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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Land, Water and Resource  
Stewardship  
Gitanyow First Nation

### **Gitanyow, B.C. mark milestone in land-use planning**

VICTORIA — Representatives of Gitanyow First Nation, including Hereditary Chiefs, and the B.C. government are celebrating 10 years of a landmark land-use plan that has reduced land-based conflicts and guided sustainable development in Gitanyow's territory.

In 2012, under the Gitanyow Huwilp Recognition and Reconciliation Agreement, Gitanyow and the Province agreed to the Gitanyow Lax'yip Land-Use Plan, which lays out the Nation's vision for lands in their territory, including appropriate uses. The visionary plan led to a collaborative process between Gitanyow, neighbouring Nations, B.C. and stakeholders that put the plan into effect through the landscape-level Nass South and the Cranberry Sustainable Resource Management Plans.

"Our land-use plan advances our sustainability principle Gwelx ye'enst, which ensures the Lax'yip (territory) is passed on in a sustainable manner from one generation to the next," said Malii/Glen Williams, president and chief negotiator for Gitanyow. "As we all face increased risks to ecosystems from climate change, it has been shown that land-use plans can have an insulating effect from the impacts of climate change. We must continue to act to protect our Ha'Nii Tokxw, our food security, which comes from the land and waters."

The land-use plan has supported sustainable development and created predictability for industry operating in Gitanyow territory, resulting in more long-term jobs and stronger economies in communities throughout northwest B.C. It has also brought western scientific data and Indigenous knowledge together for optimal habitat management for salmon and key wildlife such as mountain goat, moose, goshawk and grizzly bear.

"My ministry is committed to continue working with First Nations on shared decision-making to ensure that together we achieve our goals of reconciliation, environmental stability and economic development," says Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship. "Our partnership with Gitanyow First Nation is a success story and an example for future modernized land-use plans to prioritize both the ecosystems communities rely on and economic opportunities for industry and workers."

The Gitanyow Lax'yip Land-Use Plan continues to be an example that other First Nations and those interested in land use planning look to. Gitanyow in particular receives numerous requests for information from other First Nations in B.C. and across Canada.

"This is an example of groundbreaking leadership and a model for reconciliation in action," said Nathan Cullen, MLA for Stikine. "The land-use plan means greater certainty for Gitanyow, now and for future generations."

The Nass South and Cranberry plans have also strengthened relationships with industry, building predictability that has supported stable jobs in local communities and providing the natural resource sector with tools to operate more sustainably.

"Skeena Sawmills endorsed the Gitanyow Lax'yip Land-Use Plan in 2012, and it guides our forest management activities in Gitanyow Territory, including forest planning, road construction, timber harvesting and silviculture in Gitanyow Territory," said Greg DeMille, vice-president of operations for Skeena Sawmills Ltd. and Skeena Bionergy. "Together with Gitanyow, we've built a trusting relationship, while creating certainty in fibre supply that benefits our operations and employees."

**Quick Facts:**

- Gitanyow and B.C. reach consensus on decisions on more than 90% of all referrals or applications for development in the Lax'yip.
- All forest stewardship plans and other major development plans operating in the territory are consistent with the Sustainable Resource Management Plans and the Gitanyow plan.
- Gitanyow's land-use plan includes environmental protection to reduce the impacts of climate change and industrial development, and encourages forestry harvesting practices that support biodiversity goals.
- The Lax'yip Land-Use Plan has been featured in international research as a model for Indigenous planning.

**Learn More:**

Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs:

Link to Gitanyow backgrounder brochure: <https://www.gitanyowchiefs.com/news/gitanyow-bc-mark-milestone-in-land-use-planning>

Modernizing land-use planning in B.C.: <https://landuseplanning.gov.bc.ca/modernizing>

A backgrounder follows.

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# BACKGROUND

## **B.C.'s approach to modernized land-use planning**

Land-use planning ensures the activities that take place on the land are consistent with the goals of local communities and support the stewardship of local ecosystems.

B.C. is modernizing land-use planning to advance reconciliation efforts, support economic opportunities and guide stewardship of public land and resources to reflect the diverse values and interests of all British Columbians. The modernized approach to land-use planning includes partnerships with First Nations, collaboration with local governments, and engagement with communities, stakeholders and the public.

Nine land-use planning projects are currently underway in partnership with one or more First Nations. Modernized land-use planning has an annual budget of \$7.78 million to continue to support program development and advancement of land use planning projects currently underway. These projects address the specific needs of local lands, and reflect local interests and priorities, focusing for example on marine areas, water sustainability, and wildlife corridors.

The Gitanyow Lax'yip Land-Use Plan, along with the Nass South and Cranberry Sustainable Resource Management Plans that put it into effect, are early examples of joint land-use plans with First Nations in B.C., and are considered to be strong models of a partnership approach to land-use planning going forward.

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