

Community Report

March 2025



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Lands & Natural Resources

- ◆ Ongoing work on neighbouring Nations overlap issues
- ◆ Tseshaht book project
- ◆ Wildlife field work

Forestry

- ◆ Completed the purchase of the Interfor license
- ◆ Working on a road expansion at Canal Main 25 km
- ◆ Nashuk is now actively harvesting
- ◆ Negotiating government volume agreements and stumpage reduction

Fisheries

Micro-trolling - Our current contract with PSF and Ha'oom extends through March, and with an increase in trolling days the department is in the Broken Group a full 5-7 days out of each month (depending on weather). These trips typically take a full day, with departure in the morning and return in the late afternoon. We are hoping to start bringing Elders along for some of these trips so that they can have the experience of visiting the BGI and also can help to inform us of traditional harvest sites and share their personal history of the region.

Engagement - In early 2024 we held the first Fisheries Engagement Session, which we considered to be very successful as an outreach opportunity and one that provided us with valuable insight into the needs and concerns of both fishers and community members. We are looking to build on that success with our second engagement, held

March 10, 2025 at the Maht Mahs (and in the Somass Hall in the future). We had so many sponsors and supporters again this year and wish to thank the caterers, and everyone that attended the event!

Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy - When the current department management and technician began their employment, the department had not filed proper AFS reporting documents for approximately 5 years. This resulted in hold-backs of funding, which were then supplemented by alternative resources within the nation. Since the employment of the current manager and current technician, these back filings have been processed which has resulted in bringing the department up to speed and a recapture of funds exceeded \$526,000.

Funding - with the uncertainty in the upcoming federal election results, many programs through DFO, Parks Canada, and associated groups that receive federal funding from those parties, are ending this year. It is imperative that our department pays close attention and pursues new opportunities when they arise. Some of these opportunities will hopefully be continuations of existing programs, but some will certainly be new. We are therefore currently working to refine our collected data, define our results and future intentions, and utilize the work we have already done to prepare us for future potential sources of funding and revenue. Many of funding opportunities contain options for expanding the capacity of the



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

department and nation, increase in capital assets, and provide opportunities for restorative and sustainability work in the territory, all of which are important to the long term goals of the nation.

Distributions - This year has already seen the first oyster and siihmuu distributions take place, and we are hoping to expand on the success of that distribution moving forward. We have heard community ask for more shellfish, more traditional foods, alternative processed options (primarily for elders) etc. and we are actively listening to that feedback and considering our options. More high quality food from the territory ending up in the cupboards and freezers of Tseshaht community, particularly during periods like the present where food security is increasingly becoming a problem for many, is a high priority of the department.

PSSI - Through the increased presence and capacity granted by the PSSI Program, Tseshaht has been able to bolster the awareness of its capabilities with neighbouring Nations and organizations, which has in-turn put Tseshaht increasingly top-of-mind as an effective and valuable partner in the region.

Through the funding received via the PSSI, Tseshaht has had an increased opportunity to diversify the department's efforts, represent the nation in more ways, and heighten our presence in the territory, as well as assist in broader stewardship goals and sustainability initiatives. It is our hope that the PSSI funding is the beginning of a departmental and community legacy project for Tseshaht and its fisheries. Based on these positive results, it is our hope that this program will continue in the future.

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Governance

- ◆ Communications Policy approved by Council
- ◆ see Council report for more on Governance

Finance

- ◆ Finalizing the transition of Forestry to it's own business operation
 - ◆ Overseeing the training of an interim bookkeeper for day-to-day accounting until an accountant is hired
- ◆ Preparing the 8 Forestry entities for 2024 year-end
- ◆ Working on accounting procedures and updating finance forms

Communications

- ◆ Assisted with community recognition of members, and honouring of negotiators and former Council during AGM weekend
- ◆ Working towards a Communications Strategy supported by the new Communications Policy
- ◆ Completed logo installation on all Nation owned vehicles



HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE

Housing

- ◆ Completed Phase 1 of the Elders Heat Pump Upgrade project, as per the housing needs study conducted
 - ◆ Funding for this work was provided by New Relationship Trust
- ◆ Completed remediation and restoration to a damaged social housing unit
- ◆ Addressed health and safety issues through renovation of an Elders home

Infrastructure

- ◆ Ongoing work alongside the new Somass Hall project
- ◆ Renovations of the daycare to provide more space
- ◆ Completion of the Saiyatchapis sewer project
- ◆ Awaiting quote approval for new heating and cooling system at Maht Mahs
- ◆ New ramp designed and fabricated out of aluminum for Maht Mahs

- ◆ This will ensure work safety for workers setting up for events, etc

Education

- ◆ Participated in the Indigenous Focused Non-Instructional Day with SD70
 - ◆ School District 70 (SD70) indicated a strong preference for greater involvement from Indigenous knowledge keepers and Elders and increased opportunities for land-based learning that aligns with seasonal knowledge
- ◆ Supported the Ready, Set, Play event for early learners aged 3-5 in preparation of heading into Kindergarten

Employment

- ◆ Attended discussions with Coastal Forest Resource Programs for a partnership and training collaboration that would offer Natural Resource Micro-credential opportunities
- ◆ Partnered with Nuu-chah-nulth Education and Training Program to provide transportation for Bladerunners construction Essentials program
 - ◆ 3 Tseshaht members participated in this 2-week program

Elders

- ◆ Hoobiyee Elders Trip



Progress on the New Somass Hall on March 15, 2025.

Photo: Myra Mack



CULTURE & LANGUAGE

Language

The c̓išaaʔath Language Program launched in June 2019 and has since grown, building on the rich resources developed by previous Tseshaht language projects and champions. Since then, the team has been documenting fluent speakers and making the language available on our FirstVoices site and language app. We have also developed resources, created a curriculum, and implemented an intensive program for young adults with the goal of producing speakers and teachers of our language, while encouraging the use of language within families at home.

Language Classes

- ◆ Currently in the 4th year of our Intensive Language Program, which operates Monday through Thursday. Monday sessions are more challenging for returning graduates of our program. Additionally, an advanced Monday afternoon session is held for our lead instructors. Our language program has a strong focus on creating teachers, so our students are learning conversational language and are required to teach what they know.
- ◆ Testing newly drafted Milestone 3 lessons with students on Mondays.
- ◆ We continue to make edits to Milestones 1 and 2, revise our immersion Market Walk and Go Fish activities, and refine newly drafted Milestone 3 lessons.
- ◆ Offering once-a-week evening drop-in classes taught by graduates of our program.
- ◆ Engaging in online training with the Where Are Your Keys team and the yuʔuʔiʔath language team.

Documentation & Recording

- ◆ We continue the important work of recording with fluent speaker Benson Nookemis three afternoons a week. These sessions help increase the content available on our FirstVoices site, review teaching materials, and strengthen the language abilities of our team.
- ◆ We are reviewing and transcribing audio of stories and old recordings.
- ◆ In this quarter, we've held 40 recording sessions with Benson, recorded 300 language pieces, published 200 words/phrases to FirstVoices, transcribed 605 words/phrases, and added 50 images to words on the FirstVoices site.
- ◆ New language content is regularly added to the FirstVoices site for learners. Check it out at: <https://www.firstvoices.com/tseshahtlanguage/>. We also have a new language app available.

Support & Sustainability & Communications

- ◆ Providing language consultations, translations, and support for Tseshaht programs and departments, as well as external organizations and businesses.
- ◆ Posting on social media to promote language learning, highlight our activities, and connect people with broader language opportunities.
- ◆ Continuing to collaborate with yuʔuʔiʔath in the development of their adult intensive language program, modeled after our program.
- ◆ Networking and building relationships with other Nuu-chah-nulth language families and the broader language revitalization community.
- ◆ Supporting language students in the



CULTURE & LANGUAGE

- ◆ ‘YES’ (Youth Empowered Speakers) program.
- ◆ Presented to the new Chief and Council about the Language Program.
- ◆ Presented about our program as part of the First Peoples’ Cultural Council’s online learning series.
- ◆ Several team members attended the International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation. Highlights included advancements in language technology (text-to-speech, transcription, visual aids for learners), online language delivery methods, assessment methods, and experiences shared by other communities worldwide.

- ◆ Recently submitted a grant proposal to FPCC for a three-year agreement (April 2025 – March 2028). Unfortunately, this funding is significantly less than previous years, as each year of this multi-year funding there is a decrease of funds by 50% due to federal funding cuts.
- ◆ Ongoing advocacy and planning for language funding. The Tseshaht Language Program has relied primarily on external funding since its inception. This funding fluctuates year to year, making it challenging to plan and grow with confidence. We are hopeful that with the funds available through our Nation, we will have a more reliable foundation of funding moving forward.



HEALTH, WELLNESS & SAFETY

Emergency Response and Preparedness

- ◆ Collaborating on Emergency Communications and Public Notification Plan with City of Port Alberni, ACRD and Hupacasath First Nation
- ◆ Collaborating on the West Coast Cultural Awareness and Safety Plan
- ◆ Coordinated a funded removal of Styrofoam at the old nursery site/ language house area
- ◆ Working on new and updating Tsunami safety and evacuation signage grant opportunity

TITLE & RIGHTS

Landfill

- ◆ A joint landfill working group was established in 2022 to help address community concerns about the impacts of the landfill on the hahuuʔi and foster open communication and collaboration. This group meets quarterly and includes representatives from Chief and Council, staff from both Tseshaht and the ACRD Solid Waste Department, environmental experts as well as Ministry staff from time to time.
- ◆ This group has been successful on a number of initiatives over the past few years including: installation of additional monitoring wells, establishing a formal tipping fee waiver agreement for Tseshaht, receiving funding from the Province to undertake an alternative landfill site feasibility study, and funding to initiate a project to improve equitable employment in the region to name a few. Many other projects are in progress including the start of Annual Open Houses.
- ◆ The first Open House about the Landfill will be hosted on Thursday May 15th from 4pm to 7pm at the Maht Mahs Gym. Food will be provided as well as a prize raffle. Solid Waste staff from the ACRD will be there to share information on the landfill operations, environmental monitoring program and to listen to community feedback and concerns.
- ◆ Gained access to the RCMP E-NIRS files for review. These files contain the 1990s police investigation into residential school abuses
- ◆ Advisory on protection and commemoration for Yaquimit Cemetery
- ◆ Supported the BC IRS Technical working group subcommittee on IRS Denialism, leading to a draft declaration
- ◆ Completed a file review of all materials sent by the United and Presbyterian Churches
- ◆ Supported content for commemorative activities, such as the AIRS Memorial transformation
- ◆ Culture
 - ◆ Provided traditional welcomes and cultural support for Tseshaht and allied organizations
 - ◆ Offerings of traditional wellness for Survivors and community through drum making
 - ◆ Assisting with planning of records delivery, community events and haahuupa wellness nights
- ◆ Records Delivery
 - ◆ Establishing a stronger work plan on reaching out to families with a trauma informed approach
 - ◆ Participating in trauma training and recognizing triggers

AIRS

- ◆ Research





TSESHAHT COUNCIL REPORT

MARCH 2025

CHIEF COUNCILLOR KEN WATTS & COUNCIL

BC

- ◆ Overlap issues - Tseshaht is working to ensure our title and rights are looked after regarding treaty Nations who are currently in negotiations

Canada

- ◆ Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination - Tseshaht tabled our priorities at the negotiation table and are currently awaiting ministerial approval for next steps

Council Transition & Orientation

- ◆ Council completed orientations with Managers, legal team and financial partners
 - ◆ Other orientation on language, culture and history are still to come
- ◆ Council appreciated the engagement and feedback received during our strategic planning exercise during the AGM
 - ◆ New strategic planning will be developed and come back to community in the near future
- ◆ Council are finalizing portfolios for each Councillor and will provide an update in the near future

Housing

- ◆ On-reserve - Tseshaht is finalizing financing to build a new 4-plex located

near our current Youth Center

- ◆ Construction is slated to begin soon
- ◆ Off-reserve - Tseshaht is making progress on the former APD lands purchased last year
 - ◆ We have applied for funding to build an affordable housing complex with 110+ units
- ◆ Tseshaht are the newly secured owners of property on Craig Road in collaboration with School District 70
 - ◆ We are now exploring partnerships for market rental housing for this site and potential Elders housing
- ◆ Tseshaht is working with the City of Port Alberni on purchasing other lands to be used for housing
- ◆ Tseshaht wishes to Thank Tsuma-as Housing Society Executive Director, Colin Minions and our existing and former board members for their work towards building housing for Tseshaht members and others in the Alberni Valley

Forestry

- ◆ Thanks to previous negotiations Tseshaht has obtained Forestry opportunity agreements and non-replaceable licenses that are now bring new revenue to our Nation



- ◆ We are currently exploring other licenses and operations, such as the former SAN Group mill properties

Infrastructure

- ◆ Somas Hall - we are now nearing completion and look forward to celebrating the Grand Opening, date TBA
- ◆ Thank you to our Capital Projects team for finalizing the Saiyatchapis sewer project
- ◆ Tseshaht received funds to renovate another building that will help facilitate the move of the NTC Capital Programs department out of their current space at Caldwell Hall
 - ◆ We are hopeful to tear down Caldwell Hall this calendar year
- ◆ Tseshaht has secured funds to develop a feasibility plan and some design for water hook-up at Polly's Point reserve
- ◆ Thank you to all our funders and other partners that have helped with the above projects, funding was over \$12 Million

AIRS

- ◆ Tseshaht grows concerned with the continued denialism and potential funding changes, without longer term agreements and commitments
 - ◆ We are hopeful to remain a priority for all future Federal Governments
- ◆ We are in collaboration with Connie Watts on a second memorial, the finalized plan will be shared with community
 - ◆ Urban Systems are donating their time to project manage this memorial and the vision for the entire former AIRS area
 - ◆ Area vision will be similar to a memorial park

Community Engagement

- ◆ 4 Pillars Funding - engagement sessions

will begin the beginning of April

- ◆ This funding is part of the Band Class Action Capital Settlement
- ◆ Funds can only be spent on:
 - ◆ Culture
 - ◆ Language
 - ◆ Heritage
 - ◆ Wellness

- ◆ Options are being explored to have an independent chair for future community meetings, engagement sessions and our Annual General Meeting

Governance

- ◆ Tseshaht Governance working group is currently reviewing the Governance Manual and Policy draft and will also review the Custom Election Code in the near future
- ◆ Membership Committee and Council will review the new draft Membership Code and will bring back to the community soon
- ◆ We are actively working on the development or amendments of policies, such as:
 - ◆ Human Resources
 - ◆ Finance
 - ◆ Facilities
 - ◆ Communications (recently approved)
 - ◆ Housing
 - ◆ and others

Fisheries

- ◆ Tseshaht has tried to secure a longer term agreement, but we may simply have a 1-year agreement
 - ◆ Please stay tuned for updates

Somass Hall

- ◆ Tseshaht secured a large amount of funds to build from child and family services funding
 - ◆ This space will support prevention and keeping children with their



families

- ◆ The new main floor will provide a new Youth Center, space for family programming and prevention team offices
- ◆ Upper floor will be the New Somass Hall and Kitchen
- ◆ More details on an official grand opening will come spring/summer 2025

Lands

- ◆ Tseshaht is actively working on additions to reserve (ATR) for the former Sproat School, old airport and catalyst lands between the former school and landfill
- ◆ We are working on land designation for our EcDev park, behind the billboards on Pacific Rim Highway
 - ◆ A new access road will be built in the near future

EcDev

- ◆ Microtel - construction will begin in the near future
 - ◆ This is in partnership with Huu-ay-aht, Hupacasath and MasterBUILT

- ◆ Tseshaht Enterprises Corporation (TEC)
 - We are proud to announce our new TEC CEO, Alex Doepel, as well as new board members:

- ◆ Jennifer Gallic
- ◆ Bram Rogachevsky
- ◆ Shannon Janzen
- ◆ Caledonia Glendale
- ◆ Patricia Rivard
- ◆ The TEC Office will be in the former Orange Bridge Cannabis building, alongside Tsuma-as Housing Society

- ◆ ROGA Contracting - Tseshaht partnership with ROGA Contracting has lead to the creation of Nashuk Contracting
 - ◆ We are already obtaining contracts and looking to potentially purchase equipment in the future
 - ◆ Currently we are subcontracting these equipment use opportunities for road building etc

TAMIKO RAMPANEN

New Councillor Update

I have been spending time learning the policy of each committee and roles and responsibilities for seats on various boards.

I look forward to reporting more next quarter about the work I am doing on Council.



JENNIFER GALLIC

HR Advisory Committee

I am the alternate on the committee and have been assisting with the most recent hiring process of new Executive Assistant (EA).

Exciting to announce a successful applicant. They have been notified and an announcement will be made once the hiring process has been completed.

Tseshaht Governance

This is a new portfolio to me. I will be looking to set up a meeting to finalize draft of the Governance Policy for community review.

Language

Will be following up with the department to see if there are any meetings and/or support needed.

Housing

I am the alternate on the committee and have chaired 2 meetings in the past few months.

Other committees:

Elders (alternate) – will be requesting to attend and provide support at upcoming Elders events.

Communications (alternate) – will be assisting with any communications, as requested.

Community Energy Plan – will be assisting with any energy plan work, as requested.

Forestry (alternate) - will be requesting to attend and provide support to any forestry initiatives/meetings.

Outside Board Representation:

Tsuma-as Housing Society

I was recently appointed to the Board by Council. The Board then appointed me as Chairperson of the Society.

I have attended 2 Board meetings and various related meetings on upcoming housing projects.

Future housing projects for the newly acquired land acquisitions are currently in progress.

Sage Haven Society (previously ACAWs)

I was recommended to the Society as a Tseshaht representative and then appointed by the Board 2 years ago.

Meetings are monthly with other related supporting committee meetings, as required.

Attended and provided welcome to the territory to their Annual Coldest night of the year event.

Tseshaht Enterprises Corporation

I was interviewed and appointed to the Board by Council in early 2024, for a 4 year term. The Board then appointed me as Chairperson of the Corporation. The most of my time has been spent on this Board.

The beginning months were very busy trying to get the corporation set up before CEO was hired. I have been assisting new CEO, Alex Doepel, with work that needs to get done.

I have requested Alex meet with the community and provide updates on what the Corporation and entities are up to.



NATASHA DENNIS

New Councillor Update

As we conclude the first quarter of this year, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunities I've had to immerse myself in our community's governance. Attending various meetings has deepened my understanding of the decision-making processes, policies, and procedures that guide our community.

A highlight of this quarter has been:

- ◆ The relationships I've begun to build with fellow council members, community leaders. These connections are invaluable as we collaborate to address the needs of our community.
- ◆ Attending the B.C Cabinet & First Nations Gathering in late January where our delegation met with key provincial ministers and senior officials to discuss

shared priorities & got to witness firsthand the strength, collaboration, leadership & relationship building across all nations.

- ◆ Attended the meeting where we adopted the communication policy late February.
- ◆ Attended the HFN-TFN CoPA CEDI working group/Graduation gathering to gain more insight on the Clutesi Haven Marina/round-a-bout project at beaver creek & Compton as well as other updates happening in the city.
- ◆ Gaining valuable insight on the Microtel project progress and requirements needed for this project to begin and move forward.

I am committed to continuing this journey of learning and collaboration to serve our community effectively.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

RACHEL WATTS

New Councillor Update

Our Council Orientation was informative and I am grateful for the staff and being brought up-to-date. I have been learning a lot about relationships between governments on several topics such as:

- ◆ fisheries
- ◆ lands, waters and resources,
- ◆ transportation,
- ◆ tourism

This knowledge is inspiring and informative and will allow me to support various programs and projects.

I look forward to honouring our past leaders that laid the foundation we are working on and towards in the future.



HARLEY WYLIE

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

I have been working with the ACRD in various capacities, through planning and the improvement districts, which I am now the Beaver Creek Board alternate. This alternate position allows me to become more informed on the activities, agendas and issues that are being voted on. Although Tseshaht does not have a vote currently on important matters, we are in continued discussions that may lead to this in the future with Beaver Creek, Beaufort and Cherry Creek regions beginning to turn to Tseshaht to ensure transparency. I have also been working alongside the Landfill working group, advocating for both employment equity and with the AV Drag Racing Association to name a few.

Island Rail Corridor

As the Tseshaht representative, First Nation in-caucus participant and ACRD rail institutive committee member I participated in a virtual Zoom session with the Snaw-naw-as Chief and others discussing our common and overlapping project circumstances.

Community Economic Development Initiative

CEDI working is working on the tripartite tourism and economic development of Clutesi Haven Marina. Development began on this project earlier this year with the goal of being ready for the summer 2025 season.

School District 70

Co-governance discussions are continuing as we pursue First Nation's voting rights as School Board Trustees. This will require other First Nations in-caucus meetings to receive direction and pursue full voting rights.

City of Port Alberni

I have been participating in the Alberni Panning Commission (APC) in discussions on a new management model for the Alberni Pacific Railway, including rail maintenance, McLeans Mill and others.

