

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH



HOUSING RECOVERY TASK FORCE:

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EDITOR:
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Waytk-P

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Moccasin Telegraph.

A special Waytk-P to all the band members who live outside the Skwlāx te Secwepemcūlecw and who are getting this via mail.

Efforts continue to get those band members back into the homes that survived the fire in a safe, orderly manner.

The members that experienced the devastating loss of their homes have the opportunity to rebuild their home, rebuild hope and sustain the continued prosperity that we value as a people of the Secwepemcūlecw.

This is an important challenge we face and I Will not only meet this challenge but my team I have assembled will be victorious.



- Ensure that all members that are evacuated are comfortable
- Get people back into rebuilt homes as soon as possible
- Ensure that temporary and permanent housing solutions support the long-term goals of the community
- Ensure that SteS businesses and members can be incorporated meaningfully in the recovery

Task	Description	Timeline	Responsibility
Initial Response			
Everybody evacuated	Evacuate the community to temporary housing	Completed	EOC
Rapid Damage Assessment	Undertake Rapid Damage Assessment of houses	Completed	Andrea Stelter/Task Force One
Evacuation			
Better understand immediate needs of evacuees	Undertake survey of evacuees to understand their immediate needs and whether their temporary accommodation is appropriate	September 13 th	Destiny Francois/ Joannie Elias
Seek temporary accommodations for all evacuees who still have a home to return to	Current housing at Rayleigh may be unsatisfactory for some members. Look for other hotel <u>space</u> for evacuees until they can return home. Coordinate with ESS/ISC	By September 15 th	Destiny Francois/ Desira Johns
Review options for interim housing for evacuees who have lost homes	Look for space with kitchens and/or look at options to live with family members	By September 20 th	Housing and Health Team
Band Member Involvement			
Create skills database for members	Develop a skills database where members who want to participate in various components of the temp housing and rebuild process can describe their skills so that contractors can utilize them	By October 21	Human Resources Department
Create Band member business database	Create a database of Band member owned businesses that can assist with the rebuild	By October 21	Housing Team
Standing Homes			

Remove Fridge and Freezers	Remove all fridges and freezers in standing homes and dispose	By September 18 th	Andrea Stelter, Tanner Francois, Liam Construction
Undertake inspections of all homes to determine repair and cleaning requirements	Determine the extent of cleaning required in each house and provide report	By October 13 th	Insurance Companies, Rhys Laug
Replace Fridges and Freezers	Place order for fridges and freezers and seek reimbursement from ISC	By late October	Destiny Francois
Determine cleaning plan for standing homes that are not damaged	Determine level of cleaning required for homes, whether painting, ceiling insulation removal, and replacement of soft furniture/carpets is required	By October 22	Leslie Quanstrom, Destiny Francois, Rhys Laug
Undertake work to get standing homes cleaned and suitable for living	Implement cleaning and refurbishment program	October – December	Destiny Francois, Leslie Quanstrom, Rhys Laug, contractors
Seek funding from ISC/Insurance	Agree on claim from insurance and seek any differences from ISC	October/November	Core Recovery Team
Undertake repairs	Engage contractor(s) to undertake any repairs	November – March	Engage Contractor – Housing Team to prepare RFP

Temporary Housing Plan

Identify needs for temp housing	Size, # of bedrooms, accessibility requirements, etc. and determine # of units required	By September 15 th	Robin, Destiny, Dylan
Determine location(s) for temp housing	Identify parcels of land that can be used for temporary housing, particularly those that require subdivision	By September 22 nd	Robin, Rhys, Dylan
Develop plan to expedite hydro connection	Work with a private contractor to design and construct hydro connections and work with BC Hydro for approvals	By December	Robin
Begin clearing land at housing locations	Engage contractor to clear and grub land at housing sites	By October 15 th	Robin, <u>Beavertooth</u>
Seek cost estimates from suppliers	Issue RFP for housing	By November 15 th	Robin, Dylan
Develop conceptual plans for lots	Develop cost estimate for lot servicing for temporary housing	By September 22 nd	Urban Systems

HOUSING RECOVERY PLAN (CONTINUED)

Develop conceptual plans for lots	Develop cost estimate for lot servicing for temporary housing	By September 22 nd	Urban Systems
Develop and submit proposal to ISC	Develop temp housing proposal for approval by Council and submit proposal to ISC for funding (initial plan submitted)	By November 15 th	Urban Systems
Design lots needed for housing	Get environmental, geotechnical investigation, geohazard, survey, septic tank design done and design lots	By November 24 th	Urban Systems, Kala, EXP
Prepare and sign contract with housing supplier(s)	Purchase homes. Potentially utilize CCDC 2 contract	By November 23 rd	Robin, Art
Engage contractor to construct lot servicing	Construct new lots required for temp housing	By March 2024	Robin, Urban Systems, SRM
Install houses		By March 2024	
Debris Removal			
Hazardous materials and soils testing	Undertake debris sampling and soil samples to determine spread of contamination	October 2023	Andrea Stelter
Hire professional environmental consultant	Develop RFP for environmental consultants to sample debris and soil, develop a contaminated site remediation, oversee debris removal contractor, and certify lots	November 10 th	Andrea, Sylvia, Rhys, Dylan
RFP for Debris Removal	Issue RFP for Debris Removal	Late November 2023	
Select Contractor	Select preferred contractor(s) for debris removal	Early December 2023	
Debris and Contaminated Soil Removal	Undertake debris and contaminated soil removal	November - April	
Certification of lots	Confirmatory samples of lots	March 2024	

Archeological			
Consider developing on-reserve archeological process/policy	Develop a policy for archeological assessment and monitoring that will enable the timely completion of recovery-related projects	By September 14	TRS - Nola Markey
Train archeological monitors for projects	Debris removal and lot servicing on Band and lease lots will require significant use of archeological monitors		TRS

Rebuild

Develop initial questionnaire to assess housing needs in rebuild	Ask questions about preferences and needs (<u>i.e.</u> manufactured home vs. stick-build, accessibility, style – two <u>storey</u> vs. rancher)	November 7 th	Rhys, Destiny, Dylan
Compile inventory of housing needed (<u>i.e.</u> how many units, style of units, does <u>SteS</u> address overcrowding)	Survey evacuees that lost houses and determine their needs for new rebuilds and determine if any new houses are required. (<u>do</u> you want to replace 4 plex with another 4 plex? Do you want to replace apartments above gas station)	November	Destiny, Rhys, Dylan
Engage members in discussions on housing preferences	Begin discussions with members on their housing preferences (<u>i.e.</u> stick-build vs. manufactured homes)	October 2023	Destiny, Rhys, Robin, Dylan
Engage architect/building supplier to begin designs	Have an architect work with the members and <u>SteS</u> to develop house designs and cost estimates	October/November	Rhys, Dylan
Proposal for housing rebuild to ISC	Prepare proposal for replacement homes to ISC including costs of servicing and services	December 2023	Rhys, Robin, Dylan
Engage Construction Management Company	Engage a construction management company to lead construction of the housing units	January 2024	Rhys, Robin, Dylan
Construction	Undertake construction	March 2024 – December 2025	Construction company

EOC – Emergency Operations Centre

ISC – Indigenous Services Canada

ESS – Emergency Support Services

BOABC – Building Officials Association of BC

Rapid Housing Program

The Rapid Housing Program to get our members back into quality homes while their permanent homes are rebuilt is advancing quickly. You can expect over the next few weeks and months that a variety of contractors will be in the community doing surveys, ground testing, and tree removal ultimately leading to construction new roads, water lines and serviced lots and home installation. This work will be happening by the resort, near the North Subdivision, down Little Shuswap Lake Road East, and at Dancing Fawn. We want to make sure that members are well informed of what is going on and are safe. If you have any questions about the Rapid Housing Program or have any concerns with any of the contractors working on-site, please contact Robin Billy at 250-572-5657.

Rebuild Plan

While there has been a lot of focus on the Rapid Housing Program to get people that have lost their homes in the fire back into the community by spring, another area of focus is establishing the process for getting people back into their permanent homes. Some of the key considerations include:

- 1.) Cleaning up the lots – there is a lot of debris that needs to be removed; in addition, contaminated soils need to be identified and removed and replaced with clean fill. We are in the process of hiring an environmental consultant who can do the soils and debris assessments and help us hire a contractor to do the removal.
- 2.) What should be included in permanent homes – we know some members want to replace their two storey homes with a rancher. We know some members might have mobility issues and need a house that is easy to get around. This is going to involve a lot of conversations to ensure that members get the house they need as part of the rebuilding process. We are going to start with meeting with each of the individual households soon to walk through a questionnaire and start identifying housing preferences.
- 3.) Manufactured homes vs. stick-build homes – we want to be able to provide members with the information they need to make decisions on whether they want a custom-built house or would prefer a manufactured home. The custom-built house would take longer to construct but might be easier to align with your housing preference while a manufactured home might be quicker to get installed but you might have less design flexibility.
- 4.) Engaging a designer – we understand that many members have never been involved in the planning and design of a house. In order to help members through this process, we may hire a home designer to help members with this.
- 5.) Funding – it is unlikely that insurance will cover the complete cost of the rebuild of homes so we will have to request funding from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to cover costs.

TEMPORARY HOUSING UPDATE

BY: ROBIN BILLY
TEMPORARY HOUSING TEAM LEAD



Rising from the Ashes...

The Sqwlax te Secwepemculecw (STeS) have developed a Team to build temporary housing after the devastating fire. The temporary housing Team has developed a comprehensive plan to build these homes as quickly as possible and move people who have lost their homes back to the community. STeS has secured a financial commitment from the federal and provincial government to fund the overall temporary housing plan. To accomplish this, the Team has developed a comprehensive project management plan and have started implementation.

To build temporary homes STeS is planning the development of 4 new subdivisions located adjacent to where homes were lost. The Team has completed topographical surveys, geotechnical surveys, on-site wastewater design, and have tree removal. In addition, the Team has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to find a housing company to build temporary homes. The deadline has been set for November 9 and it is important to start manufacturing homes as quickly as possible.

Now that the preliminary work has completed, the Team must coordinate the development of civil works (ie sewage, water, electricity) and lot servicing. The goal is to install temporary houses the day civil works and site servicing are complete and have all people that have lost homes back in the community in a sustainable, and comfortable home as quickly as possible.



RETURNING TO YOUR HOME AFTER WILDFIRES

Protect yourself and your family: Re-entering areas burned by wildfire safely

Do not re-enter any areas that were heavily damaged or destroyed by the wildfire until the area has been cleared by the local fire authority. Once you are able to enter burned out areas safely, be very careful. Take basic precautions and be aware of hazards to your health and safety.

What hazards should I watch for?

- Slip, trip and fall hazards from unstable structures, open pits or wet and slippery surfaces.
- Sharp objects such as nails, metal, concrete or wood debris.
- Ash, soot and demolition dust.
- Hazardous materials such as kitchen and bathroom cleaning products, paint, batteries, and pesticide, herbicide and fuel containers which have been partially damaged or destroyed.
- Confined or poorly ventilated areas where carbon monoxide may be present from the operation of pumps, generators, or pressure washers. **Be careful entering tight spaces.**
- Propane cylinders for heating or from BBQ appliances.
- **Be careful when using pumps, pressure washers or generators in enclosed spaces.** Carbon monoxide may be present in confined or poorly ventilated areas where from the operation of pumps, generators, or pressure washers.
- Attic insulation can retain smoke odours, and you may wish to consider replacing it.
- If you have a private septic system, see the section on septic systems below.

Air Circulation

- Get the air moving inside your house by using a fan and open your windows, providing there is no smoke or air quality advisory for your neighbourhood**
- Replace your furnace filter and/or air conditioner filter.
- Use a humidifier to reduce how much ash becomes air-borne.
- Have a professional do clean your ducts and air conditioning system.
- Ozone generators do not function as “air cleaners” despite advertising claims.

** NOTE: when demolition activities are more likely to produce airborne ash:

- Stay indoors,
- Close all external doors and windows, and
- Turn off the ventilation as much as possible for air conditioners and furnaces.

Drinking Water Quality

Flushing your water system before you use it:

Prior to using your water system for consumption (drinking, cooking or bathing), flush the system to remove all stagnant water from the water lines.

- Run all cold and hot water taps for at least 5 minutes before you use them (even if the water is not hot).

For residents on a community water system:

- Questions about the quality of drinking water should be directed to your public works department. Public works staff is best able to assess how the system has been affected and whether there is any impact on the quality of drinking water. They work closely with the FNHA Environmental Health Officer to verify the safety of drinking water after an emergency.
- If there is a need for a drinking water advisory, this will be communicated to each residence. Please follow the instructions provided to protect your health.
- Where fire retardant was used in a watershed, there will be increased monitoring for changes in water quality.

source of drinking water should be used until the water source can be assessed or tested.

- Water system components should be checked for damage. A reputable company and qualified personnel should be used for any repairs.
- Private surface and ground water sources affected by fire retardant application should be tested to ensure compliance with Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/reports-publications/water-quality.html>)
- Testing can be arranged through your Community Based Drinking Water Monitor or the FNHA Environmental Health Officer for your community.

Regional Drinking Water Information

www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/DrinkingWater

www.northernhealth.ca/services/environmental-health/drinking-water

www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/drinking-water#.YOYE2UxICUk

www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/drinking-water

Clean your yards and outdoor play areas

Your yard and surrounding areas may be impacted by fire ash and soot. These materials will contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH,) as well as heavy metals. A fire restoration contractor will be able to provide clean-up services.

If you decide to manage this yourself:

- Use Personal Protective Equipment as appropriate, such as masks, rubber gloves, rubber boots, long sleeved shirt and pants.
- Wet down remaining fire debris. **Do not** wash the fire debris into the street.
- Scrape up fire ash and soot remaining on your property as much as possible, place it in plastic bags or other containers that will prevent it from being disturbed, and take it to a landfill.
 - If your home/property was totally destroyed by fire then the restoration company will look after this for you as they begin the demolition and recovery process.
- If you choose to remediate lawns, you can re-sod or reseed grassy areas.





Kukstsemc to Lynda and Ian from Ministry of Forests First Nations Relations Okanagan Shuswap Natural Resource District. Their team donated clothing for all ages, children book and toys which were handed out at the Special Band meeting on October 18, 2023 at Moccasin Square Garden in Kamloops.
Kukstsemc to Wellness staff who came to help as well.

#15-1528 Little Shuswap Lake Road

Chase, B.C., V0E1M2

Phone: 250-679-3702 Fax: 250-679-3742



Wellness Pillar UPDATE

Our focus is providing essential services during evacuation of SteS due to the 2023 Bush Creek Wildfire.

Skwlax Wellness Pillar has identified and prioritized the essential services that will be provided as of October 26, 2023.

Essential Services include:

- Mental Health Support and Referral Services (Jolene Anderson and Jennifer Jack.)
- Home Care services to Priority Home Care Clients (a letter from Domina, Health Manger to clients that will outline the specific services you will receive).
- Mental Health Support and Referral Services (Jolene Anderson and Jennifer Jack.)
- Home Care services to Priority Home Care Clients (a letter from Domina, Health Manger to clients that will outline the specific services you will receive).
- Covid and Flu Vaccination Clinics (time and places TBA).
- Prenatal and Baby wellness checks (scheduled by Tina and Nichelle).
- Social Work, Youth and Community Support provided by Jennifer Jack and team.
- Cultural Activities and Support (TBA by Emry John and team).
- Income Assistance (Claudette Billy).
- Headstart/Childcare services (provided by Dorothy Munro and team).
- Medical travel assistance and Medical Travel Vouchers – provide a minimum of 2 day notice to staff.

- Social Work, Youth and Community Support provided by Jennifer Jack and team.
- Cultural Activities and Support (TBA by Emry John and team).
- Income Assistance (Claudette Billy).
- Headstart/Childcare services (provided by Dorothy Munro and team).
- Medical travel assistance and Medical Travel Vouchers – provide a minimum of 2 day notice to staff.

ESS – Emergency Support Services are supported by Crystal Rayne Tomma and Kristina John. Please contact them directly for information regarding your accommodation and meals.

Any required support services that are required will be addressed at our earliest opportunity.

Thank you for your continued patience. We understand the impact the fire has had on the entire community and staff.

We are also focusing on a recovery plan and organizing a 'return to community' ceremony to support the healing process.

Please call Health Receptionist Brittani Tomma 236-597-5611, or Desira John 250-804-3923

Desira John – Executive Director Wellness & Skwłax Wellness Pillar



Skwłāx te Secwepemcúlecw

CALL CENTER

Question? Need Assistance?

Call us (250) 320-6239

Email: callcenter@lslb.ca

**For Band members, Staff
and Community Members**

Hours of Operation 8 AM-4:30 PM

MONDAY TO FRIDAY (except holidays)

CLEANING UPDATE

BY LESLIE QUANSTROM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-ADMINISTRATION



CLEANING UPDATE

HOUSING TEAM

The deep cleaning of homes and commercial buildings on Skwlax Te Secwepemculecw is rolling along. We have two teams, Service Masters and Champagne Cleaning Co. working diligently to clean your homes, for your return. To date, the Duct Cleaning has been completed for all homes.

ZONE # 1 – Skwlax Wellness Centre/Daycare/Townhouses/ALU Units

- Currently working on the townhouses and ALU Units.
- All exterior work on houses will be done Nov 3rd

ZONE # 2 – Administration Building, Firehall, Finance Building/Dancing Fawn

- Service Masters will be starting the Finance and Administration building Nov 4th, once that is complete, they will start on Dancing Fawn.

ZONE # 3 – Chum Creek

- Cleaning has started in Zone 3, and we are currently cleaning the second home.



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada

Secwépemc Indigenous Guardians Program

Shuswap Band, Splatsh, Skw'lax te Secwepemculucw, Adams Lake, and Neskonlith are working with Parks Canada to create an Indigenous Guardians Program in four National Parks across the Secwépemc territory. As the "eyes and ears" on the land, Indigenous Guardians are trained to support Nations and Bands to maintain, revitalize, honour, and practice their connection with lands and waters. Guardians will share these activities with their own communities and other visitors on the land as appropriate.



Where and when will the project take place?

The project is located within four National Parks: Mount Revelstoke, Glacier, Yoho, and Kootenay. During the pilot program (April 2024 - March 2026), the goal is to hire two guardians in Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks and two guardians in Yoho and Kootenay National Parks. The program will start in April 2026, if the necessary funding is secured during the pilot program.

What type of work will Guardians do in the park?

Your community priorities and direction will guide the development of the Program and the Guardians themselves. Guardian stewardship activities are co-developed with Indigenous partners, respecting both the Canadian National Parks Act, Park Management Plans, and Secwépemc priorities, laws, and protocols. Guardians often maintain and revitalize connections with lands, waters, and wildlife that sustain Indigenous knowledge, culture, and governance. Specific activities will reflect community values, interests, and priorities.

How will community members be informed about the work being done?

Guardians will deliver updates on work being done to all community members. A community communication plan will be developed based on determined needs at engagements. Communications will meet your community's needs as we hear and understand what they are.

How is the Program funded and managed?

In 2021, the federal government committed significant funding toward new and existing Indigenous-led Guardians initiatives and the development of Indigenous Guardians Networks. Seed funding for the pilot program comes from Parks Canada to the five Secwépemc Bands through a contribution agreement to hire Guardians that will work within the Parks. Currently, the Shuswap Band handles financial management and administrative duties, while each Band has one appointed lead to assist in invoicing and processing operations. However, we encourage community feedback on the structure that is most preferred.



Examples of Indigenous Guardian Programs in National Parks

Haida Gwaii Watchmen

The Haida Gwaii Watchmen is managed by the council of the Haida Nation with financial support from Parks Canada. They work within Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, and Haida Heritage Site. From May to October the program provides seasonal employment for Haida people. They offer a first-hand introduction to Haida culture by sharing their knowledge of the land and sea, stories, songs, dances, and foods.

West Coast Trail Guardians

In the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, First Nation partners are continuing the age-long practice of welcoming and sharing Nuu-chah-nulth history, traditions, and culture with visitors. Huu-ay-aht, Ditidaht, and Pacheedaht Guardians work with Parks Canada to care for the trails and protect the land and visiting hikers. An encounter with a West Coast Trail Guardian might include a story or song told by the fire.

Band Representatives



Shuswap Band
Josh Martin

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Splatins
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BEVERLY TOMMA

By Jennifer Brennan

Economic Development Project Manager

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

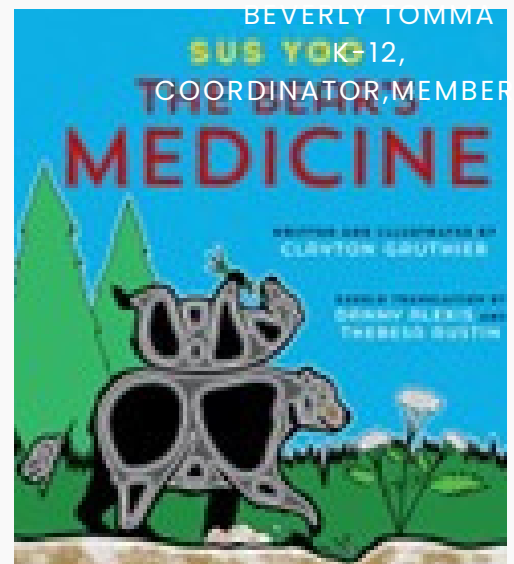
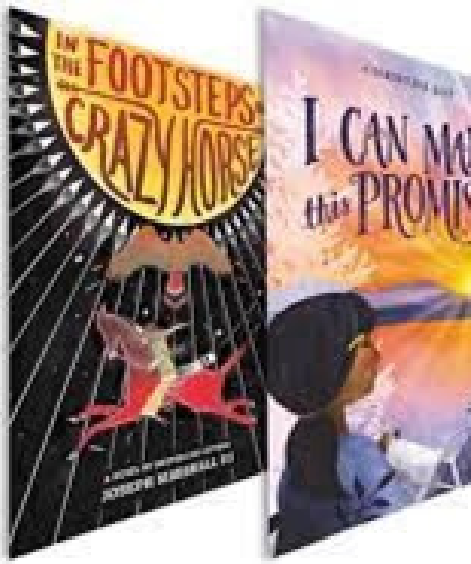
Since the Wildfire, the Economic Development team has been working out of offices at the Quaaout Lodge [and also](#) from our home offices.

The team has been attending meetings, gathering information to bring forward to Chief and Council, working on budgets, and discussing best practices with moving forward on projects after the devastating wildfire.

Some of the work has included the following:

- Funding Applications for the following:
 - Rebuild of the Gas Station & Strip Mall
 - Sun Peaks Cultural Center
 - RV Park/Campground
 - Skwlax Cultural Heritage Center or Secwepemc Landmarks Project
 - Rebuild of the Quaaout Lodge
- Meetings with Sun Peaks Mayor Al Raine regarding organization of a fundraiser to help raise funds for revitalization of the SteS Outdoor Community Ice Rink.
- Sun Peaks Cultural Center – Architects are working on the final design details.
- Working on RV preparation/winterizing for temporary member housing, if needed.
- Brainstorming ideas to maximize sales in the forestry sector.

EDUCATION UPDATE



CRAIG DUCK-CHIEF
EDUCATION MGR/POST
SECONDARY



Skwlax Education is seeking your involvement, Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw will produce four storybooks.

At the onset of the project, **four (4) Elders will be requested to share their story**, (example: early childhood memories, and/or other teachings related to culture, on the land experience). Words will be translated and written into both Secwepemctsin and English. A graphic artist will illustrate the stories scenes that best fit the storyline.

Process: 1) Newsletter request for Skwlax Elders to participate, 2). Interview Elders 3). Transcribe the oral story, into a digital format, 4). Commission artist to graphically capture a scene(s), 5). Have participant(s) agree on the arrangement of story, 6). Work with publishing company to print a few copies of storybooks. 7). Share storybook with community for family/children/youth.

Please contact Craig Duck Chief 250.804.9312 or cduckchief@slb.ca

EDUCATION UPDATE

Skwlax te Secwepmčulecw

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



Accommodations:

Parent(s), if you move accommodations please contact our Education Department. This will assist with Transportation supports.

A1 Bus Schedule:

7:15 am	Prestige front door
7:55 am	Sorrento Petro Can
8:15 am	Arrive Haldane/CSS
<i>* Please arrive early as times depend on traffic and road construction.</i>	
3:10 pm	Leave Haldane/CSS
3:20 pm	Sorrento Petro Can
3:45 pm	Prestige

Chief Atahm Schedule:

7:25 am	Prestige front door
7:55 am	Sorrento Petro Can
8:25 am	Arrive CAS
2:35 pm	Leave CAS
3:05 pm	Sorrento Petro Can

Beverly Tomma, Education Coordinator

Phone: (250) 833-6248

Email: btomma@lslb.ca

WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

BY CARMEN MASSEY



Several community members were able to fly over the Bush Creek fire and see firsthand the impact on the landscape on October 25, 2023. Thanks to Luke Gubbles, Canoe Forest Products and Sonya Campbell, BC Ministry of Forests who worked with the Stewardship Department to make this experience possible. This is part of the Scotch Creek Stewardship Initiative.

WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

BY CARMEN MASSEY



The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) with the Secwepemc Fisheries Commission (SFC), as part of their enumeration of wild and hatchery coho at the Salmon River fish fence, does a number of sacrifices of hatchery fish for sampling purposes. Rather than these fish going to waste, there have been arrangements made over the last few years to transfer them to local Bands to be used for food fish. They currently have **60 Salmon River coho** stored in a freezer at their Eagle River fish fence site, located between Sicamous and Revelstoke. Some of these Coho are being offered to our band members when they return home. Details on who to contact and where to pick them up will be announced later.



CULTURAL HERITAGE DEPARTMENT

Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw Repatriation (Returning Home) Project By Nola Markey

The Cultural Heritage Protection Department conducts a variety of archaeological and research projects yearly. In this newsletter, we are showcasing one of the research projects that started in 2022. We have been conducting the first phase of online research to find out which museums in BC and Canada are holding Skwlāx cultural items such as baskets and tools, ceremonial objects, artifacts, ancestral remains,

songs, and stories. The end goal, of what will be a long process, is to locate Skwlāx cultural heritage to eventually return home. Ultimately these items would be held in a secure repository and possibly displayed in a future Cultural Heritage Centre. These are some of the highlights of the repatriation project.



Photograph 1: Joan Arnouse, Molly Tomma, Wilfred Tomma, and Virginia Woolridge

as uses for the various basket styles. Images of cradles (Photograph 2) and a baby bag led to a discussion about baby boards, and the practical importance of cradles to protect and carry babies. They also shared that each time a baby came into the family a new basket was created.

The week of October 16-20, 2023, the research team met with some community members to seek their help in gathering information about the cultural materials identified so far, using photographs downloaded from museum websites (Photograph 1, also participating were Betty Arnouse, Oliver Arnouse, Charlotte Francois, Dianne Francois, Leo Tomma, James Linton, and Joyce Andrew).

The images led to conversations about specific recognizable family designs, skills and knowledge, as well



CULTURAL HERITAGE DEPARTMENT

BEVERLY TOMMA

Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw Repatriation (Returning Home) Project By Nola Markey

Images of people and activities were also discussed. For example, an image of members pitch-lamp fishing generated a discussion about different fishing technology, techniques, [skills](#) and knowledge required. Further, after viewing an image of an Elder taken in the early 1900s, members spoke of kinship ties throughout the Secwepemcúlecw and identified individuals in specific locations and their roles within Skwlāx.



Photograph 3: Ruth Family, Leo Tomma, Molly Tomma, and Virginia Woolridge

remembered his father Harry Tomma telling him about the Ruth family, who were storing cultural materials on behalf of Skwlāx. This led to a visit by Leo, [Molly](#) and Virginia, accompanied by Libby Chisholm, to the Ruth family and successfully repatriated the artifacts now stored with Skwlāx ([Photographs 3](#)). Thanks to everyone for your participation and input!



Photograph 2: Cradle, held by Royal BC Museum

Community members also provided us with suggestions for further research. Many stressed the importance of having the cultural belongings in the community to show members their ancestors' environmental knowledge and ingenuity, as well as exhibiting these pieces during basketry or drum making workshops. One community member said that bringing back some of the artifacts would be a way to honour their ancestors. As part of the 2024 repatriation project, there are plans to conduct future museum visits with community members.

At the end of the week, Leo Tomma initiated a conversation with the Ruth family in Salmon Arm. Leo

CONTACT LIST

Name	Contact Information	Role/Responsibility
Councillor Wes Francois	wfrancois@lslb.ca	Band Councillor
Rhys Laug	rlaug@quaaoutlodge.com	SteS General Manager Quaaout Lodge and Talking Rock Golf Course. Housing Team A Lead.
Dale M. Jackson	djackson@lslb.ca	SteS Executive Director, Economic Development
Leslie Quanstrom	lquanstrom@lslb.ca	SteS Executive Director, Administration
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Entrance to Quaaout Lodge (photo: Larry Read)