

OCTOBER 2023 | ISSUE 2

# AROUND THE LAX'YIP

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**GITANYOW HEREDITARY CHIEFS**

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Simgiget, Sigadem Hanak gunth Guuba Wilsip,

Welcome to our second quarterly newsletter! In this issue, why Gitanyow is fighting for Aboriginal title instead of signing a modern-day treaty, details of Gamlakyelxw's resource management plan event, how to gain permission to harvest moose this season, and when & where the Gitanyow Elders Housing Information Night will be held.

All this and more.



## **TITLE VS. TREATY**

Title refers to the legal recognition of ownership over land. It is a concept that acknowledges the inherent and legal right of Indigenous peoples to fully benefit from their ancestral lands.

On the other hand, a treaty cedes title, it is a formal agreement between Indigenous peoples and the government. It can be seen as a negotiated settlement that outlines rights, responsibilities, and obligations for both parties.

Simogyet Malii explains why Gitanyow is fighting for Aboriginal Title and not a Treaty.

“It’s about recognition of who we are as Gitksan people and it’s just regaining control of the entire land, and if we can capture that in a modern day agreement or a treaty or legislation that doesn’t extinguish, but purely recognizes who we are and our connection to the land.”

“Our laws say that we can’t sell it, our teachings doesn’t allow us for giving up any part of the territory. It’s about the entire territory and upholding our law, our system. In our case as Gitksan, the system is so strong here. Our chiefs in the past have fought this for over a century. They’ve tried different ways of protesting on the land, letter writing, petitions.”

Gitanyow has never supported the current land selection treaty model where we would receive five percent of our traditional lands in exchange for cash and surrender of our title.

“Here’s some money and it becomes modified or extinguished, you’ll never ever talk about your title again. Our people rejected that.”

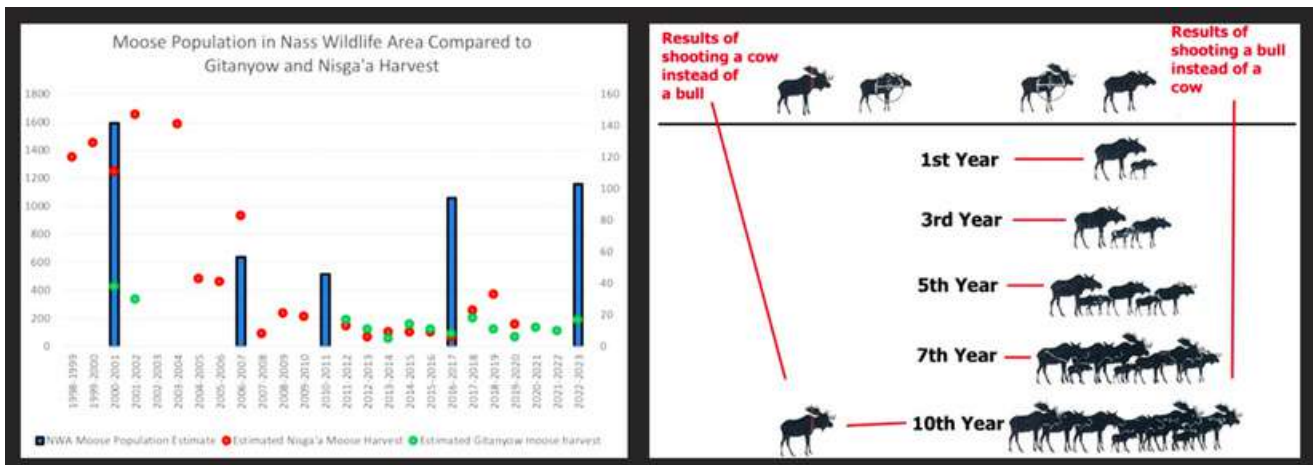
Malii vs. The King is scheduled to be tried in a three-month hearing on October 1, 2024 in Vancouver, BC.

“It’s a big fight and we will do it. We will get it all back!”



## GHC MOOSE PERMITTING PROGRAM 2023 - 2024

Between 2001 and 2011, moose populations in the Nass dropped an estimated 70% and the main cause was an over-harvest of cow moose. Since that time, Gitanyow Guardians have been monitoring the territory to ensure no cow moose are harvested. The result; the population has more than doubled between 2011 and 2023.



Protecting the cow moose is a key component of the Gitanyow Moose Harvest Permitting program. Also of importance is ensuring hunters are following the Gitanyow Ayookxw (Law) around hunting which requires asking permission from the Chief of the Wilp territory you wish to hunt. This not only revitalizes Gitanyow Law, but helps protect moose populations for future generations.

Please note: Hunting season can be closed at any time for conservation reasons, in which case hunters will be notified asap and remember that safety should be your #1 priority while hunting!



## 2023-24 Gitanyow Chiefs Moose Permitting Program – Harvest Plan



September, 2023

### **Wilp Territory Specific Information:**

**NOTE: To hunt moose anywhere on the Gitanyow Lax'yip you need permission from the Chief for the Wilp you want to hunt on.**

**For Wilps Malii and Watakhayetsxw you need to contact those Chiefs directly (see contact information below).**

**For all other Wilps contact the Gitanyow Fisheries Authority office at 250-849-5373 or in person during regular business hours (Mon-Fri 8:30am – 4:30pm, closed for lunch).**

Wilp Territory	Wilps that territory is open to	Where to obtain a permit	Contact person	Contact information	Season dates
Gwaas Hlaam	Gwaas Hlaam wilp members only	GFA office	George P. Daniels Harry Daniels	250-849-5031 250-849-5319	September 1 – January 31
Malii	Malii wilp members only	From Malii – Glen Williams	Glen Williams Tony Morgan	250-849-5305 778-202-7833	September 15 – January 15
Wiil'tsxw	Open to wilp members and non-wilp members	GFA office	Gregory Rush	250-849-5970 or gregoryrush@hotmail.com	September 1 – January 15 (open until Jan 31 for Wilp Wiil'tsxw members)
Haitsimsxw	Haitsimsxw wilp members only	GFA office	Verna Howard	778-202-9156	October 1 – January 31
Gamlak'yeltxw	Open to wilp members and non-wilp members	GFA office	Wil Marsden	250-641-5420	September 1- January 15
Luuxhon	Open to wilp members and non-wilp members	GFA office	Don Russell	250-849-5265 or 778-202-1409	September 15- January 15
Watakhayetsxw	Watakhayetsxw wilp members only	From Watakhayetsxw - Debbie Good	Debbie Good	250-849-8485	September 1 – January 15 (open until Jan 31 for Wilp Watakhayetsxw members)
Gwinuu	Open to wilp members and non-wilp members	GFA office	Solomon Haizimsque	250-975-2279	September 15 – December 31

## **GITANYOW FISHERIES REPORT 2023**

### Meziadin River Fishway Counts

80% of the Nass Sockeye spawn in the Meziadin watershed, one of Canada's last thriving populations of wild Sockeye. The spawning requirements for Sockeye is 160,000 and for the last two years we have surpassed that target.

July 1, 2023 - October 2, 2023

Sockeye - 407,927

Coho - 7,741

Chinook - 59

Pink - 108

### Kitwanga River Adult Enumeration Facility (KSEF)

Historically, Sockeye returns to the Kitwanga River were in the tens of thousands, but have drastically declined to only hundreds in the last five decades. Although Sockeye numbers continue to be extremely low, we are pleased with this year's Pink counts. We observed the maximum escapement since operations first began in 2003.

July 11, 2023 - September 26, 2023

Sockeye - 783

Coho - 2,050

Chinook - 766

Chum - 805

Pink - 653,710

## Gitanyow Commercial Fishery

We are now selling premium, wild Gitanyow Sockeye from the Meziadin watershed! Our mission is to provide high-quality salmon products caught in our sustainable community-run fisheries and to re-invest from every salmon sold into local salmon stewardship to protect this important salmon stronghold.

For more information, please watch the video at the QR code below and for purchasing enquiries, contact the Gitanyow Fisheries Authority at (250) 849-5373 or email [reception@gitanyowchiefs.com](mailto:reception@gitanyowchiefs.com).





## **GITANYOW AKS AYOOKXW**

The Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs recently enacted the Gitanyow Aks Ayookxw / Lax'yip Water Policy to establish a framework for aquatic health within our territory. The one-year pilot policy creates clear water management standards and procedures to evaluate existing and proposed activities with the overall intent to safeguard aquatic ecosystem health and operationalize cumulative effects assessment, particularly as the impacts of climate change amplify.

Proponents of all new activities with the potential to impact water resources must adhere to this policy. Implementation is triggered whenever an action is proposed with the possibility of affecting water quantity and use or impacting water quality through contributions of pollution, contaminants, excess nutrients, or erosional material. Project proponents are required to complete all steps in consultation and collaboration with staff of the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs Office, and are financially responsible for covering costs associated with their compliance at all stages of the technical process.





## **GITANYOW ELEDERS HOUSING INFORMATION NIGHT**

The Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs Society is developing 14 units of affordable housing for Elders in the community. The new housing will be a mix of one and 2-bedroom units in a 2-story building. The homes will be durable and energy efficient, with 4 of the units designed to be wheelchair accessible. The building will be located on First Avenue on Lot 115 (addresses 1331 and 1335). Each unit will have a view of the totem poles.

The project addresses the goals of safety, storage, accessibility, and affordability as expressed by Gitanyow Elders in the 2020 Gitanyow Elders Housing and Assisted Living Facility Assessment.

To proceed with the project, there is a proposed land designation for a term of 99 years with the purpose of leasing the lands for affordable housing to Gitanyow members, with Elders given a priority to the housing. The land for the project will be leased by Gitanyow to the Xsi'Gintaiyin Housing Society who will own and manage the building. Through capital and operating support from BC Housing, the housing will be affordable, and rents will be based on income.

An information session for members of Gitanyow to learn about the proposed land designation will be held on October 4, 2023 between the hours of 6PM and 8PM, at the Gitanyow Independent School, to assist the Gitanyow electors (members 18 years of age or older on voting day) in making an informed decision on the designation.

The Gitanyow electors can also participate using the following Zoom meeting link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88234803154?pwd=YmNIL0hMcExOZTMzZW9BUDFhS3BIZz09#success>

Meeting ID: 882 3480 3154

Passcode: Gitanyow

\*Please watch the digital walkthrough at the QR code below.





## RAVENS NEST RANCH EVENT

The air was crisp and filled with excitement as guests gathered on Sunday, September 17th at Ravens Nest Ranch (RNR) for Wilp Gamlakyeltxw's presentation of their new resource management plan.

Established in 2023, RNR is an off-grid permaculture farm located on the traditional territories of Wilp Gamlakyeltxw. The goal is to provide quality farm food to the BC market and to create food security for Gitanyow citizens.

Simogyet Gamlakyeltxw began the special event by singing his welcome song and spoke about the importance of reconciliation, food sustainability, green energy, and what it means to him to be developing on their Lax'yip - all the while children laughed and played around the beautifully built homestead.

Gamlakyeltxw and his Wilp members have been working closely with Sonny from North Star Agriculture building capacity on the farming of pigs, chickens, rabbits, cannabis, and hemp. Gamlakyeltxw explained that Sonny's dedication to his vision has made him more than just a contractor; he is now considered family. The chief also expressed how proud he is and how proud his ancestors would be.

Fellow Simogyets & Sigadem Hanaks offer their congratulations on the success of the development and look forward to growth. They give thanks for the wonderful gift received by Gamlakyeltxw's Wilp members; frozen and packaged chickens butchered the week before.

To learn more, please follow the Ravens Nest Ranch on Facebook or if you would like to visit, contact Simogyet Gamlakyeltxw (Wil Marsden) by email at [wil@kitwancool.com](mailto:wil@kitwancool.com).



## MEZIADIN INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA EVENT

The second anniversary of the Wilp Wii Litsxw Meziadin Indigenous Protected Area (MIPA) on Monday, August 28th was an amazing success! Hundreds of our members, neighbouring nations, and friends gathered to witness the exercise of Gitanyow Ayooxkw, receive updates on the progress of our vision, and to help us celebrate this remarkable day.

The Meziadin watershed is home to one of Canada's last thriving populations of wild Sockeye salmon, making its conservation of utmost importance.

To have David Suzuki attend the event was highly significant. His powerful words helped underscore the vital role that Indigenous law plays in environmental stewardship and governance.

We couldn't be happier!

\*Please watch Dr. Suzuki speaking at the QR code below.



# WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER TRAINING

7 DAY TRAINING



OCTOBER 23 – 29, 2023  
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM



GITANYOW  
LAX'YIP GUARDIANS  
BUILDING

The Gitanyow Education & Training Institute, in partner with FNESS, will be hosting the Wildland Firefighters training.

Requirements:

- ✘ In good standing with GETI
- ✘ Able to commit to full 7 days



For more information, see details below.



## WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER TRAINING

The GHC and GETI are excited for this important seven day training program.

To learn more, please contact Colleen Martin by phone (250) 849-5935 or (250) 641-8197, or by email at [martincolleen.2022@gmail.com](mailto:martincolleen.2022@gmail.com).

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Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs

We are Simgigyet'm Gitanyow, the protectors of our traditional lands, resources, and laws. This we will pass on to future generations.

linktr.ee/gitanyowchiefs

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MEZIADIN



FEASTS



New



GHC ON INSTAGRAM

We are now on Instagram; a popular social networking app with a focus on sharing photos and videos via your phone. It's a simplified version of Facebook with over two billion active users worldwide.

This platform enables us to reach a broad range of our target audience to help educate and inspire the next generation of Wilp members and community members, and gain support from land defenders and non-indigenous people.

Be sure to follow @gitanyowchiefs #gitanyowhereditarychiefs!





## **GHC COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**

Xbiisuunt Weh, Wilp Denimget, Lax Gibuu dim Gitwangak,

Being out on the lax'yip this summer was truly incredible; I learned to dipnet at Lax An Zok, picked medicines on top of Wii la Habasxw, counted salmon on Kitwanga River, and ate rabbit and veggies raised and grown on Ganeda Territory.

I have also enjoyed my training with Video Journalist, Laurie Hamelin, on everything social media, writing press releases, interviewing, shooting, and editing. Thank you for everyone's teachings, I look forward to sharing more with you in our winter newsletter.

If you have any questions or feedback or know someone who should be added to our mailing list, please don't hesitate to contact me at [ghc.communications2023@gmail.com](mailto:ghc.communications2023@gmail.com).

T'oyaxsi' Niin