

Dim la'saa"xm lax yip

Let's talk about the land



Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs Newsletter January 2026

New Year's Message from Malii (Glen Williams)



We are only a few weeks into xsi gohl (New Year) 2026, a year that marks 116 years since Gitanyow's first President Albert Williams wrote in 1910 to the Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier, requesting an agreement to recognize the entire Gitanyow Lax'yip (territory).

Last year was a busy year. We had four court dates in 2025.

In court, we protected our intellectual property, met important court deadlines, completed discoveries of all eight Huwilp, conducted discoveries on our indigenous neighbour to the north of our Lax'yip, and undertook commissioned evidence-gathering with one of our experts on Gitanyow resistance. The question of whether Nisga'a Treaty grants Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) an automatic full-party status in Gitanyow's title case was heard by the highest court in Ottawa on December 8 and 9, 2025.

Gitanyow's legal team did an excellent job advancing their submissions and are confident we will clear the path for access to justice for Gitanyow and our title case!



New Faces with the Gitanyow Chiefs



Laurie Rodgers Wilp Communications Coordinator

Laurie Rodgers (T'ip Xaadim hlbin) from Wilp Haijimsxw serves as the Wilp Communications Officer for the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs. She strengthens communication between leadership, Wilp Executives, and community members through clear, timely, and culturally grounded messaging that reflects Gitanyow values and priorities.

Lesley Morgan Education Plan Director

Lesley is Carrier and a member of Gitksen First Nation (Lax Gibuu wilps and Gwaas Hlaam) She is applying her degree in economic development from Simon Fraser and her diploma in Aboriginal Community Economic Development to this role. She has nearly two decades of experience in school management, program implementation, proposals writing, and event coordination.



Max Lindley-Peart (who lives in Gitxsan Lax'yip / Hazelton) has been asked to support Gitanyow Tourism in preparing for upcoming grant cycles. Max will assist with strengthening grant readiness, building toward a Gitanyow Destination Development and Management Team, and supporting the implementation of Lax'yip-wide priority projects such as the Grease Trail, roadside and welcome signage, and ongoing marketing.

Sidney Coles

External Communications Coordinator

Sidney lives and works on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen speaking Peoples in Victoria. She is a journalist, producer and academic. In her reporting, her focus was on Indigenous rights, extraction, and the environment.



Adrienne McMillan

In-House Counsel, Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs

Adrienne is Gitxsan from Wilp Guxsen of the Gisgaast (Fireweed) Clan and carries the hereditary name Aks dii sagen tsep. She supports the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs in revitalizing Gitanyow legal orders, strengthening self-governance, and advancing law-making rooted in Indigenous values and Nation-to-Nation relationships.

Allen Cummings

Policy Advisor & Technical Specialist, Human Services and Forestry Infrastructure Negotiations

Allen has worked in Indigenous Child and Family Services and Indigenous Rights and Title in a range of roles, including Regional Manager for Aboriginal Services, with BC's Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) in the North Region, Ministerial Assistant to then MCFD Cabinet Minister Grand Chief Edward John and Governance Director, for the Office of the Wet'suwet'en.



Dan Rogers - Waade Housing

Dan is from the Gisk'aast Wilp of Gitsegukla. He has over 28 years of experience as a housing and asset management leader in BC. He specializes in housing policy, capital project management, financial oversight, and securing multi-million-dollar grants. His strong government partnerships and strategic guidance have advanced housing initiatives and community development.

GHC at the Supreme Court of Canada

The Gitanyow Chiefs were at the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) **Dec 8th and 9th**, taking the next crucial steps in the Gitanyow title case.

The Gitanyow title case cannot proceed until these four questions are answered:

- 1) What weight should be given to Gitanyow's access to justice vs. other First Nations' procedural rights and access to justice in Gitanyow's title case?

- 2) Does the Nisga'a Treaty grant Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) an automatic full-party status in Gitanyow's title case?

- 3) Can "Tsetsaut"/Skii km Lax Ha (TSKLH) make their own claim to an alleged competing title case as part of Gitanyow's title case?

- 4) Should participation in another First Nation's title case have a threshold framework to prevent dubious claims from slowing down access to justice



Adrienne MacMillan, Peter Grant, David Schultze

Departmental Updates

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Fisheries

This year marked another successful field season in Gitanyow Fisheries' 23rd consecutive year of operations at the Kitwanga River Weirs. It continues to run a spring, summer, and fall program that provides critical Kitwanga salmon data for management and rebuilding, and serves as a key middle Skeena salmon index.



Gitanyow Fisheries employed 18 staff during the peak of this year's fisheries operations, making it one of the largest local employers in the community

Key work continued across the middle and northern Lax Yip, including Chinook helicopter counts on the Cranberry River, the Meziadin River, and important tributaries such as Hanna, Tintina, and Strohn Creeks. Stream counts for **sockeye** and **coho** were conducted on Brown Bear Creek, alongside the 25th year of the Meziadin adult counting program in partnership with DFO.



GFA expanded its permitting and **catch monitoring program**, with staff actively engaging harvesters on the fishing grounds to strengthen Nass salmon management.

Construction on the Gitanyow Hatchery project is expected **to begin in early 2026 and operations in 2027**. A community hiring plan will recruit and train Gitanyow members, while a community and Wilp engagement group will help Indigenize the hatchery design inviting locals to shape a hatchery that reflects Gitanyow values and vision.

The Meziadin sockeye smolt program continues to use its innovative **uplooking hydroacoustic technology**, placing GFA at the forefront of fisheries science and salmon monitoring.



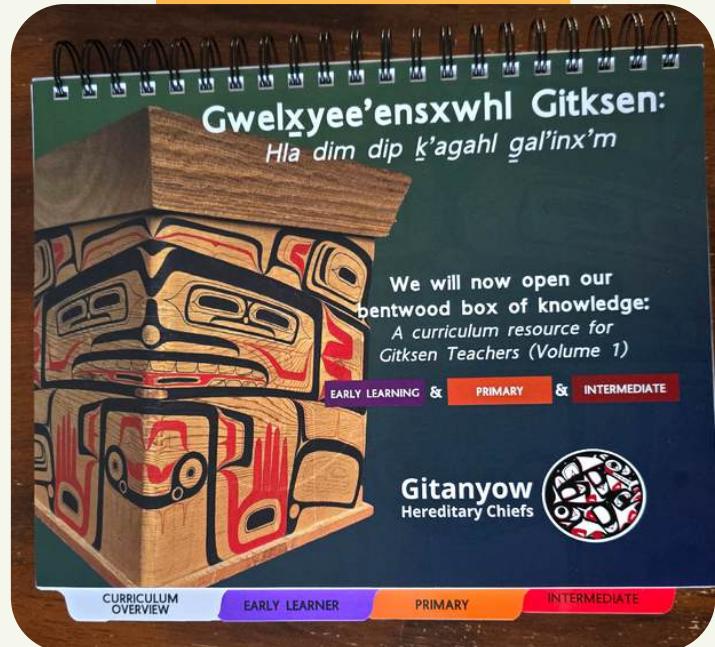
Education

New Gitxsan Curriculum Coming to Classrooms

the **Gitxsan Curriculum** passed its final edit and went to be printed in Victoria after nearly two years of work with many Gitxsan educators from early years to high school. The Gitxsan curriculum was developed in four areas: **Ayookw** (traditional law), **Liligit** (feast), **Hun** (fisheries) and **Lax yip** (Gitanyow territories)

Two engaging and separate colourful documents, one for the early years to intermediate and a second for middle to high school Grade 8-12 will be printed. Printing costs were supported by \$500 received from the New Relationship Trust.

The group plans to hold a luncheon where participants will each receive their own copy



TAP gives Gitanyow chance to learn new skills

In July, participants took part in an **Ironworks program** through the Trades Awareness Program (TAP). The program was sponsored by UA Piping Industry College of BC and the Ministry of Advanced Education & Skills Training, and SkilledTradesBC.



Participants from left to right:
Kaitlyn McLean, Adrian Brooks,
Evangeline Rush, Kira McLean,
Latrell Johnson, Lewis Johnson,
Johnson Derrick, Elliott Good,
Jorell Martin, Derek Dinzey
(Trade Instructor)

Gitanyow Lax'yip Guardians

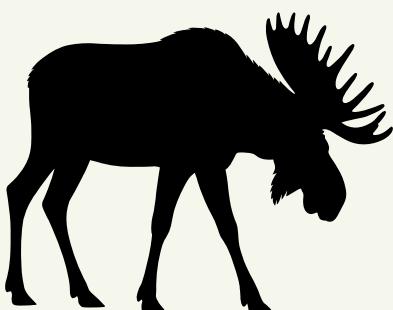
The Gitanyow Lax'yip Guardians continue to strengthen stewardship across the Lax'yip, protecting our lands, waters, and wildlife through both traditional and modern approaches. The Guardians are proud to work collaboratively with the Gitanyow Chiefs, community members, the BC government, and neighbouring Nations including the Gitxsan, Wet'suwet'en, and Lake Babine Nation.

Fire Stewardship

In 2024, our Guardians carried out seven cultural burns totalling 75 hectares, making Gitanyow a provincial leader in Indigenous fire stewardship. These burns included our first huckleberry burn in a cutblock that will now be managed specifically for huckleberry production. The success of this work has attracted significant federal funding, allowing us to expand the cultural burning program in 2026 and beyond.



Wildlife Monitoring



We continue to operate a large-scale camera network with 80 remote cameras focused on tracking moose and wolf populations across the Lax'yip. This information supports management decisions and helps us understand wildlife trends over time.



Harvest Monitoring

Our Guardians maintain a presence on the land through regular patrols to monitor moose harvest, ensuring that harvest levels remain sustainable and respectful of Gitanyow laws and values.

Innovative Silviculture

We have begun developing a new silviculture project to explore forest treatment options that reduce the risk of extreme wildfire around the community of Gitanyow. This work blends traditional knowledge with western forestry science to build healthier, more resilient forests.

Program Growth

Work continues on the development of our shop and office space, supporting future program expansion. With additional funding secured, we plan to bring on more Guardian staff in 2026 to strengthen our on-the-ground presence.



Upcoming Events - Save the Dates!

Huwilp General Assembly March 10-12th

This year's gathering is dedicated to the memory of the six Chiefs who stood their ground against surveyors in 1927 and were sent to Oakalla Prison for their defiance.

We carry their dax'gyet into our deliberations.

Join the Hereditary Chiefs of the eight Wilps as we gather for our Huwilp Assembly. We will honour the 100-year legacy of resistance, provide updates on our current court cases, and discuss the plan for the future of our Lax'Yip



“This is Us” Photo Submissions



The Communications team is looking for fun and creative photos that show your Gitanyow pride in our community. Send us a photo of with your friends, a youth event, family or the land and rivers. If selected, your photos will be part of a Gitanyow Strong video collage that will be shown at the Huwilp General Assembly in March.

Submit your photos to communications@gitanyowchiefs.ca by Feb 20th

Community Invitation Gitanyow Sockeye Hatchery Cultural Design

Community members --Elders, youth, families, and knowledge holders-- are warmly invited to join us for two gatherings to share ideas and help guide the cultural design elements of the Gitanyow Sockeye Enhancement Hatchery.

These sessions are part of a broader community engagement process focused on ensuring the hatchery's cultural elements reflect Gitanyow knowledge, values, and relationships to sockeye salmon and the land.

Possible ideas may include artwork, carvings, signage, or other cultural features shaped by community voices. A warm meal will be shared.

Location: Gitanyow Wildlife Building

Dates: Thursday January 29 at 5pm and Thursday, February 12 at 5pm



For more information contact: Trista Douse

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