‘Goodbye’ and ‘See you soon’: Staffing News at Lands

It is with a mix of emotions that KNC Lands and Resources announces the retirement of Dan Gravelle from his position as Lands and Resource Stewardship Assistant (LRSA) for Tobacco Plains. Dan will remain active in his community and with the Nation even though he has retired from his LRSA position.

Our mixed emotions reflect the sadness we feel at seeing him go, but we wish him all the very best. During his five years as LRSA, Dan’s contribution to his community and the Nation has been very, very important.

We thank him for his hard work and dedication, and also congratulate him on his retirement. We know exciting times lie ahead for you and Erin both!

Another LRSA, Nevada Nicholas, has recently taken a leave of absence to pursue other interests for a period of time. She plans to return to her position atʔakisʔaq̓am in December 2017. She is greatly missed by us. Enjoy the break, Nevada!

Photos on right courtesy of Erin O’neil Gravelle
The snow bunting, or Ɂak EXTI (Plectrophenax nivalis), is a small, hardy songbird that winters in southern Canada. In April males fly north to the high arctic ahead of the breeding season. Followed by females about a month later, the males establish their nesting territories. Unusual for songbirds, females remain on the nest for most of the incubation period. The male feeds her while she is incubating so that she does not need to leave the nest very often.

Ktunaxa Jeopardy Question

Currently named the Ktunaxa Nation Council, this organization was formed in 1970 to promote the political and social development of the Nation. What was the original name of the organization when it began in 1970?
Archeology Guardians Trained

For the past seven years, the Ktunaxa Nation Council has worked with BC Hydro and other First Nations on Reservoir Archaeology Programs. These programs include management planning in Duncan, Kinbasket, Arrow Lakes and Whatshan Reservoirs. During this work, archeology field crews have come into contact with people disturbing archaeological sites. Often people are found illegally digging up artifacts and sites to take artifacts home, or to sell them (looting).

In an effort to reduce the “pot-hunting” that happens each spring, the KNC and other Nations asked for funding to patrol the reservoirs. An initial patrol occurred in Whatshan over two days last spring, and included First Nations Archaeology Guardians as well as Compliance and Enforcement (C&E) Officers from the Province of British Columbia. C&E officers also joined archeology crews at Arrow and Duncan reservoirs to better understand the risks posed by looters to archaeological sites. BC Hydro plans to continue these patrols in Whatshan and Arrow Reservoirs this coming spring. To prepare for this work, BC Hydro funded safety training for participants to better prepare them for this work.

On February 25th – March 3rd, Lance and Jesse Thomas successfully completed their Small Vessel Operator Proficiency course as well as Marine Emergency Duties course in Kelowna. They are currently updating their first aid and other training. Lance and Jesse will be part of a team of Archaeology Guardians who will patrol the Reservoirs, along with Provincial C&E Officers. Their goals are to provide education and outreach materials to the general public, and will seek to reduce looting and other damage to archaeological sites and materials.

2017 Burbot Broodstock Survey

In February 2017 Joanne Fisher and Danielle Gravelle participated as observers during egg and sperm (gamete) collection for burbot. Researchers included: Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Idaho Department Fish and Game, University of Idaho, and the Province of BC. Gametes were collected from burbot captured by the researchers in Moyie Lake. Fertilized eggs from the Moyie fish were transported to the Twin Rivers Surgeon and Burbot Hatchery in Bonners Ferry, Idaho. When the hatchery burbot grow large enough, they will be released into the wild to help increase other wild populations in the Columbia Basin.
?ak·nusti (Guardian) Meetings

On November 23-24 2016, the Ktunaxa Nation Council Lands and Resources Sector hosted the ?aknusti (or Guardian Watchmen) Community Workshop to discuss issues related to lands stewardship in Ktunaxa homelands. Because it is not possible to include ALL comments, KNC staff produced a document (available from KNC staff) that summarizes the key themes and ideas heard by staff members. During February and March of 2017, further meetings were held in each Ktunaxa community to clarify aspects of the program, and to ensure all Ktunaxa citizens had the opportunity to contribute to this important initiative. For more information on this program, please contact Kerri Garner at 250-489-2464 ext. 3115.

We needed your guidance in answering:

- What does it mean to you to be a guardian?
- What does taking care of the land mean?
- What threats to Ktunaxa ?amak?is are most important for the Guardian program to focus on?
- What values/locations are most important for the Guardian program to focus on?

Ktunaxa need to have a strong presence on the land

- Being present on the land will deter illegal activities.
- Being on the land means we care. We need to ensure there is a balance with Ktunaxa law.
- Ensure the land is not being desecrated by off-road vehicles.
- Know what resources/tuk?qamna are in Ktunaxa ?amak?is to know how to use them and protect those resources (Forestry, non-timber forest products, etc.).
- Guardians must know about Ktunaxa culture and its importance to be able to protect these values (archaeology, locations of camps, pictographs, traditional plants and uses).
- Guardians must have authority to enforce laws.

Ktunaxa Culture is the highest priority

- Ktunaxa ancestors utilized everything (Ktunaxa must learn to harvest and use natural resources for non-commercial purposes).
- Knowledge transfer from our elders to the younger generations is critical (intergenerational responsibility).
- Leave a great legacy for future generations.
- Share space with Nuppu and interact with “All Living Things”.
- Re-engage our spiritual connection with the land, animals and spirits (learn dances, songs, stories from our ancestors and our traditions).
- Ktunaxa names for places and areas, including natural springs.
- The Guardian program applies to our community, our children and all people.
- Ktunaxa cultural knowledge must be used in land decision making.
- Ktunaxa curriculum taught in local schools.
?ak·amis Ɂqapi qapsin Strategic Plan Meetings

In addition to ?ak·nusti program meetings, KNC Lands also held a workshop and community meetings to discuss a second program related to lands stewardship - which the ?ak·nusti program is an important part of. The Ktunaxa name of the program, ?ak·amis Ɂqapi qapsin, does not translate well into English and has a different meaning within different communities and between individuals (in English: all living things, or the root of all things). This program seeks to ensure that activities, planning and policies related to land use and species at risk consider and include the Ktunaxa belief that all things are sacred, including things that other cultures do not consider to be alive. This disconnect between current policies and strategies for land use and species at risk has long been a challenge for the Lands and Resources Sector Council.

Although policies have changed in 15 years since the Canadian Species At Risk Act (SARA) became law, there remains a tendency by governments to develop management plans and recovery strategies that do not consider the larger ecosystems which these species occur in. We heard from Ktunaxa citizens that they would like KNC Lands to take an approach to ?ak·amis Ɂqapi qapsin that includes working with other sectors, external partners, but has Ktunaxa culture and language as an integral part of all activities, including ?ak·nusti program development. This diagram represents a draft illustration of the Goals identified as important for including in the strategic plan.

For more information contact Kerri Garner at 250-489-2464 ext. 3115.
The Mandate of the Ktunaxa Lands and Resources Agency is to ensure that the lands and resources within the Ktunaxa Territory are effectively managed and protected for the benefits of the citizens, communities and government of the Ktunaxa Nation.

- Lands Sector Mandate

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