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Month For Your Elders, Chief & Council
or Board of Directors.



SEPTEMBER 2024 MARKS

THE START OF OUR

26TH YEAR OF OPERATING YOUR

ELDER'S COMMUNICATION CENTER.

WE ARE PROUD OF OUR WORK AND WE HOPE THAT WE
HAVE BEEN OF HELP TO ALL OF YOU AND THAT YOU HAVE
ENJOYED THE ELDERS VOICE ALL THESE YEARS!!!

Annual Elders Gathering Dates:

EVENT: August 26-27, 2025

(Group Leader Check-In Monday, August 25).

Location: Vancouver Convention Centre

Hoping You Are All Having A Great Start To The New Year!!!

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CRISIS HELP LINE INFORMATION

BCECCS GRATITUDE LIST

Support Fee from Sept. 01, 2023– August 31, 2024

Your support is much appreciated for the provincial elders office!

LEVELS OF SUPPORT

\$15,000 - Thunderbird

\$5,000 - Killer Whale

\$1,500 - Eagle

\$1,000 – Salmon

\$750 – Frog

\$500 – Sisiutl

\$250 - Hummingbird

Hummingbird Level—\$250

1. Osoyoos Indian Band
2. Leqamel First Nation
- 3.

Thunderbird Level - \$10,000

1. CREA

Killer Whale Level - \$5,000

- 1.

Eagle Level - \$1,500

- 1.

SALMON LEVEL - \$1,000

- 1.

FROG LEVEL - \$750

- 1.

SISIUTL LEVEL - \$500

1. Aqam
2. BC Assoc. Community Response Networks
3. Lyackson First Nation
4. Cheryl's Trading Post

Disclaimer: Health articles, etc. are provided as a courtesy and neither the BC Elders Communication Center Society's Board. Members or anyone working on its behalf mean this information to be used to replace your doctor's and other professional's advice. You should contact your family physician or health care worker for all health care matters. Info is provided in the Elders Voice for your reference only. And opinions contained in this publication are not those of Donna Stirling.

This information is from a campaign in 2010 but is still very relevant.

Preventing Elder Abuse

Nov 6, 2010 | Campaigns, Home & Community Safety, National Senior Safety Week

Every year, elderly Canadians are abused in their own homes, in relatives' homes, and even in facilities responsible for their care. It is estimated that between four and 10 per cent of seniors in Canada experience some kind of abuse. And one in five Canadians believes they know of a senior who might be experiencing some form of abuse.

As elders become less able to take care of themselves it becomes more difficult for them to stand up for themselves. They may not see or hear as well, or think as clearly as they used to, leaving openings for people to take advantage of them.

November 6th – 12th is National Senior Safety Week, and Canada Safety Council wants to raise awareness on elder abuse. What it is, what the signs and symptoms are, and how it can be prevented.

What is elder abuse?

Commonly recognized types of elder abuse include physical, psychological and financial. Often, more than one type of abuse occurs at the same time. Abuse can be a single incident or a repeated pattern of behaviour. Financial abuse is the most commonly reported type of elder abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical elder abuse is non-accidental use of force against an elderly person that injures or causes physical pain, and may include: striking; hitting; pushing; shaking; burning; shoving; inappropriate physical restraints; or harm created by over or under medicating.

Psychological Abuse

Psychological elder abuse includes actions that decrease their sense of self-worth and dignity, and may include: insults; threats; intimidation; humiliation; harassment; treating them like a child; ignoring; or isolating them from family, friends or regular activities.

Financial Abuse

Financial abuse of elders involves unauthorized use of an elderly person's funds or property. This includes actions that decrease the financial worth of an elder person without benefit to that person and may include: misusing or stealing their assets, property or money; cashing an elderly person's cheques without authorization; forging an elderly person's signature; excessive pressuring on elders to make or change a will, or to sign legal documents that they do not fully understand; and sharing an older person's home without paying a fair share of the expenses when requested.

Neglect of Elders

Elders who are the most vulnerable to neglect include those who are socially isolated, and those with serious health conditions. Elder neglect can be intentional or unintentional (ignorance or denial). This type of elder abuse may include a caregiver or family member not providing appropriate nourishment, shelter, clothing, medication or medical attention, and assistance with basic necessities.

What are the signs and symptoms of elder abuse?

Elder abuse and neglect can be very difficult to notice. You might not recognize signs as being abuse immediately. They may appear to be symptoms of dementia or signs of the elderly person's frailty — or caregivers may explain them to you that way. Many of the signs and symptoms of elder abuse do overlap with symptoms of mental deterioration, but that doesn't mean you should dismiss these warning signs.

The following are a few warning signs that could indicate some form of elder abuse:

- changes in personality or behaviour in the elder;
- fear, anxiety, depression or passiveness in relation to a family member, friend or care provider;
- unexplained physical injuries, such as bruises, sprains, or broken bones;
- behaviour that mimics dementia, such as rocking, sucking, or mumbling to oneself;
- dehydration, poor nutrition or poor hygiene;
- improper use of medication;
- confusion about new legal documents, such as a new will or a new mortgage;
- sudden changes in elder's finances, such as significant withdrawals; and
- reluctance to speak about the situation.

How can elder abuse be prevented?

What you can do as a concerned family member or friend:

- Watch for warning signs that might indicate elder abuse. If you suspect abuse, report it.
- Look for any discrepancies in the elder's medications.
- Watch for possible financial abuse. Ask the elder if you may scan bank accounts and credit card statements for unauthorized transactions.
- Call and visit as often as you can. Help the elder consider you a trusted confidante.
- Offer to stay with the elder so the caregiver can have a break — on a regular basis, if you can.

If an elder is experiencing abuse they may feel ashamed or embarrassed to tell anyone in fear of retaliation or punishment. It is essential that elder's have access to information and are aware of available help. Make sure to listen to your elderly parents, friends, or other family members and take their concerns seriously. If you suspect abuse, report it immediately to health care providers, social services, police, legal professionals and/or members of faith communities.

If you are an elder who is being abused, neglected, or exploited, tell at least one person. Tell your doctor, a friend, or a family member whom you trust. Other people care and can help you.

Journaling for Harmony and Balance

In previous New Years I would make “should” goals and overwhelm myself with a hoard of things I am going to do differently or better. Then beat myself up for not accomplishing as much as I should have.

This year I’m focusing on making small changes to help me stay grounded in the moment. I’ve found listening to a regular podcast, reading my weekly subscription, and journaling to be very helpful. It’s already making a big difference in achieving the goals I’ve set, most importantly being kind to myself. When I practice these things, they help make my day easier to navigate and handle any challenges that come up with a more positive attitude.

For me, journaling each day gives me a fresh start with a blank page where I get to write, draw or even scribble outside the lines. I can lovingly thank 2024 for all it brought me and joyously claim the new things waiting for me here in 2025. This is a new process for me as previously I’ve been haunted by the things I did not accomplish. With encouragement from my mentors, I am reflecting on what I’m most grateful for. I feel that I am much more equipped to give myself an honest shot at writing this year in a new light.

The [Kidney Foundation’s Kidney Wellness Hub](#) provides free sources to help you maintain your wellbeing and overall health at any time of year. I am using their Companion Wellness Journal to track my personal journey with guidance from the staying active, eating well, socially connecting and mental wellbeing sections. Much like the medicine wheel, this journal will help me track my progress in the 4 quadrants of who I am and what I need while being gentle on myself as every beginning, middle and end has its own ups and downs.

In all this excitement of beginning a new wellness journey, I have filled the month of January with various activities that encompass all areas of my mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing as all four make up the whole of who I am. Since I have already set my focus for the year to be kinder on myself. I can see my day at a glance and adapt my activities to create harmony and balance in my life.

Speaking of the present, I am thrilled to embark upon this expedition of wellness with you. When you become a member of the Kidney Wellness Hub, you will receive our monthly newsletter and have access to free online cooking classes, engagement opportunities, and the ability to apply for wellness coaching. Membership is open to anyone looking to improve or maintain their kidney health and prevent chronic disease. Join the Kidney Wellness Hub at kidneywellnesshub.ca. It’s Free.

As a special welcome gift, you will receive your Companion Journal. Give yourself the gift of wellness today!

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Locked out: how a 19th century land grant is still undermining First Nations rights on Vancouver Island – The Narwhal

by Julie Gordon, Nov. 15, 2024

On Vancouver Island, a vast swath of privately owned forest poses a unique challenge for five First Nations seeking redress for their unceded homelands

In his childhood, Elder Luschiim (Arvid Charlie) remembers the Cowichan and Koksilah rivers teeming with salmon — chinook and coho, chum and steelhead — so many you could hardly see the bottom. “The run for the spring started in early May, and by the middle of May, my great grandfather Abel would have a 50-gallon wooden barrel half full of salted salmon. But you don’t see salmon at that time nowadays. Today, there’s no fish to fish.”

At 82, Luschiim has seen a lot of change. He grew up without electricity and lived through the Second World War. He remembers when, for the most part, his people lived off the land. And he has watched the gradual disappearance of the resources that once sustained his community, and the way of life that defined them.

“We used to go hunting deer, and now there’s nothing to hunt up in the mountains anymore. We used to catch lots of ducks in our fields: mallards, widgeons, teals. There’s nothing now. Or you’d go to the salt water to get ts’e’wi’uxun, your three black ducks, and your sxe:th — that’s the common murre. Some coves or bays were black with ducks; nothing today. Come January, we’d have hwikw’us, Pacific loon. That was our turkey for Christmas time. Now, you’re lucky to see a small flock of maybe 10, 15 where it used to be hundreds. All the resources are gone.”

Luschiim is a member of Quw’utsun Tribes, a Coast Salish First Nation and one of the five member nations of the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group. Bonded by their common Hul’qumi’num language, overlapping territories, and a shared history and many cultural beliefs and traditions, the nations came together in 1994 to negotiate a modern treaty with B.C. and Canada.

Yet, after three decades, the parties are essentially at a stalemate. The Hul’qumi’num nations want a fair settlement for the nearly 270,000 hectares of their territory that was appropriated nearly a century and a half ago. But the provincial and federal governments, who originally placed those lands in corporate hands, have a strict policy to leave private property off the negotiating table.

Hul’qumi’num territory and the ‘great land grab’

Hul’qumi’num territories extend in and around the Cowichan Valley, a fertile basin on Vancouver Island known today for its vineyards and hobby farms, quaint coastal villages and forested hiking trails. It’s a region to which tourists and newcomers alike flock for a laid-back lifestyle and access to outdoor recreation, but there’s a proverbial elephant in the room. Alongside an affluent and growing settler population, Hul’qumi’num citizens live on the sidelines in their own territory, relegated to some of the smallest reserves in the province and surrounded by a sea of private property, much of it controlled by timber companies.

Though no historic treaty agreements or land settlements were ever made, Hul’qumi’num peoples have been exiled from much of their homelands.

In what’s been described as “the great land grab,” with some scholars calling it one of the most egregious in Canadian history, the governments of B.C. and Canada appropriated more than 800,000 hectares of Coast Salish, Nuu-Chah-Nulth and Kwakwaka’wakw territories in the late 1800s, granting them to the E&N Railway Company to pay for the construction of a rail line that ran just 115 kilometres between Esquimalt and Nanaimo.

First Nations were moved to small reserves and stripped of their rights to the larger territory and its resources to make way for settler populations. Over the next 135 years, the E&N lands were sold and resold multiple times, including passing through the hands of several forestry giants — MacMillan Bloedel, Cascadia, Weyerhaeuser and others. Today, nearly 600,000 hectares are under the control of four companies: Island Timberlands and TimberWest (jointly operating as Mosaic Forest Management), Hancock Resources and the municipality of North Cowichan.

“We’re in Quw’utsun territory. Hul’qumi’num territory,” Luschiim tells me, seated in the Quw’utsun Tribes Elders Centre in downtown Duncan. “All our land is unceded. We never sold it. We never gave it away. Nobody won it in a war. We consider it our land, but there’s companies that consider it their land.”

The repercussions of the E&N grant have been devastating for First Nations. In B.C., just five per cent of the land base is private. But as a result of the E&N grant, private lands — also called fee simple — comprise roughly 20 per cent of Vancouver Island, and 85 per cent of the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group nations’ traditional territories.

Today, virtually all of the forests within the E&N grant boundary have been logged at least once, and the once-abundant wildlife and food, medicinal and cultural plants are severely depleted. Private landowners are exempt from the duty to consult with or accommodate Indigenous people, effectively excluding First Nations from participating in decisions about, or benefits from, the resources on their unceded territories.

By email, a spokesperson from Mosaic told The Narwhal, “Mosaic Forest Management is committed to recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. We foster positive, mutually beneficial business partnerships with First Nations and Indigenous-led businesses to advance Indigenous economic development and participation in the forest economy.” The email also noted that a portion of profits from Mosaic’s voluntary carbon initiative go toward supporting the Pacific Salmon Foundation and the Pacific Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area Innovation Centre to “support cultural and scientific research.”

Private lands and modern treaties: never the twain shall meet

In 1906, Quw’utsun Chief Tsulpi’multw joined a delegation to England to petition King Edward VII, asserting that, “in British Columbia, the Indian Title has never been extinguished, nor has sufficient land been allotted to our people for their maintenance.” Then, in 1909, the 10-page “Cowichan Petition,” was sent to colonial officials in London, asserting Quw’utsun peoples had possessed and occupied their land since “time immemorial” and their title to that territory was expressly recognized in the 1763 Royal Proclamation.

Neither petition yielded the success the Quw’utsun people had hoped for, and today they are still fighting for land justice. While many other First Nations make strides forward in achieving land-related restitutions, those with territories consumed in fee simple title are thwarted in their efforts. This is largely because the B.C. government has remained consistent in its opposition to renegotiating ownership of any private lands. That position was solidified in a controversial 2003 referendum in which British Columbians were asked whether they support or oppose the expropriation of private properties for treaty settlements.

“From the very beginning, the government of British Columbia has said that private land is not on the table for negotiation,” Robert Morales (Tl’ul’tut) says.

A Harvard-educated lawyer and member of Quw’utsun Tribes, Morales is the chief negotiator for the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group. By negotiating together, the treaty group nations hoped to present a stronger front at the negotiating table. Yet, three decades into the process, they remain at what Morales calls a “significant stalemate.”

“After almost 30 years, we have not been able to come to any kind of an agreement on how to deal with the biggest challenge that we have in our treaty negotiations, which is the private land issue,” he explains.

In 2005, the Hul’qumi’num nations published “Getting to 100%,” a booklet articulating the communities’ vision for the treaty process outcome. The top priority was resolution of the lands issue: “Our people want Title recognized to 100 per cent of Hul’qumi’num territory, and we want greater control over or compensation for lands and resources within that territory.” (I met Morales in 2004 when I was hired as a writer for the booklet project. I have not worked with the nations since, and none of their members reviewed any version of this article before publication.)

Armed with this clear directive, Morales approached treaty negotiations prepared to explore options that might comprise a creative, but fair, solution. “Return of the land is an option, but we know that’s not something that will happen,” Morales says. “The Hul’qumi’num Nations are not asking that land be expropriated from non-Indigenous peoples, even corporations, to settle this treaty.”

The first option Morales brought to the negotiation table was co-management, specifically, legislation that would enable the nations to share management responsibilities for the vast private forest lands with the four big timber companies that are the largest landholders on their territory. But that was a non-starter. “British Columbia in particular is not prepared to enact legislation that would mandate private corporations to co-manage their lands with the Hul’qumi’num Nations,” Morales says. Nor was there any appetite by the province to enforce mechanisms such as consultation and accommodation, which would require the companies to include First Nations in their decision-making processes.

Next, Morales and his team brought forth the idea of revenue-sharing. Again, the province indicated that it was not prepared to introduce legislative measures that would require private timber companies to share a portion of their revenues with the Hul’qumi’num Nations.

Morales explored every option he thought was possible. “At one time, we even put on the table a moderate livelihood approach, where individuals could earn a moderate livelihood through, for example, digging clams, which is a long-standing cultural tradition, or small fisheries.” This proposal, which would require Hul’qumi’num peoples to acquire the landowners’ permission to access traditionally harvested resources, was also rejected by B.C. And, Morales admits, the idea might not even be possible anymore “because of the heavy use by non-Indigenous people and the pollution in this territory.”

The land issue is a human rights issue

In 2007, frustrated by the fruitless negotiation process, Morales led the treaty group to launch a petition with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, an autonomous arm of the Washington, D.C.-based Organization of American States that observes and reports on human rights issues in the Americas. The petition alleged that, by granting 85 per cent of Hul'qumi'num territory to private landowners via the E&N railway grant, the Crown had violated the nations' rights to property, culture and equality of law, as well as other internationally enshrined human rights.

In bringing their grievance to the international stage, Morales and his team hoped to reframe the issue from a land claims issue to a human rights issue, and finally break the negotiating deadlock.

The delegation of 15 included all five chiefs, Morales, members of the treaty group's staff and legal counsel. Elder Luschiim prepared an affidavit for the hearing, a deeply powerful statement that read like an elegy. In it, he described a childhood in which he learned how to respect his fellow man and the natural environment, his peoples' traditional lifestyle and the importance of Kw'aythut, a sacred bathing ceremony that takes place in pristine pools in the forests or up the mountain.

Most of all, he described the losses. The pollution of those sacred pools from agricultural and industrial run off. The loss of entire forests due to expansive clear-cutting. Finding carcasses of animals that starved or froze to death without those forests to protect them. The desecration of burial grounds to make way for subdivisions. And more losses, which have continued to accumulate in the 15 years since the hearing.

The nations are still awaiting a final ruling from the commission, which, according to Morales, is "over-taxed and underfunded."

The petition precipitated a turning point in the negotiating process, fracturing relationships within and amongst the treaty group nations as well as with provincial and federal negotiating parties. "It was a difficult time in terms of the repercussions for making the choice to advance our issues to an international forum," Morales says. Most notably, the federal government, which had opposed the group's petition vehemently, withdrew from the negotiating table for a number of years. Stz'uminus First Nation, previously the sixth member of the treaty group, left to pursue their own agreement with the Crown. (Stz'uminus Chief John Elliott did not respond to a request for comment.)

Morales believes Canada's response speaks to the country's reluctance to have external parties involved in its domestic issues. "Canadians historically have been very proud of the fact that they are defenders of human rights, and in particular have been very outspoken about external nations breaching peoples' human rights," Morales says. "But [they] seem to be quite reluctant to address the human rights of the Indigenous peoples here in Canada."

Agreements, memorandums and other constructive arrangements: the evolution of treaty-making

Treaty-making has evolved markedly over the past decade. Three decades ago, when the B.C. Treaty Commission was created, the expectation was all First Nations would negotiate modern treaties — comprehensive agreements leading to self-government. Today, the treaty commission facilitates a variety of "agreements,

memorandums of understanding and other constructive arrangements,” allowing nations to regain control over a specific jurisdictional area.

For example, the Quw’utsun Tribes recently reclaimed oversight of its child and family services and the Council of Haida Nation received recognition of its inherent Rights and Title to all of Haida territory, through the groundbreaking Gaayhllxid/Gíihlagalang “Rising Tide” Haida Title Lands Agreement.

“I have witnessed an unprecedented alignment of the federal Liberal government and the NDP provincial government making it possible for innovations within the treaty negotiations framework,” Celeste Haldane, B.C. Treaty Commissioner, told The Narwhal in a written statement.

Earlier this year, Quw’utsun Tribes and Lyackson First Nation, both Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group Nations, together signed an incremental treaty agreement for the return of 312 hectares of private forest lands, which the province purchased from Mosaic at a cost of \$8.55 million. A legally binding agreement between the nations and the province, the incremental treaty allows Quw’utsun and Lyackson to build capacity internally while Morales continues to negotiate for a more comprehensive deal. If and when a modern treaty is ratified, the incremental agreement will be absorbed within it.

“Private lands are only on the table with a willing seller–willing buyer and this is definitely an approach that First Nations in the treaty negotiations process have been pursuing,” Commissioner Haldane says.

While Morales acknowledges that these alternate agreements can help First Nations move forward in their goals, he cautions that they are not without risks. “[Modern] treaties gain protection under Section 35 of the Constitution. These smaller deals don’t.” In other words, a treaty recognizes and protects Indigenous Rights and Title, but in the absence of a treaty, there is uncertainty about the nature and scope of those rights. Further, he suspects the provincial and federal governments prefer standalone deals because they detract the focus from more comprehensive settlements, which entail “potentially a very large outcome in terms of both finances and land jurisdiction.”

Where these other agreements leave the Hul’qumi’num nations in their collective intention to regain control over their private lands remains uncertain. It’s difficult not to contrast the Hul’qumi’num peoples’ situation with that of the Haida. While the Rising Tide agreement enables the Haida Nation to assume jurisdiction over land and resource decision-making, a similar outcome has simply not been possible in Hul’qumi’num territory because of the provincial and federal position on private lands.

The implications of UNDRIP, and the obligation to make redress

With other options exhausted, Morales is now looking toward redress as the remaining, viable solution. “International law says that where a state confiscates Indigenous peoples’ lands, they have an obligation to either return the land, which [Canada and B.C.] cannot do, or to make redress, which primarily would be through compensation,” Morales says, referencing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (commonly referred to as UNDRIP).

In fact, for the first time in Morales’ nearly 30-year involvement with treaty negotiations, the federal government has recently signalled a willingness to discuss the option of redress, although this conversation is in its infancy and not yet officially on the negotiating table.

“I don’t know the approach they’re going to take. Are they going to do an analysis, [whereby] First Nations will have to go through some kind of a process to establish that they have a claim that meets the requirements to

prove Title? Or are they simply going to accept the B.C. Treaty Commission Statement of Intent map? The first step is just getting it on the table.”

In a statement from the federal government, a media spokesperson said, “Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs is working to achieve redress and advance the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Canada’s focus is on working in partnership with Indigenous People provinces and territories, and all Canadians to address past harms, support strong and healthy communities. Negotiating Treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements can be a means of redress to support Nations by providing the resources and investments for Nations to advance their visions for self-determination.”

Should such a discussion take place, calculating compensation for the Hul’qumi’num Nations’ territory is sure to be complicated. The land mass in the treaty group’s statement of intent is nearly 900 times the size of the amount purchased in the Quw’utsun and Lyackson deal; if a similar formula is applied, that would put a hypothetical value on the appropriated Hul’qumi’num territory at close to an unprecedented \$7.5 billion.

Regardless of approach, Morales is eager to get back to the conversation, which was on hold for several weeks due to the B.C. provincial election in October. The narrow win by the NDP may be the best outcome for the continuation of the group’s treaty negotiations, as Premier David Eby has signalled a commitment to advancing Indigenous peoples’ rights and reconciliation via the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and UNDRIP.

Real life problems, and the possibility of a better future

Now in his early 70s, Morales is less optimistic than he once was about the possibility of reaching a settlement. “I used to sit at the table with Elders and they would say, ‘We don’t know where the treaty is going to get settled in my lifetime.’ Many, many, many of those Elders have now passed on. And you know, it may be future generations that are going to have to try and deal with this issue.”

Among them may be his daughter Sarah Morales, a law professor who is part of a research team exploring the impacts of the E&N land grant on Hul’qumi’num people, and providing both practical data and out-of-the-box thinking that may help the treaty group at the negotiating table.

For his part, Morales is philosophical about the “real life problems” faced by his people, many of whom live on reserve lands — properties that they can’t even own under the Indian Act. “I look at the wealth the non-Indigenous population have generated and are privileged to have, which was built on the back of the lands and resources of the Hul’qumi’num nations’ citizens, who have been restricted to living on small parcels of land and [had] no access to resources. This has created some real challenges: significant poverty, significant health issues, significant social issues.”

“Can a treaty solve all of that? I don’t know. If we are able to get a fair settlement, how will we be able to build a better future for children and grandchildren and great grandchildren? I think that’s going to be our challenge, but first we have to get to where we can even begin to do that.”

Nisga'a Nation guides world's first mining royalty company that's majority Indigenous-owned

Nations Royalty Corp. inviting royalty-holding First Nations across Canada to join as shareholders

Amanda Stephenson · The Canadian Press · Posted: Nov 18, 2024

In June, a new company called Nations Royalty Corp. began trading on the TSX Venture Exchange.

With minimum fanfare it quietly hit a milestone on the road to Indigenous economic reconciliation in Canada, becoming the only mining royalty company in the world that is majority-owned by Indigenous people.

Backed by billionaire Canadian mining financier Frank Giustra, Nations Royalty aims to lure investors with the promise of exposure to Indigenous-owned royalties, which company executives say is the last untapped pool in Canada.

But for the Nisga'a Nation — the self-governing First Nation in British Columbia that owns 77 per cent of the company — Nations Royalty is also a key part of the path to economic independence.

"One of the goals of our nation is financial independence," said Nisga'a secretary-treasurer Charles Morven.

"We still haven't broken away from the Indian Act, like we would like to ... We want to be accountable to ourselves. [Nations Royalty] will allow us to manage our own wealth, instead of relying on government funding."

The concept of Nations Royalty is simple. Virtually all mining projects in Canada are located on Indigenous territory. For reasons that include legal requirements as well as corporate social responsibility, mining companies seeking licence to operate in a region typically sign "benefit agreements" with affected First Nations.

In most cases, these agreements include royalties — a regular payment that the mining company commits to making to the First Nation, based on the mine's production or net profit.

By pooling multiple royalties into a single publicly traded, dividend-paying company, Nations Royalty aims to give investors diversified exposure to the Canadian mining space and create a revenue stream for its Indigenous owners and shareholders.

"We do have a vision to build a top-five royalty company, and the path is there — because the number and scale of Indigenous royalties across Canada are very impressive," said Nations Royalty CEO Rob McLeod.

Seeking new shareholders

The company holds Nisga'a-owned royalties from five different mining projects within B.C.'s "Golden Triangle" in its current portfolio.

But McLeod said there are more than 400 individual benefit agreements between mining companies and First Nations across Canada.

He said the Nisga'a are currently seeking other First Nations royalty-holders to join them and become shareholders in the new venture.

And for the royalty-holders themselves, royalty companies are a way to monetize agreements that have been signed but aren't generating any revenue yet, such as in cases where the mine has not yet entered production

"Particularly for the Indigenous groups that might just have one mine on their lands ... there's a reason to be in the collective," McLeod said.

'Indigenous collective enterprise'

Ken Coates, director of the Indigenous program at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and a professor emeritus with the University of Saskatchewan, called the concept of Nations Royalty "interesting and original."

He said he particularly admires the Nisga'a's aim to reach out to other Indigenous groups to pool their resources and increase their economic heft through economies of scale.

"It's a really good example of Indigenous collective enterprise," he said.

In its final report released in 2015, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission defined the concept of "economic reconciliation," saying Indigenous people, businesses and communities must have the opportunity to fully participate in the Canadian economy.

Coates said as a country, we are not there yet — but as an Indigenous-owned investment vehicle trading on the TSX Venture Exchange, Nations Royalty shows how far we've come.

"In the 1970s and '80s, if an Indigenous community bought a gas station in a small town, that was considered to be a major, major achievement," Coates said.

"So, it's an amazing transition that we've gotten to this point."

Nearly all members of the Nations Royalty's board of directors and executive team are Indigenous.

McLeod is not, but said he will be an interim leader until one with a First Nations background can be found.

Morven said in addition to building wealth, the Nisga'a want to use Nations Royalty to build up financial capacity so the nation can access capital markets in the future. Shareholders will be able to use their blocks of stock as a securitized asset to access loans and invest in other projects, something Indigenous communities have struggled to do in the past.

"We've seen that there is racism within the capital markets. One of the biggest royalty companies in the world, when we went to them to see if they would like to invest, they said we were a risk," Morven said.

"So this is going to build the Nisga'a's capacity to develop people with experience in the capital markets. We will not only build that financial capital, but we'll also be building the capacity to be able to manage it ourselves in future."

Typically, mining royalty companies appeal to investors because they are less risky than investing in a single project.

Tribunal orders Canada to address Jordan's Principle backlog immediately

Brett Forester · CBC News · Posted: Nov 21, 2024

Canada also ordered to consult with First Nations on solutions and a new complaints system

The federal government must deal immediately with a backlog of claims under the Jordan's Principle program for First Nations kids, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has ruled.

In a letter decision released Thursday, the quasi-judicial panel ordered Canada to consult First Nations groups on solutions to the logjam, noting some of the backlogged requests "may very well be urgent."

Jordan's Principle aims to ensure First Nations children get prompt access to health and social services without discrimination, with questions about which jurisdiction pays for them worked out afterward.

The summary decision addresses a motion from Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, who alleged the government created the backlog through mismanagement, potentially putting children's lives in jeopardy.

"This backlog was admitted by Canada and while parties may have different views on the number of backlogged cases, the existence of a backlog is undisputed," the letter says.

Blackstock called it "yet another excellent decision" made on the facts.

"I think it's important that Canada learns a lesson," she said, "that when we raise legitimate concerns from First Nations, agencies, people on the ground — and families are saying, 'You're out of compliance and provide solutions' — that they have to move forward and do that, because children's lives are literally on the line."

The tribunal, a court-like panel that investigates discrimination complaints, ordered Canada to report back with a detailed plan, targets and timelines by Dec. 10.

A spokesperson for Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu didn't comment on the decision directly but said Canada has spent nearly \$8.1 billion to meet the needs of First Nations children through Jordan's Principle since 2016.

"We remain focused on ensuring First Nations children can access services they need. We are currently reviewing the CHRT's decision and will have more to say soon," wrote press secretary Jennifer Kozelj in an emailed statement.

The Assembly of First Nations has not responded to a request for comment.

Criteria needed for urgent cases

Currently, the timelines for Canada to respond to urgent requests are 12 hours for individuals and 48 hours for groups. Canada responded to Blackstock's motion by seeking to modify the timelines, but the tribunal refused.

Canada argued requests were being misclassified, with things like modelling headshots, a snowmobile, a lawn mower, glow sticks, televisions and a zip line kit being labelled improperly as urgent.

The Caring Society had motioned for the creation of a complaints mechanism to ensure accountability in the program.

Both Canada and the Caring Society had parts of their motions granted.

"The tribunal ... agrees that the backlogs need to be addressed and objective criteria for urgent cases must be developed as a priority," the letter says.

"The tribunal agrees it would be best to have broad consultations with First Nations for the creation of a permanent independent Indigenous-led complaints mechanism."

The ruling sends a strong message to the government about how it must behave when these disputes arise, according to Blackstock.

"It reminds Canada of its obligations to consult, and it reminds Canada that they have to come forward with evidence-based solutions, not just something off the back of a napkin," she said.

"They also remind Canada that children's human rights are minimum standards. They're not aspirations."

The tribunal has not ordered any specific reforms, only consultations to try and reach solutions everyone agrees on. The parties include the Caring Society, AFN, Chiefs of Ontario and Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

The legal battle dates back nearly 18 years to early 2007, when the Caring Society and AFN filed a human rights complaint alleging the chronic underfunding of on-reserve child and family services was racially discriminatory.

The tribunal upheld the allegation in a landmark 2016 decision, and since then it has sought to reform the programs. In 2019, the tribunal ordered compensation for the victims, which eventually led to a court-approved \$23.3-billion compensation deal.

The tribunal's orders also led to a separate proposed \$47.8-billion deal to reform the on-reserve child welfare program over 10 years, but in October chiefs voted this deal down and called for new negotiations.

The tribunal also ordered Canada to properly implement Jordan's Principle and reform that program long term, but so far no agreement has been reached.

First Nation considers legal options as B.C. approves mining permit 'without consent'

Published Nov 22, 2024 The Canadian Press

The mine is on the nation's territory in central B.C. and it issued a statement earlier this month calling for the project to be halted until the nation had given its consent.

The Xatsúll First Nation says it is disappointed that B.C.'s Mines Ministry has granted an operating permit for the Cariboo Gold Mine without meeting its leadership or obtaining the nation's consent.

The mine is on the nation's territory in central B.C. and it issued a statement earlier this month calling for the project to be halted until the nation had given its consent. The B.C. government announced Thursday that Barkerville Gold Mines, owned by Osisko Development Corp., was issued the permit for the underground mine in a process that took 13 months to complete.

The ministry said it was the first project entirely assessed under the new Environmental Assessment Act, which was modernized to enhance public confidence, and was done in consultation with experts, the public and First Nations, including the Xatsúll.

But, the Xatsúll nation says it did not consent, which showcases "troubling inconsistencies" with how B.C. deals with First Nations and "demonstrates a lack of commitment" to adhere to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The nation says it is considering all legal options and is calling on the newly appointed mines minister, Jagrup Brar, to "ask for clarification on the inconsistent application of UNDRIP across government, including his ministry."

"Xatsúll would like to see sustainable resource development in our territory, but it has to be done properly," it says in a news release.

"The government must honour its commitments and truly collaborate with Xatsúll in a respectful and inclusive manner and in alignment with UNDRIP. That means immediately moving to consent-based decision-making with Xatsúll in relation to major permits and authorization for mines in our territory."

Why 2024 was a bittersweet year for Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks

**By Nora O'Malley, Ha-Shilth-Sa, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
November 24, 2024**

Tofino, B.C. – Sweetness is the \$1 million milestone Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks crossed this year in ecosystem stewardship contributions from Tribal Parks Allies businesses.

Since launching the program in November 2018 with four Allies and \$15,000 in donations, the number of participating businesses has increased to 127. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year those partners contributed a combined total of \$444,318 to support Tribal Parks coastal restoration initiatives, salmon enhancement, trail building, community outreach and more.

Sweeter still, the late Nancy Powis, a passionate member of the Tofino community, bequeathed 50 per cent of her estate to Tribal Parks, amounting to \$1.2 million. The magnanimous gift was put into an endowment fund and a garden with a commemorative bench will be erected along the Big Tree Trail on Meares Island, Tla-o-qui-aht's flagship hike with some of the world's oldest cedars.

"I'm proud of where we've come and where we're going. It's been a busy summer," said Saya Masso, Tla-o-qui-aht's Natural Resources Manager and director of the Tribal Parks program, during the Nov. 13 annual Tribal Parks Gathering at Tin Wis Resort. "We hope to do good by all of you, and we hope that you're all proud and staunch advocates of Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks. We hope that you believe in us. We hope that you believe in our rivers and our vision of where we are going."

Every year, approximately 1.2 million visitors flock to Tofino, B.C., located in the ḥaḥuufi (traditional territory) of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation (TFN). With the vision of creating a sustainable tourism model and building strong relationships, TFN Tribal Parks has slowly gained momentum within Tofino's tight-knit business community to participate in a "potlatch economy".

In traditional Tla-o-qui-aht society, masčim (citizens) contributed what they could as a tithe to their ḥawit (chief), who redistributed the wealth. Today, Tribal Parks places an expectation on businesses within their ḥaḥuufi – sign-up to become a Tribal Parks Ally and start collecting a 1 per cent fee from customers.

"The money that is collected here, stays here," said Masso. "It's not going to go to Ottawa or Victoria, it's going to stay here as a legacy to all your grandchildren. We want you all to feel good about that," he continued.

Speaking the truth is bitter as Masso releases a sigh and talks about the six weeks his Guardians spent monitoring the local rivers for salmon.

"There's chum, there's coho, but we didn't find a single female chinook for our hatchery this year," he said.

With the new conservancies established in collaboration with Ahousaht First Nation and the Province of B.C. to protect 77,600 hectares of coastal temperate rainforest, Masso says he feels "good that our culture will be intact in accessing monumental cedars for our future."

But the rivers remain broken from unsustainable logging practices and "the cost of rebuilding these rivers is immense," Masso says.

Tla-o-qui-aht elder and carver Joe Martin echoed the urgency.

"I really hope that more people will support the Tribal Parks Allies. And I really feel that percentage needs to be increased. What that is, is pittance. I think it could be a little more. If you want to come here, you should support," said Martin.

Masso said Tla-o-qui-aht forwent a longhouse to invest in the protection of Tofino's drinking water, which flows from creeks on Meares Island.

"We suffer for tourism. It's unfathomable that a hotel would not sign up to be an ally when their clients are drinking the water from Meares Island that would have been logged and devastated," Masso said.

Tla-o-qui-aht's hope is to build a longhouse in Opitsaht, one of the oldest traditional village sites on Vancouver Island, that is large enough to host upwards of 600 people. They would also like to build an athletic hall with two basketball courts and a maternity ward, so they can "bare children in their homeland."

"We need this for our culture. It shouldn't be a wish, it's a need. I hope to get there in my lifetime," Masso said.

Maureen Fraser, a longtime Tribal Parks Ally and owner of the Common Loaf Bake Shop, was there in 1984 when the original one-page Tribal Parks Declaration of Meares Island was read.

"It was an electrifying experience," said Fraser.

She said the moment forever transformed her perspective of the land she's called home for the past 50 years.

"One of the terms used in the declaration is 'garden'. We in western culture can understand that a garden is something that you have to work hard in. You have to do a lot and you have to protect it, but mostly it's a place where you do a lot of work in order to be able to live off the proceeds of that garden. And that's what's been happening for millennia. That's what's happening still now with Guardians," said Fraser.

In 2024, 40 years after Tla-o-qui-aht ḥawiih (Hereditary Chiefs) declared Meares Island a Tribal Park, the First Nation created a new Tribal Parks Declaration that asserts four terrestrial Tribal Parks within the ḥaḥuuli: wanačas hithuuʔis (Meares Island), ḥiṭsyakʕis ʔunaacuʔ (Tranquil and Tofino Watershed), ʔaʔukmin (Kennedy Lake Watershed) and hiisawista (Esowista).

The new declaration also asserts a fifth Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Park – Deep Ocean, which encompasses the extent of the nation's offshore fishing and whaling sites.

The Only Way You Should Store Flour, According To King Arthur Baking Company

By Megan O. Steintrager

December 14, 2023

Yes, there's a right way and I asked the experts.

You are about to whip up a batch of cookies or muffins, or a birthday cake, only to discover that your flour smells or looks a little funky—or, worse, has some creepy crawlies in it. There are a few things you can do.

First, toss that funky flour in the trash or compost bin. Second, either dash to the supermarket for new flour or pre-made goodies or make up an excuse for why there will be no cake on this birthday. Third, learn how to keep your flour from ever going bad again.

For help on the last option—ensuring that your flour stays fresh as long as possible—I reached out to the experts at King Arthur Baking Company. They sell more than two dozen types of flour, among other baking essentials, so they know a thing or two about how to keep your flour in tip-top shape, including the right kind of container to keep it in, where to store it, and how the type of flour affects optimal storage conditions and shelf life. Read on and never have another flour-spoilage snafu.

What's the Best Container for Storing Flour?

All types of flour—including all-purpose, whole grain, gluten-free, and even nut flours—should be stored in an airtight container, says Frank Tegethoff, a research and development specialist at King Arthur. As long as the container is airtight, any material is fine, including plastic, glass, metal, and silicone. The key is to keep out moisture, heat, and odors.

If you choose to use plastic bags for your flour, be sure to use a zip-top bag that's meant for freezer use, Tegethoff says and adds, "Twist-tie closures are a no-no."

Regardless of what kind of container you use, be sure to label the container with the type of flour, the date you opened it, and the best-by date on the original package. Or you can simply slip the flour in its original bag inside the container.

Pantry, Fridge, or Freezer? The Best Place To Store Your Flour

Once the flour is in an airtight container, you have a few options for where to store it. All-purpose flour and other refined flours can be stored for short periods in a cool, dry, dark place, such as a pantry. Whole grain flour and nut flour should be stored in the freezer because they contain oils that can cause the flour to go rancid quickly.

If you don't use your all-purpose and refined flours very often, your best bet is to store them in the freezer as well. If you don't have room in your freezer, you can store flour in an airtight container in the fridge, but the freezer will help it to last the longest.

Understanding the Best-by Date on Your Flour

Most brands of flour, including King Arthur, include a "best-by" date, sometimes also noted as "best if used by" or "best if used before." This date indicates when the manufacturer recommends using the product by for the best quality but it is not an indicator of safety. Flours can be perfectly safe to use past the "best by" date, especially when properly stored in the pantry or the freezer.

Refined flour, such as white, all-purpose, high-gluten flour, or white rye is fine to use if it looks and smells like it did when you first opened the package.

On the other hand, because their higher fat content can cause them to go rancid, whole grain flours, such as whole wheat, pumpernickel, and buckwheat, should be discarded if they are past their best-by date, according to King Arthur. The same goes for nut flours. Also, note that self-rising flours may have lost their ability to raise your baked goods once they're past their best-by date.

How Long Does Flour Last?

Different types of flours have different shelf lives, and this will be reflected in the best-by date on the package. That said, white flour should last about a year when properly stored in the pantry, while whole wheat flour should last three to six months in the pantry, according to the USDA's FoodKeeper App. Nut flours tend to have a fairly short shelf life, but you can extend that life by storing them in the freezer.

How To Tell if Your Flour Has Gone Bad

"If there is any sign of infestation or an off aroma the flour is not usable," says Tegethoff. And that's true even if the flour hasn't reached its best-by date.

According to King Arthur, flour that's gone bad might smell like Play-Doh—that might have been a selling point for me when I was a kid, but as an adult, I know it's not a good thing. Other signs that it's time to toss any type of flour and start with a fresh bag include a yellow or gray color (or any color other than its original color), any signs of mold, and sour, musty, or any other bad smells.

The Takeaway

Store all types of flour in an airtight container in either the pantry or the freezer, depending on the type of flour. Oily flours, such as whole wheat and nut flours, should be stored in the freezer, and you can also extend the shelf life of all-purpose and other types of white flour by storing them in the freezer. If your flour develops a bad smell or changes in appearance, it's time to toss it and move on to a new bag. And remember, as King Arthur notes, your best defense against your flour going bad is to use it up quickly in all your favorite baking projects.

Detail from "Salmon's Feathers" ©Clayton Gauthier 2020



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Some missing residential school students disappeared into arranged marriages, report says

Researchers say more investigation needed to find out total numbers affected

Samantha Schwientek · CBC News · Posted: Dec 03, 2024

Some children who disappeared from residential schools ended up in arranged marriages organized by school principals and the government, according to the final report from the special interlocutor for missing children and unmarked graves and burial sites associated with Indian Residential Schools.

Leah Redcrow believes her grandparents, who were married at Sacred Heart Indian Residential School (later called Blue Quills) in Alberta in 1928, may have been one of an unknown number of couples whose marriages were arranged by authorities.

Researchers who study the issue say a large scale study is needed to find out how many people were affected and when it ended. Still, there are records showing arranged marriages of residential school students in the 1890s and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) collected testimony from survivors who said they faced arranged marriage as late as the 1950s.

Redcrow, executive director of Acimowin Opaspiw Society, which represents Blue Quills survivors, says she believes arranged marriages were common at the Sacred Heart/Blue Quills school and said there's enduring impact on the Saddle Lake Cree Nation — affecting everything from land to family connections.

People who spoke with CBC Indigenous said it shows how the government of Canada used marriage as a tool to further the assimilation of Indigenous youth and illustrates how much control the government and schools exerted over the personal lives of Indigenous people.

Special interlocutor Kimberly Murray's final report examines the ways that children were moved through various institutions — like homes for unwed mothers, hospitals and treatment centres — and how that made it difficult for families to find out what happened to their kids.

Murray included the issue of arranged marriages because it illustrates that point, she said, especially if names were changed after marriage.

Beginning in the 1890s, the government "directed Indian Agents and principals to consult the youth who were soon to be discharged from [residential schools] and encourage marriage between them," according to Murray's report.

Murray said she first became aware of arranged marriages when she was editing a report by the TRC on the history of residential schools.

"I had no idea, especially about the [File Hills] colony," she said.

"I thought that was outrageous that they set up these colonies and married people together and moved them."

File Hills Colony

The File Hills Colony was an experiment by Indian agent William Morris Graham to create an agrarian utopia in Saskatchewan by taking land from the local Cree community, giving it to others and cultivating it for farming, said Karen Brglez, a PhD student in history at the University of Manitoba.

In the early 1900s, File Hills was touted as a model community to show off Canada's efforts assimilating Indigenous people.

In 2022, the federal government apologized to Peepeekisis Cree Nation for the scheme and the community received \$150 million in compensation for loss of land.

Brglez studied Catherine Motherwell who was a missionary and principal at the File Hills Residential School near Regina. Brglez said her research shows Motherwell "creepily" arranged marriages for her students and found partners for them at nearby institutions like the Round Lake Indian Residential School and the Regina Indian Industrial School.

Brglez added that the hypersexualization of Indigenous girls and women made officials fear unmarried or unemployed female graduates would engage in sexual relationships that did not adhere to the standards of settler society.

Motherwell would visit these places and select girls to visit the File Hills school for short vacations. Then she would encourage relationships between the visiting girls and suitable boys, Brglez said. After the couples were married, they could be moved onto the File Hills Colony to farm the land and further assimilate.

"A big fear of government officials and church officials was that they were going to put 18 years into 'civilizing' these children within the school, and then they were going to go back to the reserves and were going to 'regress,'" Brglez said.

By orchestrating marriages between students, schools and the government discouraged students from returning to their communities, particularly if they came from different communities, she added.

Anne Lindsay, a historian and archivist who worked for the TRC, said it was also possible some students from different cultures only had one shared language — English or French — furthering their assimilation.

Lindsay said it's tricky to identify arranged marriages since officials used coded language in letters and other documents, calling it "colonial shorthand."

Additionally, policies varied over time and many were unofficial.

"A lot of the things that people sort of think were policy... were not written down. It was just kind of how people did it," Lindsay said.

It's not clear how much the eugenics movement influenced the practice but Brglez said she's seen evidence Motherwell looked for girls with light skin to marry boys who would settle on the File Hills colony.

"Eugenics was involved by trying to whiten this colony and show how civilized these young people were," Brglez said.

"There's this idea that they're biologically inferior... but that they have the potential to be assimilated through the civilizing process."

Redcrow said her grandparents, never spoke about their time at residential school, which she believes is due to trauma they suffered. Nevertheless, she says, they did their best to protect their children and remained happily married for over 60 years — calling the couple a major success story.

The couple also took in orphaned children, Redcrow said, adding they probably raised close to 20 kids. She also said they demonstrated a desire to do better for their own kids calling it a "sacred responsibility."

Redcrow said children from other communities who attended Blue Quills often ended up married and living in Saddle Lake and may have received land there.

She said her own great-grandmother was from Enoch Cree Nation and was sent to the Lac La Biche school because the school in her area was full. After her great-grandparents got married at the school, the couple returned to his family's home in Saddle Lake.

"That's why we don't know who her siblings are or anything," Redcrow said.

Forced labour and other impacts

In Murray's report on missing children and unmarked graves and burial sites associated with Indian Residential Schools she also drew attention to the issue of trafficking children for the purpose of forced labour, especially on farms.

While some research has been done on forced domestic and farm labour, there's still more to investigate, Murray said.

"I actually believe that we should be looking into human trafficking for sexual purposes as well," Murray said.

"I have come across some records... where girls are being sent to Muskoka homes in the summer time and before they go, the institution's getting their teeth done and doing their hair."

Girls sent to these homes wrote letters to the schools asking to be allowed to return, she added.

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