

AROUND THE LAX'YIP



GITANYOW HEREDITARY CHIEFS



Simgigyet, Sigidim hanak ganhl guuba wilksihlxw,

2023 was an important year for Gitanyow, and we have no doubt that 2024 will be as successful!

In this issue, we unpack Gitanyow's title case, taste what Vancouver Chefs are creating with Gitanyow's wild sockeye salmon, and showcase two new exciting Gitanyow buildings that will be open to the community this year.

All this and more is below.

GITKSAN AYOOKXW LEARNING SUMMIT

In accordance with our Ayookxw, we regret to inform you that the Gitksan Ayookxw Learning Summit, initially scheduled for January 9, 10 & 11, will be postponed until a later date.

The recent passing of our beloved Gitanyow members has profoundly impacted our community. We appreciate your understanding and patience during this challenging period.

P O S T P O N E M E N T





GITANYOW GOES TO COURT TO SEEK DECLARATION OF TITLE

For over 100 years, our ancestors have fought to safeguard our lax'yip, and this year, Canadians will hear the echoes of their resilience all across the country! On October 1, 2024, Mali vs. The King will seek justice and recognition for their tireless commitment to preserving our culture, heritage and traditional territory.

"We know who the land belongs to and we will hold it until we die," declared Simogyet Gamlakyeltxw in 1908, and that is precisely what the people of Gitanyow will do.

The Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs have been working with their legal team to develop a powerful Aboriginal title case that seeks a declaration of title to the entire lax'yip in a condensed trial of 30 days, beginning in Gitanyow the first two weeks. Simgiyet Gitanyow has prepared for this case for many years with commission evidence from our knowledgeable Simgiyet and expert reports to prove that Gitanyow's title in the whole lax'yip has been consistent since contact with BC and Canada. Simgiyet Gitanyow have always stated, "if you don't get what you want, don't be afraid to go to court."

Respect for mutual boundaries is an Ayookxw, and Gitanyow has been consistent with its neighbouring nations: no land claims to lands Gitanyow does not own have ever occurred.

Gitanyow has categorically rejected a land selection model proposed by the BC Treaty Process and has retained its title in the entire lax'yip, which is within the care, stewardship and jurisdiction of the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs.

Colonization and Crown assertion over Gitanyow lax'yip has resulted in the loss of integrity of lands, impacts to fish and wildlife, and economic losses. These losses, claimed by the Crown through assertive actions and treaty settlement processes, have claimed Gitanyow lax'yip, contrary to Ayookxw and breaks the ayookxw by trespassing without consent, and not providing settlement for harms to land that were without consent.

Despite this, the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs have achieved great success in creating government-to-government agreements and economic partnerships and implementing its Ayookxw in modern land use planning tools based on sound science and principles of conservation consistent with Gwelx'ye'enst.

In 2022, Gitanyow rejoined tripartite negotiations and participated in monthly meetings to seek title by agreement, but little progress has been made. Meanwhile, continued trespassing and infringement of Gitanyow's title, despite the assurance that the Nisga'a Final Agreement would not impact Gitanyow, have ensued since its signing. Gitanyow seeks recognition of its title through 'title by agreement' to the entire lax'yip grounded in recognition of title guaranteed in the Constitution of Canada, UNDRIP and DRIPA, and as set out in Delgamuukxw as a right to the land.

The Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs Office supports the leadership, involvement and participation of the eight Wilp Simgigyets in tripartite negotiations and Malii vs. The King Aboriginal title case. Updates and communications on the case will be available in our newsletters and internally to Wilps.



NISGA'A LAUNCHES COURT CHALLENGE TO ENFORCE TREATY

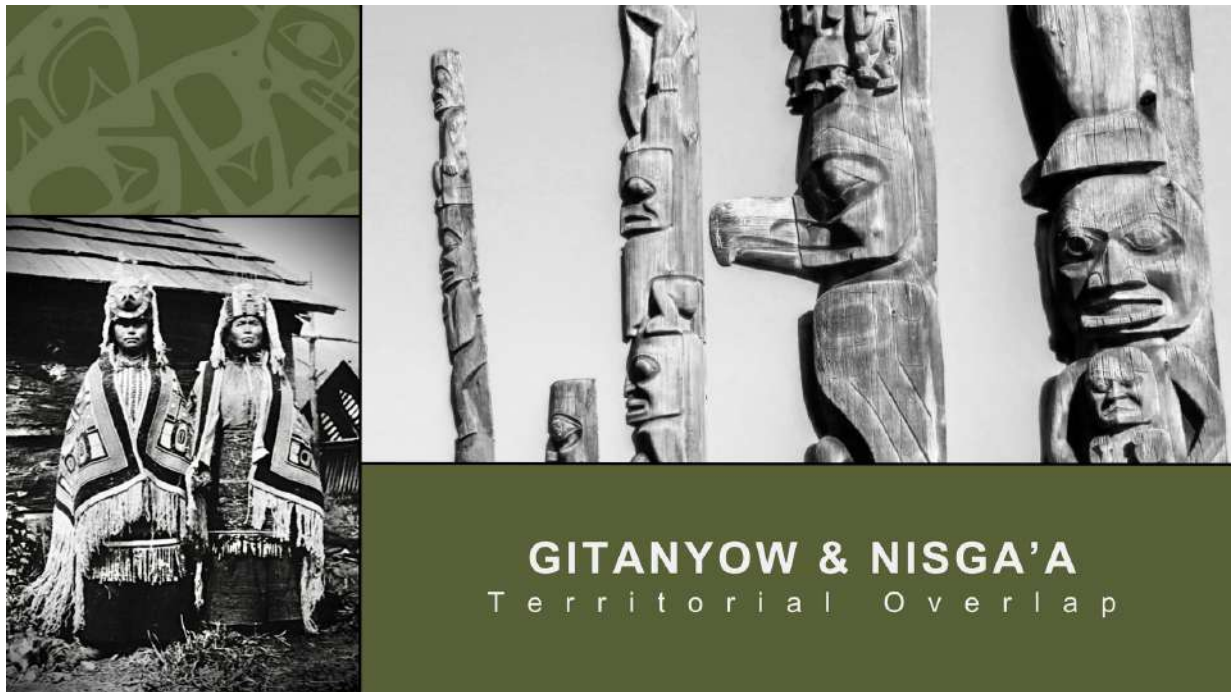
On December 14, 2023, the Nisga'a Lisims Government filed a lawsuit with the Supreme Court of British Columbia against the Raven Clan Outlaws and Wilhelm Marsden.

The implications of this lawsuit are profound; it claims that we are illegal occupants in the Nass Wildlife Area where Ravens Nest Ranch is located, interfering with Nisga'a's treaty rights and damaging territory.

Ravens Nest Ranch (RNR), established in 2023, is an off-grid permaculture farm on the territory of Wilp Gamlakyeltxw and is the first of 12 cabins now built.

Please watch the video at the QR code below to learn more about Simogyet Gamlakyeltxw's vision for RNR.





TERRITORIAL OVERLAP SERIES

During November, the GHC's Instagram and Facebook page shared a powerful 19-part series on our decades-long struggle for justice in hopes of educating people and sparking peaceful dialogue.

We presented the earliest documentation of what Nisga'a leaders declared as their territorial boundaries, exposed Nisga'a's ever-expanding boundary starting in the 60s, detailed how the Nisga'a Final Agreement harmed Gitanyow and much more.

To read the series, please see the presentation on our website at the QR code below.



WILD SOCKEYE SALMON FROM GITANYOW NATION

WATCH
OUR STORY!



- A GITANYOW FISH IS UNMISTAKENLY RED, FLAVOURFUL AND DELICIOUS!
- SUSTAINABLY HARVESTED FROM THE PEOPLE OF GINTAYOW, RIGHT TO YOUR TABLE.
- FLASH FROZEN FOR PEAK QUALITY.
- CUTTING EDGE SCIENCE BACKED BY TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE.

GITANYOW FISHERIES AUTHORITY

Last month, Gregory Rush Senior, Joel Starlund and Mark Cleveland met with Steve Johansen from Organic Ocean in Vancouver for an unforgettable Gitanyow Sockeye tasting tour.

Steve and his friend Dane Chauvel created Organic Ocean, both BC fishermen committed to fostering a sustainable, vibrant, healthy seafood industry.

Thanks to Organic Ocean, Gitanyow's Sockeye is now on the menus at various restaurants and sold at seafood markets across BC and even in Toronto, including Organic Ocean's online fish market that offers home delivery.

And we could only do this because of the dedication of our Gitanyow Fisheries crew. Thank you everyone!

Be sure to watch the video at the QR code below.



GITANYOW LAX'YIP GUARDIANS' HOMEBASE AND FOOD SECURITY CENTER

After three years of hard work, the Gitanyow Lax'Yip Guardians' Homebase and Food Security Center will be open in February!

This unique space offers our Guardians the opportunity to further their research, teach others about protecting the lax'yip, and empowers our community to come together to share and learn a variety of traditional teachings from processing meat & fish to skinning beavers & tanning hides.

Please watch the video at the QR below to learn more.



GITANYOW ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

The new administration/governance/training building is expected to be ready this summer and it's going to be incredible! See for yourself at the QR code below.

Project Timeline

- * Winter 2024 - Interior Finishing
- * Spring 2024 - Exterior Finishing & Substantial Completion
- * Summer 2024 - Opening Celebration





I AM GITANYOW - MELISSA SHIREY

From rocks to water, Melissa Shirey's path to becoming a Junior Biologist with the Gitanyow Fisheries Authority (GFA) was not a simple straight line; it was a little more like going with the flow.

"I didn't really know what I wanted to do after high school, it took a bit of figuring out," says Shirey.

"I went to university and took various general credit courses but switched to Northwest Community College when I knew I wanted to do science."

But Melissa soon learned that geosciences wasn't for her and switched diplomas.

"I realized that rocks and rock formations weren't really quite my thing, and I found a coastal ecology program that they offered in Prince Rupert," says Shirey.

"I spent two years there and ended up with my Applied Coastal Ecology Diploma and my Associate of Science Degree."

During her college years, Melissa's connection with fisheries blossomed in 2016 while working as a part-time GFA Fisheries Technician.

"I was looking for work that was somewhat school-related, so I reached out to Mark Cleveland, Gitanyow's Head Fisheries Biologist, to see if they would take me on as a summer student," says Shirey.

"I really enjoyed what I was doing, so I decided to further my education. I transferred my associate's degree to the University of Victoria, where I finished off with my Bachelor's."

As a Gitanyow Band member from Wilp Watakhayetsxw, Melissa's work is deeply rooted in community and tradition, with a bit of help from modern technology.

"I do a lot of fish counting, more specifically salmon counting," says Shirey.

"When I first started, we were counting through manual counting chutes, but now we're heavily utilizing underwater camera technology. We also do stream walks, counting the salmon that we see visually, and helicopter counts; you can see them from the air."

Melissa thrives in the field, enjoying hands-on experiences and being on the lax'yip. Her favourite days involve being at the lake counting juvenile salmon on their way to the Pacific Ocean.

“Counting salmon does seem a little bit tedious, but it is something I really enjoy,” says Shirey.

“Just being out on the territory feels good, not only for your physical health but mental health as well.”

At 27, Melissa has found her calling in fisheries and now stands as a beacon for the next generation of environmental stewards in Gitanyow's community.

“I really love my job,” says Shirey.

“I get to work towards protecting and rebuilding important fish stocks that people have always relied on. I didn't really study fisheries at university, but here I am, and I can see myself sticking around for the long run!”





The GHC proudly supports local athletes ...

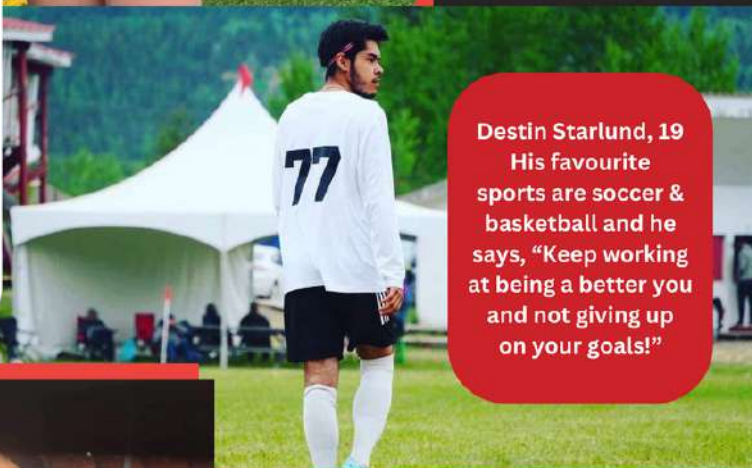


Misty Wells (right), 21
Plays forward for the
Gitwangak Wildcats since
she was 11 & is now the
Forward for the
NIFA Ladies National Team.

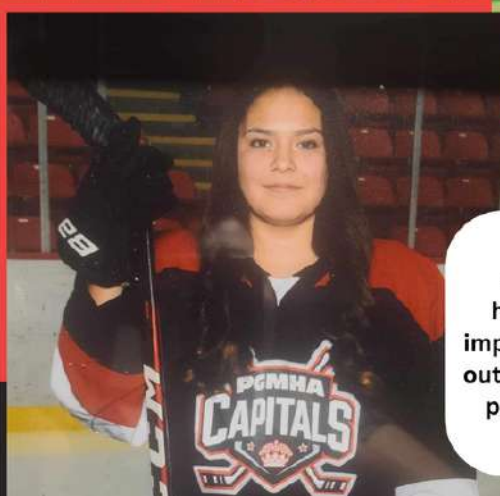
Amber Wells (left), 20
Semi Pro for Nautsa
Mawt FC 2023, Langara
Falcons, College Team, NIFA
International Soccer Team,
Premier League Fusion
Club & Gitwangak Wildcats



Eddie Martin - Loves soccer & basketball, his words of advice are, "Try not to get annoyed when someone older is guiding you in a game or in practice. Attitude is something that will get you benched or lose playing time. Practice makes perfect and always have fun!"



Destin Starlund, 19
His favourite sports are soccer & basketball and he says, "Keep working at being a better you and not giving up on your goals!"



Miley Harris, 15
She started off in figure skating and soon found her passion for hockey. Miley is very dedicated to improving her game and skills. Miley says, "To any kids out there wanting to play any sport; develop a routine, practice hard and don't fall behind in your studies. Only you can push yourself to succeed in life."

GITANYOW ATHLETES

The Gitanyow Chiefs have always been very proud of our local athletes. We show our support by contributing fees or sponsoring jerseys the teams need for tournaments.

Best of luck this year; we cannot wait to cheer you all on!





GHC COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Ama Si Kuuhl Es Nisim,

2023 was an exciting year to be working with the GHC Office! I look forward to another rewarding year and more opportunities to connect with you all.

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.

T'ooyaks'y Niin