Yellowhorn said, as he's been using the stories he heard growing up to interpret archaeological records.

"This [traditional knowledge] has all been kind of dismissed. That it's just myth, and there's no truth to be found there," Yellowhorn said. He said he's used archaeological records to trace traditions — which are often referred to as dating back to "time immemorial" — back to their likely origins.

### Who gets control of what's found

Items discovered during the Chipewyan Prairie field work are being held only temporarily at the University of Alberta Institute for Prairie Indigenous Archeology, Dersch said.

That is different from what usually happens when artifacts are uncovered. In Canada, provinces and territories decide what happens with archaeological artifacts.

"So in Alberta, this means listening to the Archeological Survey of Alberta and following the artifacts submission guides by the Royal Alberta Museum [RAM]. Because in Alberta, everything's going to the RAM," Wadsworth said.

However, since reserves fall under federal jurisdiction, First Nations are able to decide what to do with artifacts found on reserve land, he added.

In this case, the artifacts from Winefred Lake belong to Chipewyan Prairie. Janvier said the community plans to open a museum or heritage centre in the First Nation or in Fort McMurray, Alta., so that all First Nations in the area have equal access.

Yellowhorn said often provincial rules around archaeological findings alienate Indigenous people from their heritage.

"It has effectively put a rift between descendant communities and the artifacts that we find in the ground, because now they're saying, since these are resources, they now belong to the province and you have no say in what happens to them," Yellowhorn said.

Yellowhorn said recent land claims agreements have tried to address this issue by giving First Nations back the control over these finds — but that requires each community to address the issue on an individual basis.



## A Sea-to-Sky Highway Road Trip for Indigenous Culture in Whistler and Beyond

All the ways to uncover First Nations and Indigenous culture in North America's largest ski resort and mountain bike park.

The evergreen road, wet and luminous, was the magic carpet upon which my husband wove our rental SUV between ancient rock faces and around fuzzy mountainsides of virginal pines. All along, a parade of glacier-capped points rising out of the silvered Salish Sea escorted us north, away from Vancouver and toward the promise of peaks groomed into the snowy ski slopes of Whistler Blackcomb, Canada's largest ski resort town.

The gobsmacking beauty of this winter journey to Whistler had started before we even left Vancouver proper. Then a sign jumped out at me. "Wait!" I exclaimed, "Did you see that?" It was a standard green notice indicating the distance in kilometers to destinations ahead. But, instead of only English town names, it listed Squamish and (Sḵw̱xwú7mesh), Whistler and (Sḵw̱ikw). The First Nations language of this region was displayed on a road sign. As an American, I've never seen a Native American language written in public anywhere. This acknowledgment, sadly, felt to me as novel as seeing a grizzly bear walk down the road. The dual-language signs are one step in Canada's important Truth and Reconciliation journey.

I spent the remaining two hours of our British Columbia drive eagle-eyed, looking for more Indigenous signage. They felt like an invitation to learn more and a reminder that there is deep meaning in all these natural features, and compelled me to dive into a Google rabbit hole where I found a YouTube explainer on pronunciation that treated me to an earful of Sea to Sky Highway road signs read by a Sḵw̱xwú7mesh individual. I later learned the translations aren't one-to-one. Take the Sea to Sky Highway we were on: In Squamish, its transportive name is Átl'ka7tsem, meaning, "paddling up the sound." It's practically the start to a story. And that's exactly the point.

"When people hear our stories, see our languages on signage, taste our traditional foods, and visit sacred and historical sites, they're engaging in a meaningful exchange—one that fosters respect, understanding and appreciation for the original peoples of these lands," says Talaysay Campo, a member of the Squamish (Sḵw̱xwú7mesh) and Sechelt (Shíshálh) Nations and co-founder of the region's Talaysay Tours, alongside with her mother, Candace Campo.

Thanks to the Campo family and quite a few others, I discovered there are many meaningful ways to engage with First Nations cultures while visiting the rich Sea to Sky Corridor stretching from Vancouver to Whistler, especially in the most inclusive ski resort (and mountain bike park) in North America.

Note: Whistler is the unceded traditional territory of the Líl'wat7úl (Lil'wat) and Sḵw̱xwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples who have called it home for time immemorial. Vancouver is on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish: the x̱m̱əθḵw̱əy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱xwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Travelers should respectfully acknowledge the diverse histories, cultures, and languages of the Indigenous and First Nations people who have always been stewards of these homelands.

# **Snuneymuxw First Nation launches trucking company for Vancouver Island**

Nanaimo Bulletin News Staff

Mar 5, 2025

**Snuneymuxw First Nation-Petroglyph Development Group company to cater to forestry, construction, mining**

**Snuneymuxw First Nation has launched a transportation company to strengthen Vancouver Island's supply chain and spur the region's economy.**

**Sarlequun Transport Inc. will offer trucking services for general freight, forestry, construction and mining industries, stated a Snuneymuxw press release, offering "export and import from Vancouver Island to the world, providing transportation, documentation, and logistics," and will operate under the nation's economic development corporation – Petroglyph Development Group.**

**The company has a 2.83 hectare property on Maughan Road in Nanaimo, complete with trucks, forklifts and a warehouse to service shippers on Vancouver Island, according to the press release. Ian Simpson, Petroglyph CEO, said the new company will build on Snuneymuxw's legacy.**

**"For thousands of years, Snuneymuxw people have been leaders in transportation and trade," Simpson stated in the press release. "The launch of Sarlequun Transport Inc. continues this ... creating new economic opportunities while strengthening our role in Vancouver Island's supply chain. This venture will provide career opportunities for our members and generate profits to support the nation's growth and prosperity."**

**In addition to businesses, contractors and industry, Sarlequun Transport Inc. also seeks truck drivers, mechanics and logistics staff, according to the press release.**

**Profit will be reinvested in the Snuneymuxw community for programs including health services, housing, education and infrastructure, the press release stated.**

**In an e-mail, Alisha Yarham, Petroglyph Development Group spokesperson, said there is not a direct hul'q'umi'num'-English translation for Sarlequun, although it's based on history.**

**"On Dec. 23, 1854, the Snuneymuxw people entered the Sarlequun Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854 to forever preserve and protect Snuneymuxw villages, enclosed fields, waterways, harvesting and gathering, and the rights to hunt and fisheries as formerly," Yarham said. "[It] honours Snuneymuxw's rich cultural heritage and deep connection to the land."**

**Snuneymuxw First Nation Chief Michael Wyse said the venture is important for his nation's growth.**

**"With the launch of Sarlequun Transport Inc., Snuneymuxw continues to strengthen Vancouver Island's infrastructure and expand economic opportunities for our people and the region at large," Wyse said in the press release. "Through job creation and economic empowerment, we are fostering our Nation's independence and advancing Indigenous leadership in the transportation industry." More information is available at <https://petroglyphdg.com/> and <https://sarlequunlogistics.com/>.**

# Survivors of abuse at Indian hospitals eligible for up to \$200K in proposed settlement

Deal covers Indigenous patients admitted to government-run facilities

Olivia Stefanovich · CBC News · Posted: Mar 06, 2025 8:30 AM PST | Last Updated: March 6

**WARNING:** This story contains distressing details.

Ottawa has reached a proposed settlement agreement with Indigenous survivors of the segregated health facilities known as Indian hospitals, to provide individual compensation ranging from \$10,000 to \$200,000.

Indian hospitals were substandard facilities operated by the federal government starting in the 1930s to separate Indigenous people from the rest of the Canadian population to stop the spread of tuberculosis (TB).

Tens of thousands of First Nations, Inuit and Métis patients, including children, were admitted to the overcrowded, poorly staffed and unsanitary institutions. Survivors allege they faced physical and sexual abuse from hospital staff, along with forcible confinement to beds without a medical reason. Some say they were also the subject of medical experiments.

The deal announced Thursday aims to resolve a \$1.1-billion class-action lawsuit on behalf of former patients from the decades-long segregated health-care system rife with widespread mistreatment and abuse by providing an uncapped amount of compensation.

"It's a meaningful day," said Ann Hardy, representative plaintiff.

Hardy was admitted to the federally run Charles Camsell Indian Hospital in Edmonton from January to May 1969.

"I was admitted because I had TB and I was supposed to heal. But instead, I experienced fear, isolation and trauma that has stayed with me for decades."

The agreement covers 33 federally run Indian hospitals that operated from January 1936 until December 1981, excluding sanatoriums.

## **5 years of negotiations**

**Under the proposal, individual compensation for survivors would vary depending on the level of verbal, physical and/or sexual abuse suffered.**

**Some of the allegations from patients include: being beaten with rods and sticks, isolated in hospital rooms for prolonged periods of time, deprived of food and water and even forced to eat their own vomit.**

**Compensation for immediate family members would also be made available.**

**A foundation would be created to administer an additional \$150-million healing fund for survivors to access money for the revitalization of their Indigenous languages, education and wellness.**

**The foundation would also manage a separate \$235.5-million research and commemoration fund to preserve the history of the institutions and to help local burial sites associated with them.**

**"I wish this chapter of our history had never happened," Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Gary Anandasangaree said at the announcement.**

**"But it did. And so, we have a responsibility not just to acknowledge it, but to act."**

**The agreement comes after five years of negotiations between the federal government and lawyers for the lawsuit, *Ann Cecile Hardy v. Attorney General of Canada*, which was filed in 2018 and certified in 2020. An agreement-in-principle was reached in December 2024.**

**The deal also covers three similar proposed class actions that were filed afterwards and dealt with collectively under Hardy, including: Deborah Azak and Wayne Louie (Supreme Court of British Columbia), Jean John Baptiste Pambrun (Court of King's Bench Saskatchewan) and Blanche Bull (Court of King's Bench Alberta).**

**In addition to compensation, survivors could collectively access \$150 million from Indigenous Services Canada for mental health and legal support through the claims process. The money would also cover the administrative cost of the settlement agreement by independent third parties.**

**The Federal Court will decide whether to approve the proposed settlement agreement during hearings scheduled for June 10 and 11. Survivors are encouraged to provide feedback in advance.**

**Mental health counselling and crisis support also available 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the Hope for Wellness hotline at 1-855-242-3310 or by online chat.**

## **Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Government of Canada sign a Reconciliation Agreement**

### **From: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada**

#### **News release**

**March 7, 2025 — səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), District of North Vancouver, British Columbia — Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada**

Today, Chief Jen Thomas of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, marked a significant milestone towards strengthening their Nation-to-Nation relationship.

Meeting in the Tsleil-Waututh community, they signed a new Reconciliation Agreement as an incremental step towards reconciliation. The Agreement sets out a process for future discussions and negotiations on topics of shared interest to the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Canada. Building on a Letter of Understanding (LOU) signed in 2017, it re-commits the Parties to continue working together on a Nation-to-Nation basis, guided by core principles including the recognition of Tsleil-Waututh Nation's section 35 rights within the Territory, and a shared commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Representatives of Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Crown-Indigenous Relations developed the Agreement through their established Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination negotiation table. The Agreement follows other agreements between Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Canada that are focused on co-operation and partnership on environmental management in the Burrard Inlet, including the Agreement on Collaborative Decision Making Regarding Disposal at Sea (2018), and the Burrard Inlet Environmental Science and Stewardship Agreement (2021).

Canada supports the goal of advancing Tsleil-Waututh Nation's interests, including recognition of their traditional role as stewards of Burrard Inlet, as well as a commitment to the ongoing collaborative process of reconciliation. The Reconciliation Agreement is a tangible example of how Canada is working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to deliver results. It is also another example of how Canada is upholding its commitment to advance on Action Plan Measures included in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

#### **Quote**

"My hands are raised to the Government of Canada and our Tsleil-Waututh Nation representatives for coming together to prioritize building our relationship, which is a step forward in the journey towards reconciliation. There are outstanding issues of reconciliation and jurisdiction between Canada and TWN that need to be addressed, and this agreement provides the vehicle for resolution. TWN has always held inherent jurisdiction and authority within our territory—This Agreement sets the table for future negotiations regarding matters related to Tsleil-Waututh Nation rights and title in our ancestral lands and waters within our traditional territory and upholds the standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This step will bring mutual benefits and support a thriving future for the next seven generations."

**Chief Jen Thomas**  
**səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation)**

## **Vancouver CTV News**

**K'omoks First Nation on Vancouver Island votes to ratify treaty, constitution**

**By The Canadian Press**

**Published: March 09, 2025**

**The K'omoks First Nation on Vancouver Island says members have voted in favour of both a treaty and constitution, paving the way for a "transition to self-government."**

**The nation's elected Chief Councillor Nicole Rempel says the vote "marks a momentous day" for the K'omoks First Nation.**

**The nation says 83 per cent of the votes went in favour of ratifying the K'omoks constitution, and 81 per cent voted in favour of the treaty, but a date for it to come into effect is yet to be determined by the First Nation and the provincial and federal governments.**

**It says work over the next three years will involve a restructuring of the Nation's governing bodies and developing laws, while "carefully considering the tremendous economic opportunities that lay ahead."**

**The K'omoks says the province and the federal government must pass legislation to ratify the treaty, which it says will be signed next year.**

**Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Christine Boyle says the treaty "is a path to self-governance," and congratulated the First Nation's leadership for the successful vote on a treaty that's been in negotiations since 1994.**

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## **Rock Me to Sleep**

**By Elizabeth Akers Allen 1832 –1911**

**Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,  
Make me a child again just for tonight!  
Mother, come back from the echoless shore,  
Take me again to your heart as of yore;  
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,  
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair;  
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep;—  
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!**



Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years!  
I am so weary of toil and of tears,—  
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain,—  
Take them, and give me my childhood again!  
I have grown weary of dust and decay,—  
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away;  
Weary of sowing for others to reap;—  
Rock me to sleep, mother — rock me to sleep!

Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,  
Mother, O mother, my heart calls for you!  
Many a summer the grass has grown green,  
Blossomed and faded, our faces between:  
Yet, with strong yearning and passionate pain,  
Long I tonight for your presence again.  
Come from the silence so long and so deep;—  
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

Over my heart, in the days that are flown,  
No love like mother-love ever has shone;  
No other worship abides and endures,—  
Faithful, unselfish, and patient like yours:  
None like a mother can charm away pain  
From the sick soul and the world-weary brain.  
Slumber's soft calms o'er my heavy lids creep;—  
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,  
Fall on your shoulders again as of old;  
Let it drop over my forehead tonight,  
Shading my faint eyes away from the light;  
For with its sunny-edged shadows once more  
Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore;  
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep;—  
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

Mother, dear mother, the years have been long  
Since I last listened your lullaby song:  
Sing, then, and unto my soul it shall seem  
Womanhood's years have been only a dream.  
Clasped to your heart in a loving embrace,  
With your light lashes just sweeping my face,  
Never hereafter to wake or to weep;—  
Rock me to sleep, mother, — rock me to sleep!

# Justin Trudeau pledged to end boil water advisories in First Nations communities. Here's how many are left

By Charlie Buckley Published: March 16, 2025

Ten years ago this fall, then-Liberal leader Justin Trudeau made a pledge to voters: that a Canadian government under his leadership would drastically improve water quality for Indigenous peoples.

"We have 93 different communities under 133 different boil-water advisories across the country," Trudeau said at the October 2015 town hall; a number he agreed should be brought down to zero "within five years."

Efforts to meet that pledge have drawn criticism from Indigenous leaders and the auditor-general's office alike for insufficient federal support. Close to a decade on from the initial five-year pledge, there remain 35 long-term drinking water advisories across 33 reserves in Canada, federal data shows.

Long-term boil water advisories on First Nation communities in Canada, March 2025

Indigenous Services Canada counts 147 long-term drinking water advisories lifted since November 2015. As of March 2025, 35 remain.

As the Trudeau era comes to an end, here's a look at what has been done to end drinking water advisories, as well as the work that remains:

What is a DWA?

Drinking water advisories (DWAs) are issued when local authorities determine a community's water supply is unsafe. While most municipal drinking water systems are the responsibility of provincial governments, those on First Nations are supported federally, through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

A DWA can be sparked by a single, large problem like a burst water line or chemical spill, or numerous localized issues, such as lead plumbing found in many individual buildings.

Advisories may require residents to boil water before use, typically for contaminants like bacteria or viruses; to avoid drinking or cooking with the water, often due to the presence of heavy metals like lead; or to refrain from using it for any purpose, such as when toxic chemicals have made the water unsafe to touch.

Once an advisory has been in place for a full year, it is considered a long-term DWA. Some can linger for years, or even decades, during which time residents may have to take additional daily precautions including regular boiling, purchasing bottled water for their homes or trucking in large supplies from outside their region.

In Neskantaga First Nation in northern Ontario, water was declared unsafe to drink in February 1995, and a boil water advisory has remained in effect for 30 years. ISC's tracker shows that work is underway to ensure a new water treatment system is operating successfully, though as of the last update in August 2024, the timeline to lift the advisory remains to be determined.

What has been done about DWAs?

Before a DWA can be lifted, local authorities and their partners must resolve the underlying contamination, including by repairing or upgrading infrastructure, adjusting monitoring measures or improving training for operators. In some cases, a brand-new water treatment plant may be required.

In recent months, authorities in English River First Nation in Saskatchewan and Fort Severn First Nation in Ontario lifted long-term DWAs in their jurisdictions, following upgrades to their water treatment plants and staffing. Until last fall, the two nations were under DWAs for more than 500 and more than 1,000 days, respectively.

A March 2025 breakdown by ISC shows that 81 per cent of DWAs active in or after 2015 have since been lifted, and another nine per cent are expected to officially end soon, as the projects launched to address them are now complete. Projects to address another eight per cent of DWAs are under active construction, ISC says, with a final two per cent subject to projects in the early stages.

A Friday statement from the department notes that 670 water infrastructure projects have been completed to date, with another 783 more projects underway.

ISC says that since late 2015, 147 long-term DWAs have been lifted, though in that time, 79 new advisories have been declared long-term. From a starting list of 93, there are currently 33 communities still under a long-term DWA, nationwide.

#### Long-term drinking water advisories added and resolved, 2016-YTD 2025

At the time of Justin Trudeau's October 2015 pledge to end long-term drinking water advisories, there were 93 advisories active, nationwide. Ten years on, there are 35 active in March 2025.

#### What about that pledge?

By the time the deadline came for Trudeau's original town-hall pledge, there remained 54 long-term DWAs in First Nations communities across the country, and in 2020, ISC data shows, the total actually grew, with 13 new advisories declared long-term and just 11 resolved.

A 2021 report from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) found that ISC "did not provide the support necessary to ensure that First Nations communities have ongoing access to safe drinking water," and noted that at the time, "almost half of the existing advisories (had been) in place for more than a decade."

ISC acknowledged in late 2020 that the original commitment of zero advisories would not be reached on time, part of a problem the OAG report attributed in part to "an outdated policy and formula for funding" operations and maintenance.

"Let's be clear, this is a process, not a single event," said Marc Miller, then minister of Indigenous services, in a December 2020 press conference. "Today we are making ourselves accountable, we're making future governments accountable. And, while there have been many reasons for the delay I want to state as clearly as possible, that ultimately I bear responsibility for this, and I have the responsibility, and the duty to get this done."

With the acknowledgement came the announcement of \$1.5 billion in additional funding to lift DWAs, no longer tied to a specific timeline, CTV News reported.

In a statement to CTVNews.ca Friday, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak wrote that though progress was significant throughout the Trudeau years, numerous First Nations remain under DWAs, and the long-term sustainability of water quality is a pressing concern.

“Chronic underfunding of operations and maintenance costs must be addressed,” the statement reads. “Delays have been caused by inadequate funding, reliance on short-term solutions, and a lack of long-term investments. Without sustained funding, First Nations are forced into a recurring cycle of funding shortfalls and lack of access to clean water, issues that are never fully resolved.”

In its own Friday statement, ISC noted the complexity of water infrastructure projects, especially in remote communities, but said that its “focus is unwavering” on the goal of providing “effective and lasting solutions developed with First Nations to meet their needs.”

In the wake of Trudeau announcing that he would resign, organizations including the AFN and Chiefs of Ontario, where the largest total of DWAs remain, have urged the federal government to pass the First Nations Clean Water Act (Bill C-61), a 2023 bill that would affirm First Nations water rights, and establish regulatory standards and commitments to improve conditions and infrastructure.

The act is currently in limbo following the prorogation of Parliament earlier this year. Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu’s office told CTVNews.ca in a statement that while the bill’s future is “unknown,” they remain resolute in their work on water quality.

The AFN, meanwhile, looks toward opportunities with the government that follows Trudeau’s own.

“The Assembly of First Nations is ready to work with Prime Minister (Mark) Carney’s government to complete this essential work through long-term, sustainable funding arrangements,” Woodhouse Nepinak’s statement reads.

“We must work to improve Bill C-61 and move it through to Royal Assent—whether in this Parliament or the next ... Together, we can ensure clean drinking water now and for future generations.”

With files from CTV News' Rachel Aiello and the Canadian Press

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#### MOTHER’S DAY QUOTES

“A mother is your first friend, your best friend, your forever friend.” —Unknown

“When you are looking at your mother, you are looking at the purest love you will ever know.” — Benetto

“Mother is the heartbeat in the home; and without her, there seems to be no heartthrob.” —L. Brownlow

“Mothers are like glue. Even when you can’t see them, they’re still holding the family together.” —S. Gale

“My Mother: She is beautiful, softened at the edges and tempered with a spine of steel. I want to grow old and be like her. ” —Jodi Picoult

“Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children.” —William Makepeace Thackeray

“The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation.” —James E. Faust

“It may be possible to gild pure gold, but who can make his mother more beautiful?” —Mahatma Gandhi

“There is no role in life that is more essential than that of motherhood.” —Elder M. Russell Ballard

“Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall; A mother’s secret hope outlives them all.” — Oliver Wendell Holmes

# **Tla'amin Nation and Domtar Celebrate Historic Land Agreement**

## **Nation reacquires lands at the tiskwat paper mill site**

(TLA'AMIN TERRITORY and RICHMOND, BC) MARCH 17, 2025 — Domtar (formerly Paper Excellence) and Tla'amin Nation have reached an historic agreement for the Nation to reacquire a substantial portion of the lands at the tiskwat paper mill site in Powell River, British Columbia. The two parties signed the agreement at a ceremony on Tla'amin Territory.

tiskwat was a large and important village site that holds both historical and contemporary significance for the Tla'amin people.

The agreement is the result of years of work and commitment by both parties who overcame initial apprehensions to develop trust and work together in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation. That work began with the renaming of the mill site in 2021 to tiskwat and continued in a mutually respectful way to reach today's agreement.

The agreement honours both the historic significance and future potential of the lands. The reacquired lands primarily front the river and ocean and are among the least industrialized areas at tiskwat. Tla'amin Nation will manage portions of the land for cultural and environmental values while developing the more industrialized lands to spur regional economic growth.

While a large portion of the former mill site will be acquired by the Tla'amin Nation, a segment of land will be sold by Domtar to one or more third parties that will engage in industrial redevelopment. This will ensure that these lands will also continue to create economic benefits for the broader community well into the future.

**Hegus John Hackett, Tla'amin Nation:**

**"We want to thank our ancestors who never gave up on tiskwat. Your strength has guided our hands in this work. We also recognize Domtar's commitment to staying the course with us when negotiations got tough. Reconnecting with this place—once the original commercial hub of our territory, a center of trade and prosperity for thousands of years—is deeply emotional. We look forward to once again exercising our responsibilities to these lands."**

**Richard Tremblay, President of Pulp and Tissue, Domtar:**

**"Our journey with the Tla'amin Nation is an important one in the history of our company. The path we have walked together shows that when you take the time to build trusted relationships and get things right, the extraordinary becomes possible. We are proud of this agreement as a tangible demonstration of our commitment to a reconciliation-centered approach to engaging with Indigenous communities."**

**Dillon Johnson, Executive Councillor, Tla'amin Nation:**

**"tiskwat is a very special place that has sustained Tla'amin people since time immemorial and we always knew it would come back to us. Today's agreement marks a new chapter not only for Tla'amin but for the entire regional economy. We look to make the most of this opportunity for present and future generations to come."**

**Lana Wilhelm, Director of Indigenous Relations, Domtar:**

**"I raise my hands in deep respect for the Tla'amin Executive Council and their staff for their incredible work in negotiating this generational acquisition. Equally, I'm very proud to be working with colleagues and leadership at Domtar who had the integrity to do the right thing with this site. It has not been a journey without challenges, but what an inspiring one it is when everyone paddles in the same direction."**

**Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Province of British Columbia:**

**"Congratulations to the leadership of Tla'amin Nation and Domtar on this agreement, reached through complex and collaborative discussions, on the path forward for the tiskʷat site. As a partner in the Tla'amin Treaty and the yixmətštəm tiskʷat (which translates to 'we are going to take care of tiskʷat') MOU, the Province recognizes tiskʷat as an important Tla'amin settlement site and is committed to further collaborative planning related to site acquisition, stewardship, and economic development. This agreement is a positive example of reconciliation in action and ensures all parties can continue exploring a shared vision for the site, one which benefits the whole community."**

**Honourable Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Province of British Columbia:**

**"Today is about celebrating an important milestone and opportunity for the tiskʷat site, the Tla'amin Nation, Domtar, and the entire community. The agreement represents a positive step forward for reconciliation. One which reaffirms and recognizes tiskʷat as the Tla'amin's ancestral home. Today's announcement is not just a welcome home for Tla'amin Nation. It's also an exciting new beginning for tiskʷat, the Tla'amin and the entire community."**

#### **About Tla'amin Nation**

**The Tla'amin Nation is a self-governing modern treaty nation with significant land holdings in the qathet region on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast. The Tla'amin Treaty with Canada and British Columbia came into force in 2016. Tla'amin people have occupied the region for millennia, stewarding the land and sea in accordance with Tla'amin law and respect for the natural world. To learn more please visit <https://www.tlaamination.com/>**

#### **About Domtar**

**Domtar is a leading, privately held manufacturer of diversified forest products, with a workforce of about 14,000 employees in more than 60 locations across North America. The company has an annual production capacity of 9.1 million metric tons of pulp, paper, packaging and tissue, and approximately 3 billion board feet of lumber and other wood products. Formerly known as the Paper Excellence Group, Domtar is comprised of legacy businesses Paper Excellence, Domtar and Resolute Forest Products.**

**Domtar prides itself on operational excellence, delivering sustainable, high-quality and cost-effective products to meet and exceed customer needs globally. The company is committed to turning sustainable wood fiber into everyday essential products. For more information, visit [www.domtar.com](http://www.domtar.com).**



## **Feds to contribute up to \$200M for Haisla-led project to ship liquefied natural gas to Asia**

**Cedar LNG on B.C.'s North Coast set to be largest majority Indigenous-owned project in Canada**

**CBC News · Posted: Mar 21, 2025 11:46 AM PDT | Last Updated: March 21**

The federal government says it will contribute up to \$200 million to a floating liquefied natural gas export facility off B.C.'s North Coast, saying it's an important part of diversifying Canada's economy.

The project is Cedar LNG, a collaboration between Calgary-based Pembina Pipeline Corp. and the Haisla First Nation, and is slated to be the largest Indigenous majority-owned infrastructure project in Canadian history, stakeholders say.

Originally valued at \$3 billion, the federal government now says it will cost an estimated \$5.9 billion to build, creating 300 jobs during construction and 100 full-time jobs once operational.

"The need to build a resilient economy with new export opportunities for Canadian energy suppliers has never been clearer," Jonathan Wilkinson, the federal energy and natural resources minister, said in a statement Friday.

"Our international partners are looking for a reliable supplier of low-carbon energy sources, and Canada will be there to enable communities."

Cedar LNG has also been identified by the B.C. government as one of several projects it wants to fast-track in order to stave off the threat imposed by U.S. tariffs.

The project consists of a floating natural gas liquefaction plant and marine export terminal located in the Douglas Channel near Kitimaat Village, a Haisla community approximately 380 kilometres directly west of Prince George, B.C.

Scheduled to be in service in late 2028, it will have the capacity to liquefy approximately 3.3 million tonnes of natural gas per year for export to Asian markets.

Crystal Smith, chief councillor of the Haisla Nation, said the project fits into her community's values of sustainability because it will have "one of the lowest carbon footprints in the world."

The plant itself is meant to be powered by hydroelectricity, and the natural gas will be fed in for liquefying via an eight kilometre-long pipeline spur connected to the main Coastal GasLink pipeline, which travels across British Columbia from near Dawson Creek, passing through Wet'suwet'en territory and which has been subject to widespread protests and legal challenges.

While proponents of a Canadian LNG industry say liquefied natural gas from Canada could help reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by replacing coal in countries that still rely on the dirtier fuel, environmentalists argue LNG creates its own emissions through the liquefaction and transportation process, as well as through the drilling and flaring of natural gas.

They say building massive LNG terminals that require huge upfront capital investments "locks in" future greenhouse gas emissions at a time when the world needs to be planning for a lower-carbon future.

# Japan has come up with a much simpler solution to clearing snow from roads that the US could learn from

Published on Mar 22, 2025 by Jack Marsh

- Japan is well-versed in creating world-renowned tech
- But this time they've gone simple
- This sprinkler system keeps roads safe during 10-ft snowstorms

The tech-savvy geniuses in Japan have created a simple solution to clearing snow from roads, and the US could take some notes.

Snow can be extremely hazardous for drivers, reducing visibility, creating slippery roads, and increasing the risk of accidents if proper precautions aren't taken.

But in Japan, people have found an ingenious way to clear snow.

The genius way Japan deals with snowy roads

Japan has some great habits when it comes to cars and travel, having already established incredible parking courtesies. Now, the country is defeating bad weather.

Currently, American methods of dealing with snow are spreading salt, deploying plow trucks, and putting a big fat coat on to get your shovel out.

But Japan has a 'shosetsu' system that melts snow on every major road.

First introduced in the 1960s in the city of Nagaoka, the neat little hack involves the implementation of sprinklers on the roads.

These are used to soak the streets and melt the snow. The sprinklers, either built into the roads or the barriers that dock the streets, have now been employed all over the country.

Considering snowfall can reach 10 feet high, matching that in Minnesota and other northern US states, it's an incredibly successful technique.

Because of the many hot springs in Japan and the general temperature of gathered rainfall being quite warm, the sprinklers spray warm water constantly, which even combats the creation of ice.

Few places around the world have been able to replicate this though, as warm water is needed, rather than cold water which would ice over and make conditions even worse.

Chinese cities have experimented with similar infrastructure with the addition of heat pumps, but this becomes increasingly expensive and difficult to maintain. Japan is well and truly ahead of the game when it comes to this kind of technology.

## **Survey in British Columbia Reveals Dozens of First Nations Sites**

**FARWELL CANYON, CANADA--**In 2024, a landslide along the Chilcotin River in British Columbia caused extensive damage to the ancestral home of the Secwépemc Nation.

A new archaeological and cultural heritage survey of the area seeking to assess the damage to historical sites revealed previously unknown ancient villages and has shed new light on the Secwépemc communities' long connection with the land, according to a statement released by Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN).

The region has long been known to be the location of the four principal Secwépemc villages, including Tecwilúps, Nexelp, and Kwomesken's Village.

Surprisingly, however, the survey identified 70 additional archaeological sites spanning 4,000 years, including 31 pre-contact villages.

Seven of these contained sacred use features, such as burials, caves, and rock art, as well as millennia-old houses. "These pit houses are older than the pyramids!" said WLFN's Whitney Spearing.

"It's incredible that we're still uncovering new insights about the communities that thrived here for thousands of years."

The settlers in the canyon, collectively known as Ste'tlemc, were a dominant trading force within the Secwépemc Nation, and thrived in the area until the 1860s, when a smallpox outbreak devastated the settlements and forced its populations to flee.

To read more about archaeological traces of Canada's First Nations, go to "The Edible Seascape."

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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**