ḏapkiɬ \ ˈqʼɑpkɪɬ \ k · ahp · kihlh
Ktunaxa v: to tell someone everything.

Ktunaxa Camp, Goat River. Photo: Creston Museum.

Hello, bonjour, kiʔsuʔk kyukyit!

Parks Canada is committed to a system of national heritage places that recognizes and honours the contributions of Indigenous people, their histories and their cultures, as well as the special relationships Indigenous people have with traditional lands and waters. Parks Canada is also committed to ensuring that people have opportunities to learn about a fuller scope of our history, including the difficult periods that are part of our past.

Unfortunately, in many of the sites managed by Parks Canada, the narratives of people, places and events have historically focused on colonial perspectives that excluded Indigenous people's histories, cultures and world views. Parks Canada recognizes that many important aspects of history, including the injustices of the past, have been unjustly overlooked in doing so.

As part of the Government of Canada's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, Parks Canada is now working to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action 79, which calls on the federal government to "integrate Indigenous history, heritage values and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history" and to commemorate "the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada's history."

To advance this work, Parks Canada established the Stories of Canada program to support a variety of projects across the country, which would prioritize opportunities for Indigenous people to share and communicate their history in their own voices and to help support development of the capacity that may be required to do so.

Stories of Canada contribution funding was provided to support the Ktunaxa Nation Council in researching, writing and publishing the publication you hold between your hands–*ḳapkiɬ*. The magazine captures and defines the Ktunaxa and their relationships to their land in their own voices. It places particular emphasis on the northern portion of their traditional territory and the lands encompassed in the mountain national parks—Banff, Glacier, Jasper, Kootenay, Mount Revelstoke, Waterton Lakes and Yoho—and Kootenae House National Historic Site.

 Photo: Blaine Burgoyne.

ḳapkiɬ comes at a significant time in the mountain parks' history: new park management plans have been issued for all of the mountain national parks. These management plans set out the strategic direction in the national parks for the next 10 years. One of their key strategies is to "Strengthen Indigenous Relations." Under this key strategy, reconciliation will be given meaning through collaborative approaches that address the interests and priorities of diverse Indigenous groups and cultures.

This work will promote the reconnection of Indigenous people to their traditionally used lands and waters within the parks, support Indigenous voices in sharing Indigenous cultures and histories, support initiatives to protect and care for park lands, and facilitate participation in the economic opportunities associated with these special places. This publication will play an important role in raising the voice of the Ktunaxa Nation in sharing its culture and history within the national parks as we move into this new chapter of the mountain parks' management.

We congratulate the Ktunaxa Nation for this exceptional publication, which is the result of much sustained work over two years. *ḳapkiɬ* is well positioned to support the Ktunaxa Nation in sharing its stories in its own voices in the mountain national parks. More importantly, these written words, illustrations and images celebrate the fullness of modern Ktunaxa life and their deep connections with ancestral lands and waters through the words of many Ktunaxa voices, past and present.

In the spirit of reconciliation, it is my deepest hope that this publication marks the beginning of a new understanding between the Ktunaxa Nation and Parks Canada, and that you will enjoy reading and learning from it as much as I did.

Sincerely,
François Masse
Field Unit Superintendent, Parks Canada

INSIDE

 Photo: Blaine Burgoyne.

FEATURES

ġapkiɬ

Publisher: Traditional Knowledge and Language Enrichment Society

Published in Ktunaxa Territory

Editor-in-Chief: Lillian Rose

Managing Editor: Trevor Kehoe

Art Direction/Design: Marian Lowe

Feature Writer: Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Feature Photographers: Blaine Burgoyne, Nicole Leclair

Contributors: Jared Cayenne, Dustinaya Duteau, Troy Hunter, Trevor Kehoe, Cisco Luke-Jimmy, Darcy Luke/Roshau, Mara Nelson, Cody Morigeau, Dean Nicholas, Lillian Rose, Troy Sebastian, Lance Thomas, Lindsay Whitehead, Jesse Winter.

Special Thanks: Troy Hunter, Ray Warden, Trish Barnes, Galadriel Watson, Kevin Kehoe, Mara Nelson, Vickie Thomas, Angelique Tardivel, Brad Vaillancourt.

Online: ktunaxa.org

Fonts used in this publication were designed by Typotheque and adapted to accurately represent the Ktunaxa language.

Printed in Canada by Hemlock Printers.

RECYCLED Paper FSC® C014956

Cover: 2022 Kootenay Warrior Michael Fisher. Photo: Nicole Leclair.

Back Cover: "Endure Time." Photo: Blaine Burgoyne.

ISSN 2817-5077

EDITORS

Lillian Rose is ʔakisq̓nuknik and a Ktunaxa traditional knowledge holder, with formal training, professional experience and knowledge of Ktunaxa-specific archeology, traditional use sites and harvesting practices. Specializing in Ktunaxa basket-making, she also has a publishing and design background, supporting Ktunaxa storytelling and communications projects.

Trevor Kehoe is a Communications professional and journalist. Born in Treaty Seven territory near the Tsuut'ina Nation in Calgary, he has lived throughout portions of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa in Banff, Lake Louise, Fernie, Rossland and Nelson. For nine years he worked to support the establishment of the First Nations Health Governance Structure in British Columbia on Coast Salish territory in Vancouver. He now lives happily back home with his family in Calgary.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Special thanks to the Ktunaxa Nation Traditional Knowledge and Language Advisory Committee for its contributions to this publication. Pictured on this day in April 2023: (back row from left) Roberta Gravelle, Anne Jimmie, Marie Nicholas, Stanley Teneese, Irene Benallie, Dee Dee White; (front row from left) Gloria Hunter, Kay Shotnanna, Hilly Ignatius, Mary Mahseelah, Beatrice Stevens.

Look for this symbol throughout ġapkiɬ to learn the meaning of Ktunaxa words in English.

CONTRIBUTORS

Blaine Burgoyne is an ʔaq̓am-born Ktunaxa photographer specializing in canvas wall art and contract photography through his business Indigenous View Photography. His unique lens and connection to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa always brings an original perspective to the territory.

Martina Escutin (Shovar) is a registered social worker with a passion for decolonization, systems change and social justice through cultural revitalization. She holds a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of British Columbia, and co-authored Dark Secrets, a theatre-based research project and graphic novel on student-to-student abuse in residential schools. Learning the Ktunaxa language since childhood, she is committed to passing along her culture and language through creative media outlets and intergenerational knowledge sharing.

Troy Hunter is ʔaq̓amnik (a Ktunaxa person from ʔaq̓am). Raised in Cranbrook since the early 1970s he was able to learn about Ktunaxa knowledge from his family and community connections. Troy is a self-taught photographer and has experience in media and communications. In 2010, he graduated from law school and commenced his law practice after being called to the Law Society of Upper Canada in 2013. He obtained his Master's Degree in Constitutional Law in June 2023. Troy is employed by the Ktunaxa Nation Council Society as a special projects coordinator.

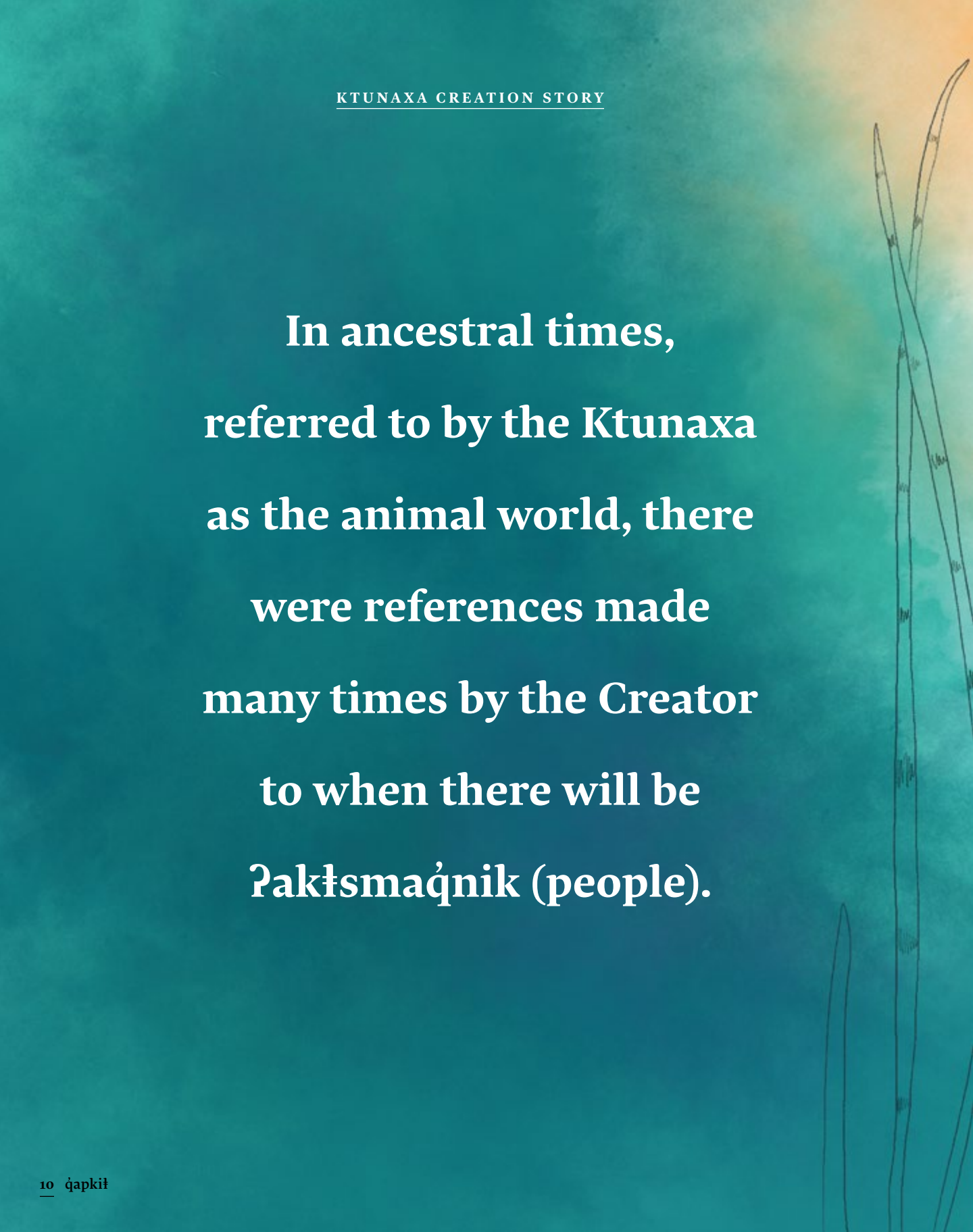
Nicole Leclair is a commercial and lifestyle photographer working primarily in the traditional unceded territory of the Ktunaxa and Kinbasket Peoples. Nicole combines technical approachability and intuition as she aims to create photos that capture people and subjects in their moments—both spectacular and ordinary. "It's been the highest privilege to a be a contributor to this publication and to the beautiful communities of the Ktunaxa." **nicoleleclairphotography.com**

Marian Lowe has worked in the field of design for longer than she can remember. What began as drawing horses for friends in elementary school led to a degree in visual communications and an international career. A love of people and holding integrity in communication inspires Marian every day in her work, which is why it is an honour to work with the Ktunaxa in the richness of all lives lived as she designs for *q̓apkiɬ*.

Darcy Luke/Roshau is a Ktunaxa artist and designer from Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqti ʼit–Tobacco Plains, now living in Cranbrook. Passionate about art from an early age, her finely beaded art and custom digital design work can be found through her business platform Cedar and Pine Design. One-of-a-kind and custom beadwork, digital illustration and painted pieces can all be viewed and acquired through her website **cedarandpine.square.site.**

Mara Nelson is Ktunaxa, and her family comes from Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqtiʔ ʼit. A steadfast educator, Mara was an education assistant specializing in sign language translation before committing her time to sharing her passion of learning the Ktunaxa language. She promotes language revitalization and shares her teachings with students and educators that live on the traditional homelands of the Ktunaxa People. Ɬuni qapsin ʔat kinq̓ qa qapsin—there is nothing you cannot do.

Troy Sebastian | nupqu ʔak·ɬaṁ is a writer from the Ktunaxa community of ʔaq̓am. His story "tax niʔ pikaḵ — a long time ago" was longlisted for the 2018 CBC Short Story Prize and the 2019 Writers' Trust Journey Prize. In 2020, Troy was selected as a Writer's Trust Rising Star by Lynn Coady and was longlisted for the CBC Poetry Prize. His story "The Mission" won the 2022 National Magazine Award Gold Prize for Fiction. His writing has appeared in *Brick, The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star* and *The Walrus*. He is represented by Rachel Letofsky at CookeMcDermid.



In ancestral times, referred to by the Ktunaxa as the animal world, there were references made many times by the Creator to when there will be ʔakłsmaq̓nik (people).

At that time, there was some disturbance caused by a huge sea monster known as Yawuʔnik̓, who killed many of the animals.

A council was called by The Chief animal, Nałmuqȼin. Nałmuqȼin was huge. He was so tall that he had to crawl on his hands and knees for, if he stood up, his head would hit the ceiling of the sky.

It was decided that Yawuʔnik̓ had to be destroyed. A war party was formed.

Yawuʔnik̓ plied the Kootenay and Columbia river system, including Columbia Lake and the Arrow Lakes.

Yawuʔnik̓ was sighted in Columbia Lake near yaqan nuʔkiy and the chase was on. At that time, the Kootenay River and the Columbia Lake were joined together.

As the chase proceeded, Nałmuqȼin gave names to many locations along the Kootenay River, Kootenay Lake, the Arrow Lakes and the Columbia River.

Yawuʔnik̓ was pursued down the Kootenay River and past the Wasa sloughs—now called Wasa, BC. Here, one of the party members, Skinkuȼ (Coyote) got into trouble when he fell into the river and had to be rescued by Wasa (Horsetail).

The chase went past where the St. Mary's River empties into the Kootenay River. It continued to ʔaq̓am, and then downriver to Kanḵak (Spring), where Mayuk (Weasel) joined the war party.

There were animals on both sides of the river as the chase continued, and among the party was a parasite—ʔa·kukłakuwum (Cricket)—who had to be carried on the backs of other animals. His name was C̓umtus, and he was mean and bossy. The other animals grew tired of his nagging and dumped him into the river at a place now known as Yaqakił Waṫmitqułiłki C̓umtus.

Leaving ʔamakʔis ʔa·knuqłułam̓– Land of the Eagle and entering ʔamakʔis C̓am̓na–Land of the Wood Tick, the chase continued past Wasaʔki (Waldo, BC), beyond what is now the 49th parallel and Kaxax (Turtle). They were now underwater near Rexford, Montana.

The chase went on by ʔa·kiʔyi (Jennings, Montana) and past ʔaqswaq (Libby, Montana), and into ʔamakʔis Skinkuȼ–Land of the Coyote and past ʔaq̓anqmi (Bonners Ferry, Idaho). The party travelled northerly back over what is now the international boundary, into ʔamakʔis ʔaȼpu–Land of the Wolverine, past yaqan nuʔkiy again and up Kootenay Lake beyond ʔaq̓asqnuk (Kuskanook, BC).

The chase went on by ʔakuqłi (Akokli Creek, BC) and Ksanka Creek. Yawuʔniḵ̓ chose to follow the Kootenay River past ʔaqyamłup (Nelson, BC). The chase was now in ʔamakʔis Miȼqaqas–Land of the Chickadee.

At Kiḵ̓siłuk (Castlegar, BC), Yawuʔniḵ̓ went north into the Arrow Lakes, past ʔakinḵ̓aʔ-nuk (Arrow Rock), where arrows were shot into a crevice in the rock.

If the arrow was true,
the journey continued–
if the mark was missed,
beware danger ahead.

The arrow was true and the journey continued past ₵ałnuʔnik̓ (Nakusp, BC), and up past Ktunwakanmituk Mi₵qaqas (Revelstoke, BC), where the Columbia River flows into the Arrow Lakes. It went up and around the Big Bend, down past ʔaknuqłuk (Golden, BC), past Yaknusuʔki (Briscoe, BC), then on past Yakyu₵ki.

The chase carried on through Kwataq̓nuk (Athalmere, BC), and past Kananuk (Windermere, BC) and ʔakiskq̓nuk (Windermere Lakes, BC), and back into Columbia Lake near Canal Flats, BC. This completed the cycle of the chase.

Yawuʔnik̓ would once again escape into the Kootenay River and the chase would go on. The chase would go on and on. Every time the war party thought they had Yawuʔnik̓ cornered, Yawuʔnik̓ would escape again.

One day, sitting on the riverbank observing the chase was a wise old one named Kik̓um.

Kik̓um told Nałmuq₵in, "You are wasting your time and energy chasing the monster."

"Why not use your size and strength and, with one sweep of your arm, block the river from flowing into the lake—and the next time the monster enters the lake, you will have him trapped?"

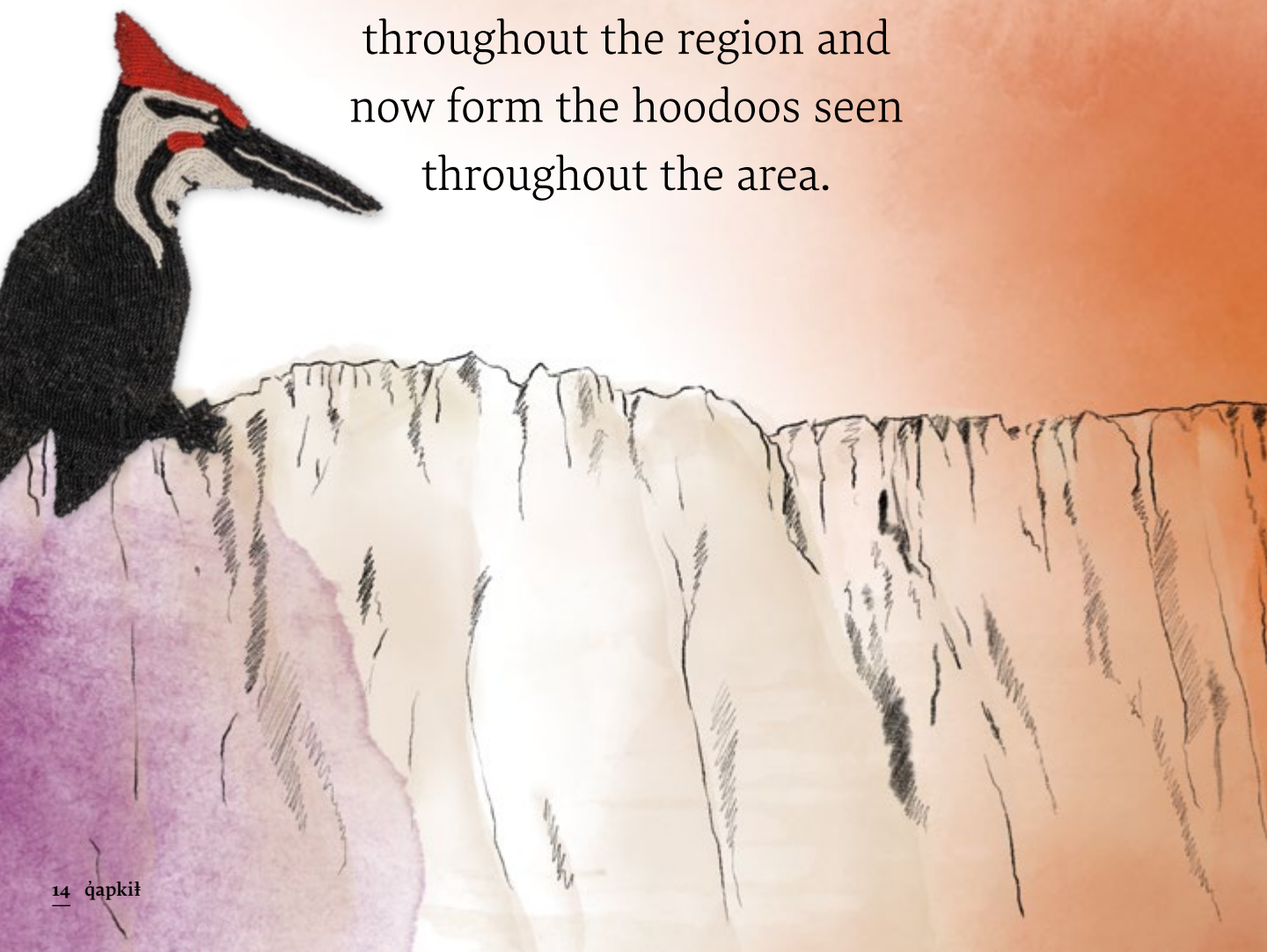
Nałmuq₵in took the advice of Kik̓um and did as he was told. The next time Yawuʔnik̓ entered the lake, he was trapped.

Hoodoos at Dutch Creek, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Having successfully corralled Yawuʔniƙ, a decision had to be made as to whom the honour of killing Yawuʔniƙ would be bestowed upon. The honour was awarded to Yamakpał (Red-headed Woodpecker).

When Yawuʔniƙ was killed, he was taken ashore and butchered, and distributed among the animals. There remained only the innards and bones.

The ribs were scattered throughout the region and now form the hoodoos seen throughout the area.



Redstreak, Ɂamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Nałmuqɂin then took the white balloon-like organ known as the swim bladder and crumbled it into small pieces and scattered it in all directions saying, “These will be the white race of people.”

He then took the black ingredient from the inner side of the backbone—the kidney—and broke it into small pieces and scattered them in all directions, declaring, “These will be the black race of people.”

He then took the orange roe and threw the pieces in all directions, saying, “These will be the yellow race of people.”

Nałmuqɂin then looked at his bloody hands and reached down for some grass to wipe his hands.

He then let the blood fall to the ground, saying,
“This will be the red race of people.
They will remain here forever.”

Can you see Nałmuqɬin? Nałmuqɬin's head near ʔakisq̓nuk, pointing towards Yellowstone National Park.

Nałmuqɬin, in all the excitement, rose to his feet and stood upright. Hitting his head on the ceiling of the sky, he knocked himself dead.

His feet went northward, creating what is known today as Ya·kłi·ki, in the Yellowhead Pass vicinity.

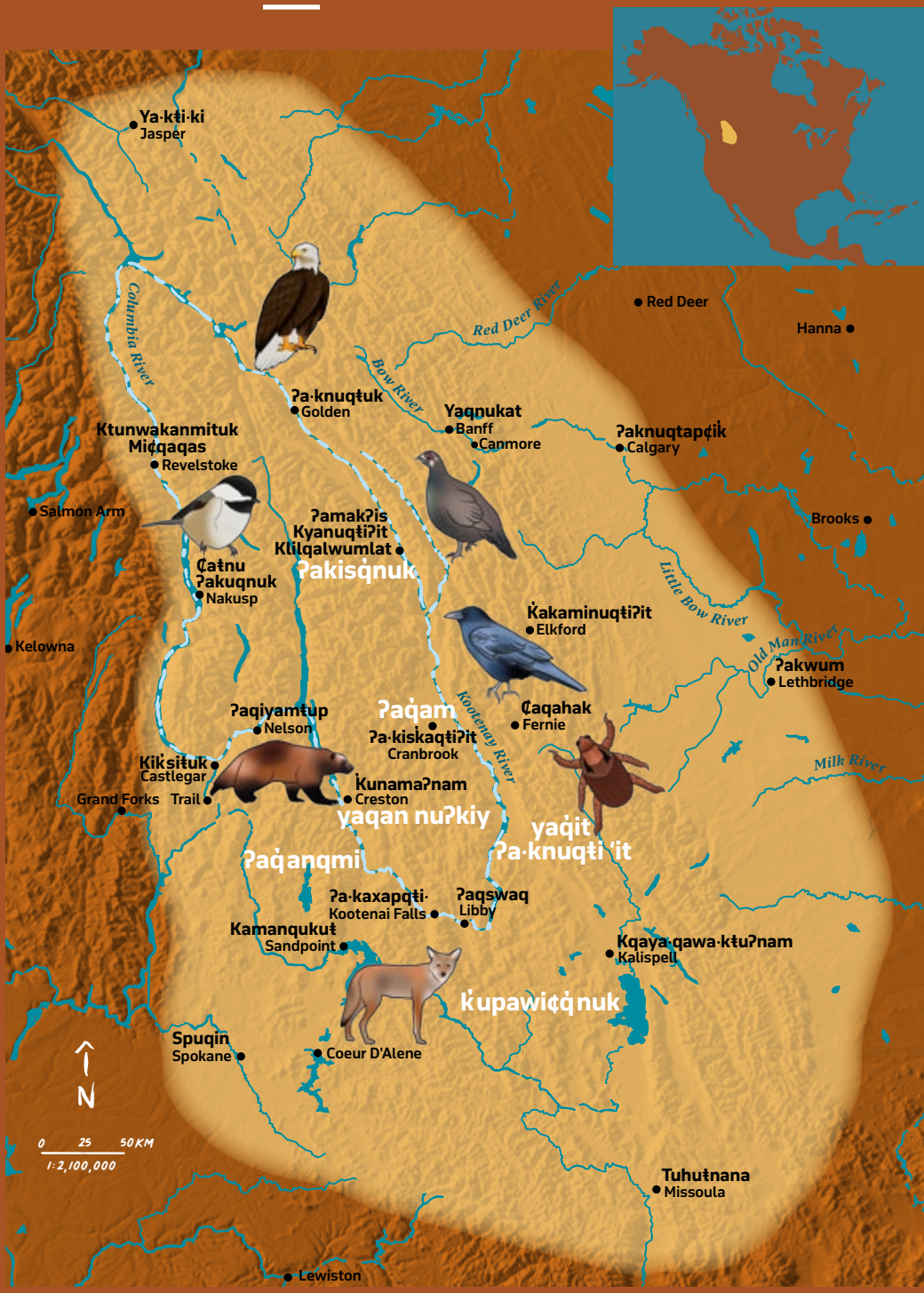
His head pointing towards Yellowstone National Park in Montana.

His body forms the Rocky Mountains.

The people were now keepers of the land.
The spirit animals ascended above and are
the guiding spirits of the people.

 Ktunaxa on horseback, 1920s.

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa



Disclaimer: This artist rendering does not capture the complexity of the Ktunaxa Nation, Ktunaxa communities and Ktunaxa citizens' relationships to their traditional lands. This map is a living document and is intended to be amended and refined over time. This map is property of the Ktunaxa Nation and may only be reproduced with written permission.

Icon illustrations by Darcy Luke/Roshau.

Significant Events

~8,000–14,000+ BP

Archeological evidence indicates the Ktunaxa have lived in the region continuously.

Mid-1700s

The Ktunaxa acquire the horse.

1763

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 by King George III recognizes "Aboriginal People" as "Nations or Tribes" and acknowledges they continue to possess traditional territories until they are "ceded or purchased" by the crown.

1781

Smallpox enters Ktunaxa territory with a tragic toll.

1790s

The first French and British fur traders appear in what is now western Montana and the Flathead Indian Reservation.

1798

Recorded visit of two 'Kootenay Indians' at Fort Edmonton.

1801

Traders LaGasse and LeBlanc are accompanied by 28 Kootenay men and women on their return west of the mountains, likely across Howse Pass.

1806

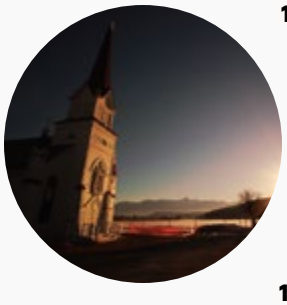
The Northwest Company establishes a post on Kootenay Plains at the confluence of the North Saskatchewan and Siffleur rivers.

1807

David Thompson makes journeys through Howse Pass and establishes Kootenay House.

1825

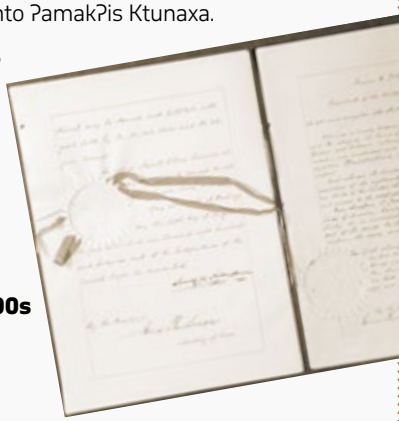
Yellowhead pass begins to be used regularly by non-First Nations travellers.



1841

Father De Smet and the first Jesuit missionaries arrive in Montana, establishing St. Mary's, a mission near present-day Stevensville in the Bitterroot. De Smet then travels north up the Kootenay River and further into ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

1846



The Oregon Treaty between the United States and Great Britain divides Ktunaxa and other territories along the current Canadian and United States border at the 49th parallel.

Mid-1800s

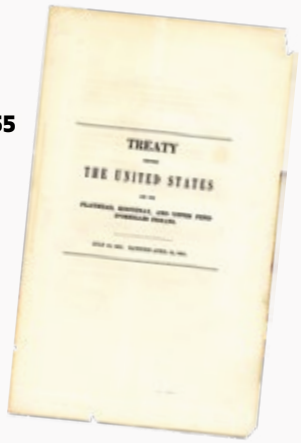
Members of what will later be called the Shuswap Indian Band travel into Ktunaxa territory north of ʔakisq̓nuk and are welcomed as guests.

1851

The United States Congress passes the Indian Appropriations Act, creating the reservation system and forcing relocation, restricting the hunting and harvesting of food, and introducing food rations.

1855

The Hell Gate Treaty is signed, creating the original Flathead Reservation through the forced relocation of the communities—in what is now considered western Montana—of the Ktunaxa Kootenai, Flathead (also known as the Bitterroot Salish) and the Pend d'Orielle (also known as the Upper Kalispel.)



- Banff National Park is established on a 10-square-mile parcel.
- The Lame Bull/Judith River Treaty is convened by the United States government to establish peace among the Flathead Nation (Kootenai, Flathead Salish, Upper Pend d'Oreille), Blackfoot Nation (Piegan, Blood, Blackfoot and Gros Ventre), and Nez Perce.

1857

The Palliser expedition begins exploring western "Canada" to determine opportunities for immigration and settlement.

1864

The first major gold rush is in Montana territory; a mining camp is also established in Fisherville, BC, leading to Wildhorse Creek gold rush.

1867

The Dominion of Canada is created under the confederation of British territories in what is now known as Canada.

1870

The Honour of the Crown staff and medallion is given to Kootenay Peoples.

1870s

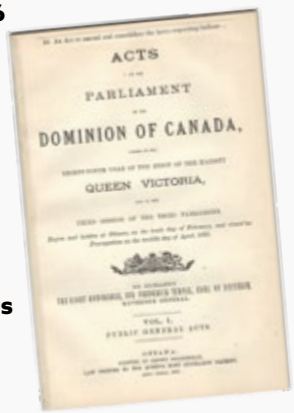
Six buffalo calves survive a journey to the Flathead Reservation brought by Ɬatati—Little Falcon Robe—eventually supporting the creation of the Pablo-Allard herd.

1871

The Crown colony of British Columbia enters Confederation.

1876

The Indian Act passes as an act in Canada, restricting movement and self-determination of the First Nations and Indigenous Peoples through many racist and discriminatory aspects of the legislation.

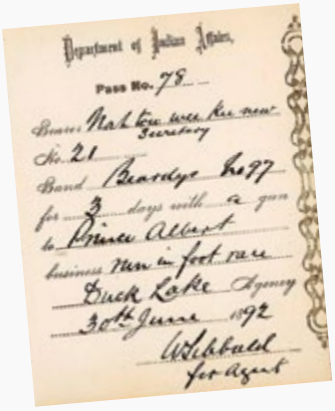


1880s

The forced removal of First Nations and Indigenous children through residential and day school systems is done for the purposes of assimilation in Canada; United States boarding schools operate during the same period.

1885
The transcontinental railway is completed at the last spike site in what is now called Rogers Pass in Glacier National Park.

1887
Kootenay reserves are established.



- The United States government's Dawes General Allotment Act passes, unilaterally dividing up reservation lands into privately held land allotments based on age and family status.
- The Rocky Mountain Parks Act receives Royal Ascent, barring First Nations and Indigenous Peoples from using the territory within the parks for travelling, hunting, harvesting and cultural practices.

1895
Sundance, powwow and any "festival, dance or other ceremony" are declared illegal through an amendment to the Indian Act. Ceremonies continue underground.

1886
Yoho National Park is established.

1902
Banff National Park is extended to include Lake Louise.

1904
The Flathead Allotment Act is passed by the United States congress. This allows for the survey and allotment of Flathead reserve territory without consent of the Tribes, and results in an estimated loss of over 60 per cent of the reservation land base.

1908–09
The United States creates the National Bison Range, annexing parts of the Flathead Reservation and dishonouring the Hell Gate Treaty.

1910
The Flathead Reservation officially opens up to non-member settlement. "Surplus" reservation lands are sold to homesteaders.

1912
The Indian Rights Association petitions Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden on rights. The delegation includes Kootenay Chiefs.

1914–19
World War I takes place. Ktunaxa citizens participate as members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

1920
Kootenay National Park is established.

1922
Radium Hot Springs is taken over by the National Parks Service to the exclusion of the Ktunaxa.

1923
The Banff-Windermere highway is completed.

1924
The United States Congress grants citizenship to American Indians.

1926
The highway between Lake Louise and Field is constructed.

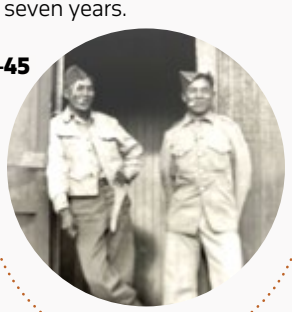
1927
From 1927 to 1951, Canada makes it illegal for "Status Indians" to hire lawyers or seek legal advice, fundraise for land claims, or meet in groups.

1934
The Indian Reorganization Act passes finally giving Tribal governments in the United States the freedom to create their own governance entities, resulting in the creation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

1938
After eight years, Kerr Dam is completed on the Flathead River within the Flathead Reservation without the consent of the Tribes.

1939
The Banff-Jasper Highway is completed after seven years.

1939–45
World War II takes place. Ktunaxa citizens participate as members of the Canadian Armed Forces.



1949
First Nations are granted the right to vote in BC provincial elections.

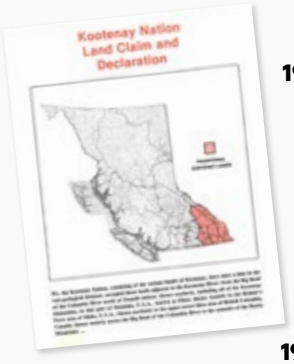
1960
First Nations are granted the right to vote in federal elections.

1970
The Kootenay Indian Residential School (St. Eugene) closes.

- The Kootenay Indian District Council is formed by five Bands to promote political and social development. It's renamed the Kootenay Indian Area Council in 1974.

1974
The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho declares War on the United States government to draw national and international attention to the conditions of the community and put pressure on the United States government to support changing the social, economic, health and housing conditions within their community. This is considered a "war of the pen" with no intent to engage in formal conflict, and eventually the Tribe is deeded 12.5 acres of land at the Mission in the heart of its territory near Bonners Ferry.

1980
The Constitution Express is initiated by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. A caravan of Chiefs, leaders and supporters travel to Ottawa by train to advocate for inclusion of Indigenous rights within the Canadian Constitution. Members of the delegation, including Kootenay leaders, then travel to Europe the next year.



1981
The Kootenay Nation Land Claim and Declaration is created to affirm and assert jurisdiction over traditional territory. It's signed by Chiefs and representatives of the Kootenay Indian Area Council.

1982
The Canadian Constitution recognizes and affirms existing "Aboriginal and Treaty Rights" in Section 35.

1987
Ɂakisq̓nuk hosts a gathering to signify 100-year survival of the Canadian Indian reserve system.

1991
The Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council forms from the Kootenay Indian District Council.

1992
The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples has a hearing in Cranbrook. Ktunaxa leaders provide testimony.

1994
The Ktunaxa Kinbasket Tribal Council files a Statement of Intent to participate in the BC treaty process.

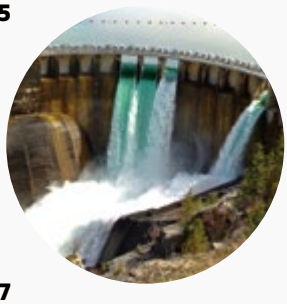
1996
The last residential school closes in Canada.

1998
The Ktunaxa Kinbasket Tribal Council Traditional Use Study identifies over 500 place names and over 800 traditional-use sites within Ktunaxa traditional territory.

1998
Commemorating its 200th anniversary, Wilfred Jacobs and Alfred Joseph re-enact the first recorded visit to Fort Edmonton by the Ktunaxa.

2005
KTUNAXA NATION
The Ktunaxa Nation Council is established from the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council.

2015
Kerr Dam is now administrated by Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and renamed the Séliš Ksanka Qlispé project.

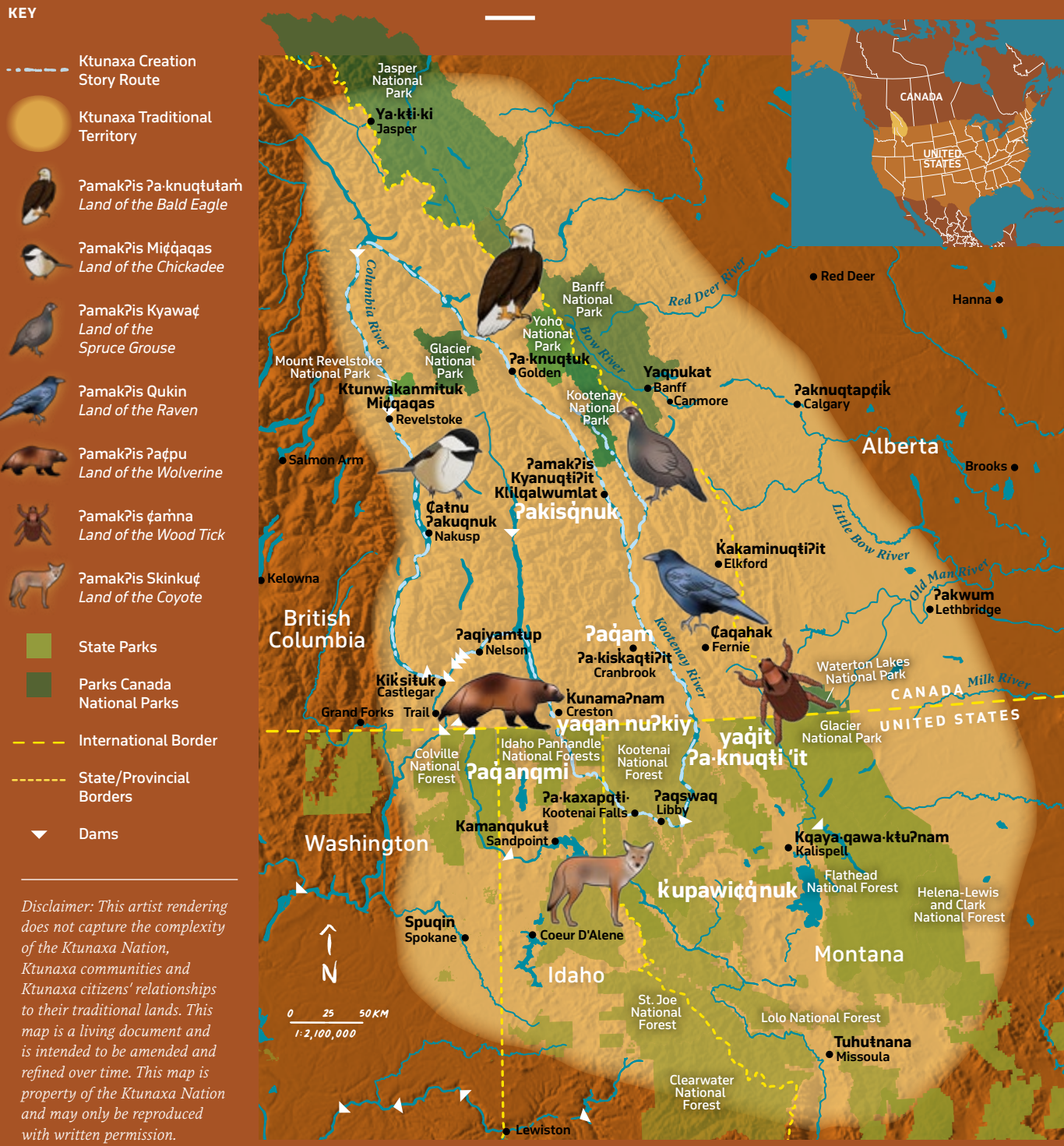


2017
Sophie Pierre is presented with the Order of Canada.

2020
After decades of work, the Ktunaxa announce that Qat'muk—the place where Kt̓awt̓a Tukt̓ut̓akʔis–Grizzly Bear Spirit is born, goes to heal itself and returns to the spirit world—will become an Indigenous Protected Area. The area will span about 70,000 hectares immediately north of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, encompassing Jumbo Valley and parts of adjacent watersheds.

2023
q̓apkiɬ is published!

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa



Icon illustrations by Darcy Luke/Roshau.

Ktunaxa Peoples

For thousands of years, the Ktunaxa enjoyed the natural bounty of the land, seasonally migrating throughout our traditional territory to follow vegetation and hunting cycles.

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa – Ktunaxa Territory

The Ktunaxa (pronounced k-too-nah-ha) are a People who, for more than 14,000 years, have occupied the lands adjacent to what are now called the Kootenay and Columbia rivers, including the Arrow Lakes in the Kootenay region of southeastern British Columbia, parts of northwest Montana, northern Idaho and northeastern Washington State. Ktunaxa traditional territory covers approximately 70,000 square kilometres, also encompassing areas of southwest Alberta and the lands north of what are now known as Revelstoke, Golden and Banff, up to the area of Jasper.

Archeological evidence firmly places the Ktunaxa within and throughout ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, with continual use in the territory from today to approximately 8,000-14,000+ years before present. Ktunaxa People describe our territory using ancient place names. Some of these names are thousands of years old, having been established at the time of creation. The Ktunaxa language is unique among Native linguistic groups in continental North America. Ktunaxa names for landmarks throughout our traditional territory and numerous heritage sites confirm this region as traditional Ktunaxa land.

For thousands of years, the Ktunaxa enjoyed the natural bounty of the land, seasonally migrating throughout our traditional territory to follow vegetation and hunting cycles. We obtained all our food, medicine and material for shelter and clothing from nature—hunting, fishing and gathering throughout our territory, across the Rocky Mountains and on the Great Plains of what is now both Canada and the United States.

European settlement in the late 1800s, followed by the establishment of "Indian Reserves," led to the creation of the present Ktunaxa "Indian Bands." The Ktunaxa Nation comprises six Ktunaxa Bands located throughout the traditional territory. Four Bands are located in British Columbia and two are in the United States. Many Ktunaxa citizens also live in urban and rural areas "off-reserve."

The Ktunaxa Nation Council is the Ktunaxa Nation government in Canada and consists of members from ʔakisq̓nuk, ʔaq̓am, Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi 'it and yaqan nuʔkiy First Nations communities. Ktunaxa communities in the United States are ʔaq̓anqmi, also known as the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and k̓upawiȼq̓nuk, part of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation. The Ktunaxa have also been referred to historically as the Kootenai, Ksanka, Kootenay and Flatbow Kootenai.

Shared lands, a rich cultural heritage and a language not like any other in the world make the Ktunaxa People unique and distinctive.

Photo: Nicole Leclair.

We, the Kootenay Nation, consisting of the various Bands of Kootenay, have since a time in the vast geological distance, occupied those lands adjacent to the Kootenay River: from the Big Bend of the Columbia River north of Donald Station; thence southerly, including all of the Kootenay Sinuosities, to that part of Montana, U.S.A., known as Elmo; thence westerly to the Bonners Ferry area of Idaho, U.S.A.; thence northerly to the Upper Arrow Lakes area of British Columbia, Canada; thence easterly across the Big Bend of the Columbia River to the summits of the Rocky Mountains ...

We, the Kootenay Nation, have suffered, endured and survived a multitude of injustices.

The greatest injustices we as a people have tolerated is the disruption of our inalienable right to sovereignty. Initially we experienced the blatant encroachment of the first Europeans; later the oppressive and opprobrious reserve life; lastly, our sovereignty has become a mockery giving us only token recognition. This is an especially offensive affront to our collective sensibilities.

The Kootenay Nation defines "Aboriginal Title," which this claim is based upon, as the right to retain ownership of so much of their traditional lands, and under such terms, as to ensure their independence and self-reliance, traditionally and socially, and the maintenance of whatever other rights they have.

Through the long years of our historic past, we, as a people have kept our internal sovereignty alive. The sovereignty of our oral traditions, our spiritual beliefs and the language of our parents and their parents have stood fast, giving little ground to the trespasses—and prevailed.

In the past, we were larger in number, thus indicating that our forefathers utilized a great area of land. The land was consecrated and respect was enshrined upon the earth. It is not an impossibility that the Kootenay people used and occupied a greater area of land, extending north to the present site of the City of Edmonton, Alberta, and south to the U.S. City of Missoula, Montana.

It is evident that the area claimed by the Kootenay Nation is presently used and will continue to be used.

The land has been altered. In many cases neutered. The cities give credence to the lifelessness of the land. This was not our way. We must be included in the decision making of our future. The development of the resources should include the people who display sensitivity to the land.

It is our intent to establish a positive relationship with the provincial and federal governments. It is our desire that this relationship be founded in mutual trust. Upon this trust we will create the conditions needed for serious and thoughtful negotiations. From our discussions a complimentary respect will develop and grow. A bountiful harvest will occur. Economic development, self-education, land use and conservation, Indian government, and much more will attest to the equitable fruits of our negotiations.

THE KOOTENAY NATION HAS DEMONSTRATED PATIENCE!
THE KOOTENAY NATION'S ABORIGINAL RIGHTS HAVE NEVER BEEN EXTINGUISHED!
THE KOOTENAY NATION HAS NEVER ENTERED INTO ANY TREATIES WITH ANY GOVERNMENT!
THE KOOTENAY NATION DEMAND LEGAL RECOGNITION AS THE FIRST OCCUPANTS OF THIS LAND!

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE MEMBER BANDS OF THE KOOTENAY INDIAN AREA COUNCIL, ON BEHALF OF OUR PEOPLE, EMPOWER THE COUNCIL TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS PURSUANT TO THIS CLAIM ON OUR BEHALF.

Florence Alexander Councillor
for the ST. MARY'S BAND

Chief Chris Luke
for the LOWER KOOTENAY BAND

Chief Linda Grassette
for the TOBACCO PLAINS BAND

Chief Randy McLeod
for the COLUMBIA LAKE BAND

Chief Paul Ca
for the SHUSWAP BAND

Sophie Pierre
CO-ORDINATOR for the KOOTENAY INDIAN AREA COUNCIL

Presented this 5th day of JULY, 1981.

Transforming St. Eugene Mission

A building that contains much Ktunaxa history and tells a story of colonization, reclamation and resilience is St. Eugene Mission, located in the community of ʔaq̓am.

In 1873, the Oblate Order founded the first mission in Ktunaxa territory at ʔaq̓am. With the discovery of ore by a Ktunaxa Nation member and a stake made near the town of Moyie, funds from the claim were used to construct St. Eugene Church in 1897. In 1910, the Canadian government funded and built the current building, then known as the Kootenay Indian Residential School.

Approximately 5,000 children from Ktunaxa, Secwépemc and other neighbouring Nations attended the residential school at St. Eugene during its operation from 1912 to 1970. After the school ceased its operations in 1970, the building fell into disrepair. There were mixed feelings from the community and Nation on the future of the building. After hearing from community members and former attendees, in the early 1990s, after much deliberation, it was decided to reclaim the building and utilize it as an economic opportunity for the Nation.

Now the building and land is owned by each of the four Ktunaxa Nation communities in Canada and the Shuswap Indian Band. An 18-hole championship golf course opened on the property in 2000, followed by the Casino of the Rockies in 2002. After additional renovations—and the building of a spa, cultural centre and other amenities—the Ktunaxa Nation officially opened St. Eugene Golf Resort and Casino in June 2003.

While visiting the resort, be sure to see the interpretive centre. Also, book ahead to attend Speaking Earth—a series of Ktunaxa activities and discovery and learning programs—and St. Eugene Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training.

Above: Historic Ktunaxa images found inside St. Eugene Mission.

A comprehensive history of the residential school system in Canada can be found through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission website, now hosted by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. The website, report, 94 Calls to Action and educational materials are recommended reading for anyone not familiar with the tragic colonial system.

→→→ National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: **nctr.ca**

"Since it was within the St. Eugene's mission school that the culture of the Kootenay Indian was taken away, it should be within that building that it is returned."

ELDER MARY PAUL

"Residential schools" in Canada and "Indian boarding schools" in the United States were part of government policies to attempt to assimilate Indigenous people into the non-Native population. This included attempts to extinguish language, spirituality and culture. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called the policy and actions on behalf of the Canadian government and religious institutions during this time "cultural genocide."

Photo: Blaine Burgoyne.

→→→ Find out more about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: **nctr.ca**

ST. EUGENE 2022

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On September 30, 2022, Ktunaxa and neighbouring Nation residential school survivors, intergenerational survivors, citizens and supporters gathered at St. Eugene Resort—formerly the Kootenay Indian Residential School—for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Here, they shared personal stories and acknowledged the history of the residential school system on the Ktunaxa and the neighbouring Nation members who attended. The event now takes place each year and pays respect to the resilience of survivors and the Nation, and celebrates the next generation of Ktunaxa.

KTUNAXA STATEMENT OF RECONCILIATION

ṅini ku qałwiynała
[this is what is in our hearts]

qaqaʔni ma yaqałitknawaski
[what they did to us is true]

ġapiłpałnin
[say it all/tell the whole story]

mika yaqałitknawaski hu qayaqałqa¢ałani
[despite what happened to us, we made it through]

hu qałwinałani ku¢ sukił ʔaqsłmakniḵ nała
[we want a good life for ourselves]

hawi¢kinin k¢maḵ kyam ¢ ¢ina·kinin
[hold the truth and go forward]

¢inł qaqa [so be it]**. maʔ¢ kuktkinin!**
[do not change this statement!]

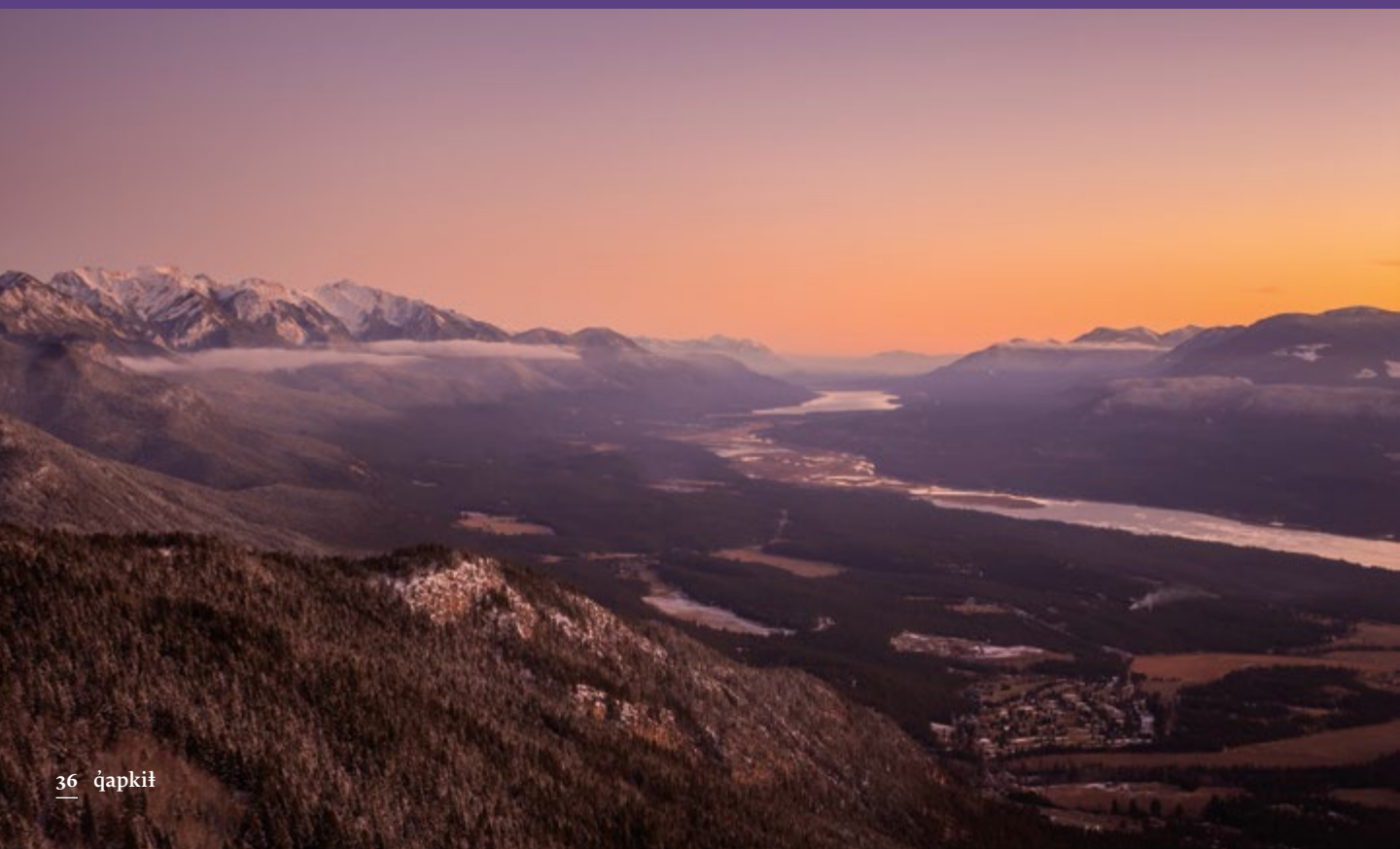
Created by the Ktunaxa Nation Traditional Knowledge and Language Advisory Committee in 2018.

ʔakisq̓nuk

ʔakisq̓nuk—which in Ktunaxa means "where two lakes meet"—is located on the western base of the Rocky Mountains at the centre of what is now known as the Columbia Valley, nestled between the headwaters of two critical river systems: the Columbia and Kootenay. The community is at the south end of Kananuk (Windermere) and east side of ʔakiskq̓nuk (Windermere Lakes). ʔakisq̓nuk traditional territory encompasses what is now the village of Fairmont Hot Springs down to Canal Flats, as well as the Kootenae House National Historic Site.

COMMUNITY FEATURES

- Eva Joseph Learning and Cultural Society
- Little Badger Early Learning Centre
- Columbia Lake Recreation Centre
- ʔakisq̓nuk Health Centre
- Raven's Nest Resort & Campground
- Lakeshore Resort and Campground
- Indian Beach Estates



FEATURE BUILDING: COLUMBIA LAKE RECREATION CENTRE

The 6,858-square-metre Columbia Lake Recreation Centre was completed in 2020. In addition to hosting working spaces and meeting rooms for ʔakisq̓nuk and Ktunaxa Nation Council staff, it includes an expansive gymnasium, elevated running track, exercise facility, concession and cafeteria space, and more. Volleyball, basketball, soccer, pickleball and other recreational opportunities are available for ʔakisq̓nuk members and surrounding residents. A highlight piece of artwork can be seen in the entryway, completed by artist Jason Botkin in collaboration with ʔakisq̓nuk members and the Banff Centre. The artwork includes many prominent Ktunaxa community members, athletes, leaders and Elders, as well as elements from the Nation's Creation Story.

FEATURE COMMUNITY GROUP: LITTLE BADGER EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Little Badger Early Learning Centre offers nature-based child care and preschool for Ktunaxa children and others in the ʔakisq̓nuk area. The program provides a supportive environment where respect is nurtured, focusing on kindergarten readiness, creating community, supporting families and connecting to the territory.

THINGS TO DO

Visit the mural at the Columbia Lake Recreation Centre.

*

Stay at the Raven's Nest Resort & Campground.

*

Hike the area's hoodoos and walk the Wilmer Wetlands.

*

Visit the Radium Visitor Centre and see the Cultures and Contact exhibit.

CONTACT

ʔakisq̓nuk
3050 Highway 93/95, Windermere, BC
250-342-6301
akisqnuk.org

ʔaq̓am

ʔaq̓am—which in Ktunaxa means "deep dense woods"—has also been known historically as the St. Mary's Band. The community is located within the Rocky Mountain Trench, along the St. Mary River as it reaches a confluence with the Kootenay River. The community is near the centre of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, with the contemporary settlements of Fort Steele to the east, Kimberley to the west, Cranbrook to the south and Wasa to the north. The territory is known for its landscapes of mixed ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine and interior Douglas fir forests and grasslands.

COMMUNITY FEATURES

* ʔaq̓amnik' Elementary School and Daycare
* ʔaq̓am Health and Wellness Centre
* ʔaq̓am Trading Gas Bar
* ʔaq̓am Community Enterprises

 Photo: Troy Hunter.

FEATURE BUILDING: ʔAḏAM COMMUNITY CULTURAL SPACE

ʔaḏam's original Band hall building is now a community cultural space, used to host gatherings, events, workshops and more. Traditional knowledge, language, culture, sewing, beading and drumming groups all regularly host gatherings. The venue includes a kitchen area and also hosts fundraising and other community events.

FEATURE COMMUNITY GROUP: ʔAḏAMNIK' ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ʔaḏamnik' Elementary School offers a unique and rich learning experience for students of all cultural backgrounds. As a small, accredited, independent kindergarten-to-grade-six elementary school, it offers standard BC curriculum with added cultural programming, as well as a licensed after-school program. Small class sizes provide personalized education tailored to students' needs, while cultural programming includes learning the Ktunaxa language and participating in traditional Ktunaxa activities.

→→→ **aqamnikschool.com**

THINGS TO DO

Visit the local hoodoos.

✶

Visit the ʔaḏam Trading Gas Bar.

✶

Travel the Chief Isadore portion of the Trans Canada Trail from Wardner to Cranbrook.

✶

Visit and stay at the nearby St. Eugene Resort, and participate in St. Eugene Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training and Speaking Earth: Ktunaxa activities and discovery and learning programs.

✶

Play the Ktunaxa Annual Charity Golf Tournament.

CONTACT

ʔaḏam
7470 Mission Road, Cranbrook, BC
250-426-5717
aqam.net

Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it

The community of **Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it**—also known as Tobacco Plains—is located near Koocanusa Reservoir, with the town of Grasmere to the north and its southern boundary meeting the United States border at Montana near the Roosville border crossing. Parts of the territory were known for its tobacco cultivation and harvesting. The community hosts a number of popular campground and RV sites, including the newly developed Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it Campground and RV Park, complete with convenience store and gas station. The community is also home to Edwards Lake, Big Springs, Ayes Ranch and Dorr Road campgrounds, with long sandy beaches, treed areas and spacious sites—but book in advance as many sites fill up early for the season.

COMMUNITY FEATURES

- Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it Campground and RV Park
- Edwards Lake, Big Springs, Ayes Ranch and Dorr Road campgrounds and RV parks
- Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it Administration and Health Building
- Grasmere General Store
- Tobacco Plains Duty Free Shop

FEATURE BUILDING: YAḲIT ʔA·KNUQŁI ʻIT ADMINISTRATION AND HEALTH BUILDING

Built in 2018, the state-of-the-art YaḲit ʔa·knuqłi ʻit health centre and community administrative office also includes an Elder's room, gymnasium and community health room.

FEATURE COMMUNITY GROUP: KA·KIN RESOURCE CORPORATION

Owned by YaḲit ʔa·knuqłi ʻit, the Ka·kin Resource Corporation supports a broad range of forestry operations within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and beyond. Projects include fuel reduction and management, road building and maintenance, timber harvesting, woodlot operations and border and right-of-way clearing.

THINGS TO DO

Attend and support the annual Ktunaxa border walk that takes place at the Roosville border crossing each summer.

*

Stay at one of the many local RV parks or campgrounds: YaḲit ʔa·knuqłi ʻit, Edwards Lake, Big Springs, Ayes Ranch and Dorr Road.

*

Gas up and grab snacks at the Grasmere General Store, owned by Ktunaxa members.

*

Visit the Tobacco Plains Duty Free Shop.

CONTACT

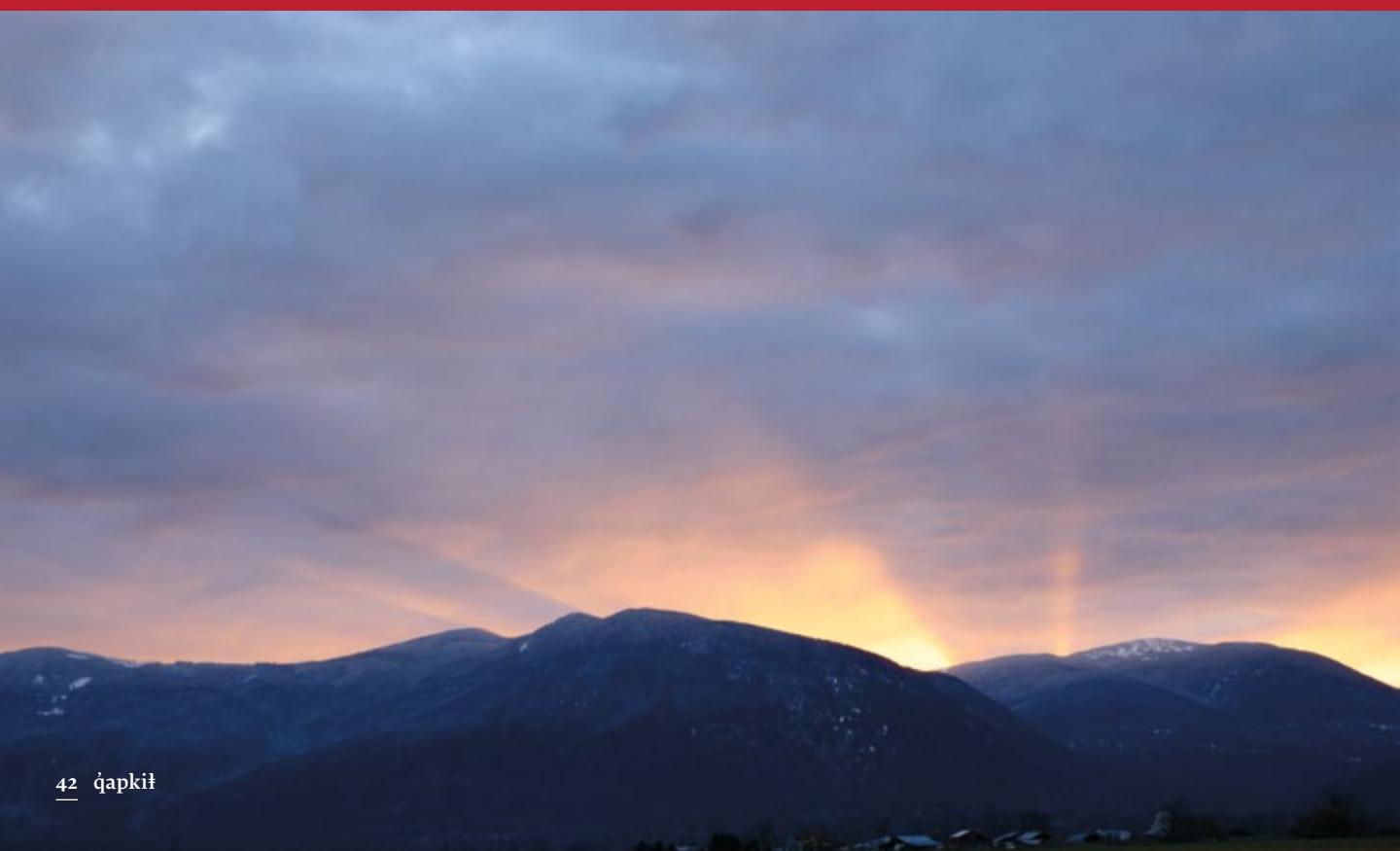
YaḲit ʔa·knuqłi ʻit
5500 Village Loop Road, Grasmere, BC
250-887-3461
tobaccoplains.org

yaqan nuʔkiy

yaqan nuʔkiy—which means "where the rock stands" in Ktunaxa—is also known as the Lower Kootenay Band, and at times historically as the Flatbow Kutenai. The community is located in what is now known as the Creston Valley, south of the town of Creston and alongside the United States border near Idaho, on a bench overlooking the Kootenay River at the south end of Kootenay Lake. The area has a wetland ecosystem, and many tributaries from the surrounding mountainsides flow into the Kootenay River, a water source that has provided for the community for generations.

COMMUNITY FEATURES

* Wilfred Jacobs Building
* yaqan nuʔkiy School
* yaqan nuʔkiy Heritage Centre at Legend Logos
* Community Roundhouse
* yaqan nuʔkiy Gymnasium



FEATURE BUILDING: WILFRED JACOBS BUILDING

The Wilfred Jacobs Building—housing a community health centre and administration and meeting spaces—is designed in the shape of a sturgeon-nose canoe, a trademark of the Ktunaxa and yaqan nuʔkiy. Located on an original village site, the building was celebrated with a grand opening in May 2022.

FEATURE COMMUNITY GROUP: YAQAN NUʔKIY HERITAGE CENTRE AT LEGEND LOGOS

The yaqan nuʔkiy Heritage Centre is located inside the Legend Logos building near Creston, and was developed through contributions from Ktunaxa people across the territory. Sturgeon-nose canoes, a tulle teepee, fish traps, dance regalia, arrowheads, stone tools, stick game sets, buckskin and historical documentation are all on display. While at the centre, ask about the 2021 film *Voices of the Ancestors: Teachings of the Flatbow Kutenai*. Released in 2021, the 32-minute video shares the traditional knowledge and life experience of yaqan nuʔkiy Hereditary Chief Robert Louie Sr. Based on the oral history Robert learned as a child, the video shares stories of the Flatbow Kutenai that have been handed down through millennia, much of it previously undocumented.

→→→ **legendlogos.ca**

THINGS TO DO

Visit the yaqan nuʔkiy Heritage Centre.

*

Attend the yaqan nuʔkiy Pow Wow, held each year in May.

*

Hire an adventure guide through Lower Kootenay Guide Outfitters.

*

Participate in a Legend Lake Tour and visit Legend Logos gift shop.

*

Buy flowers, fresh produce or wagyu beef from yaqan nuʔkiy member-owned Morris Flowers & Garden Centre in Creston.

CONTACT

yaqan nuʔkiy
830 Simon Road, Creston, BC
250-428-4428
lowerkootenay.com

ʔaq̓anqmi

Kootenay Tribe of Idaho

The community of **ʔaq̓anqmi**—also known as the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho—is located along the Kootenay River within Boundary Country in Idaho. The Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge is just to the east, with the Kaniksu National Forest to the south and west. Upstream on the Kootenay River from ʔaq̓anqmi is Kootenai Falls, a sacred place for the community and Ktunaxa Nation. The community began operating a sturgeon hatchery on its territory in 1991, and officially opened the Twin Rivers Sturgeon and Burbot Hatchery in 2014. The hatchery has played a vital role in increasing the population of endangered Kootenai River wiyaƚ (white sturgeon) and near-extinct ʔaq̓uƚam (burbot) within the Kootenai/Kootenay and Columbia river systems. The community gained national and international attention for its non-violent "War of 1974" proclamation against the United States government. The Tribe is also a member of the Upper Columbia United Tribes. ʔaq̓anqmi staff operate out of Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

COMMUNITY FEATURES

* Twin Rivers Sturgeon and Burbot Hatchery
* Kootenai River Inn Casino & Spa
* Twin Rivers Canyon Resort
* St. Michael's Mission

FEATURE BUILDING: TWIN RIVERS STURGEON AND BURBOT HATCHERY

The Twin Rivers Sturgeon and Burbot Hatchery is a one-of-a-kind initiative to support the population reintroduction of endangered Kootenai River wiyał (white sturgeon) and nearly extinct ʔaq̓ułam (burbot). The original hatchery was built in 1991 to focus on wiyał alone. After years of steady success in supporting the Kootenai River wiyał population, the Tribe opened another hatchery in October 2014 to support ʔaq̓ułam as well as wiyał. The over-10,600-square-metre hatchery—at the confluence of the Kootenai and Moyie rivers—was the first in North America designed to support large-scale reintroduction of wiyał and ʔaq̓ułam.

»»» Read more on page 90.

FEATURE COMMUNITY GROUP: UPPER COLUMBIA UNITED TRIBES

The Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) comprises the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and Spokane Tribe of Indians. It was formed in 1982 to protect, preserve and enhance treaty and executive order Tribal rights, sovereignty and environmental, cultural and other interests for the benefit of all people. UCUT collaborates with nearly 20,000 enrolled Tribal members, with management authority and responsibility of approximately two million acres of reservation land, 14 million acres of Aboriginal territories, over 800 kilometres of waterways, 40 interior lakes and 30 dams and reservoirs.

THINGS TO DO

Book a tour at the Twin Rivers Sturgeon and Burbot Hatchery.

*

Stay at the Kootenai River Inn Casino & Spa, owned by the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho.

*

Stay at the 40-acre Twin River Canyon Resort.

*

Visit the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge and Kaniksu National Forest.

CONTACT

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
100 Circle Drive, Bonners Ferry, ID
208-267-3519
kootenai.org

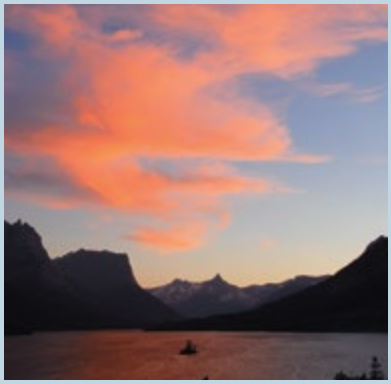
ǩupawi¢qnuk

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

ǩupawi¢qnuk is a Ktunaxa community and part of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The community is located on the southern tip of Flathead Lake within the Flathead Reservation in northwest Montana, which is also home to the Séliš—or Bitterroot Salish, also known as the Flathead People, and Qlʼispé—or Upper Pend dʼOreille, also known as the Upper Kalispel Tribe. The territory contains many prominent natural areas and preserves—including the National Bison Range, Pablo National Wildlife Refuge, Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge, Big Arm/Flathead Lake State Park and Jocko Valley, as well as the municipalities of Polson, Ronan, Charlo and St. Ignatius.

COMMUNITY FEATURES

- Three Chiefs Cultural Centre
- Kwataq̓nuk Resort & Casino
- National Bison Range
- Pablo National Wildlife Refuge
- Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge
- Big Arm/Flathead Lake State Park



FEATURE BUILDING: THREE CHIEFS CULTURAL CENTER

The Three Chiefs Cultural Center is owned and operated by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Housing original artifacts and exhibits, traditional art and crafts, cultural education and storytelling of the communities, the centre honours the rich culture of each community, Tribe and Nation. Three Chiefs is a place to experience how the Kootenai, Bitterroot Salish, Pend d'Oreille and other Tribes in the region lived before and after the Hell Gate Treaty of 1855 and the establishment of the Flathead Reservation.

→→→ **threechiefs.org**

FEATURE COMMUNITY GROUP: NATIVE AMERICA SPEAKS

Language and cultural leaders from the Kootenai, Bitterroot Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Blackfeet/Blackfoot share their cultures, histories and languages each summer through storytelling, participatory learning and song as part of the Native America Speaks program. The longest-running Indigenous speaker series in the United States National Park Service, the program was initiated in 1982 and has been a highlight for many community members, locals and visitors. Delivered in partnership with the Glacier National Park Conservancy, the events provide an opportunity for attendees to learn about the diverse Indigenous histories and cultures of the region through singing, storytelling and hands-on learning.

THINGS TO DO

Visit the Three Chiefs Cultural Center.

*

Attend a Native America Speaks event.

*

Attend the Arlee Powwow and the Standing Arrow Powwow.

*

Stay at the Kwataq̓nuk Resort & Casino.

*

Go to the National Bison Range.

*

Journey through Flathead Lake State Park.

CONTACT

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
42487 Complex Boulevard, Pablo, MT
406-675-2700
cskt.org

Photos: Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development.

Kathryn Teneese

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Kathryn Teneese is a highly respected public figure in the Ktunaxa community and amongst other Indigenous Nations, leaders and organizations. Kathryn is a member of ʔakisq̓nuk, where she formerly served as a Band Councillor and Band Manager. She was involved in the beginnings of Band governance in the late 1960s, when ʔakisq̓nuk was still known as the Columbia Lake Indian Band and had no building or office. At that time, her work and the beginnings of the Band operations were run from her kitchen table. Since this time, she has been pleased to see the development of governance at ʔakisq̓nuk and within the Ktunaxa Nation.

"I am proud that we are a small Nation of people that has been able to achieve a lot in terms of protecting our homeland and being able to work towards our vision of self-determination," she says. "We developed our Nation vision a number of years ago, and I believe we are working very diligently towards that goal."

From 1981 to 1998, Kathryn was involved in senior-level work with several provincial Aboriginal organizations based in Vancouver. Despite living away during this time, she always had a strong connection to her homeland. Currently residing in ʔa·kisk̓aqƛiʔit (Cranbrook), Kathryn is looked up to by many as a political trailblazer.

Kathryn draws inspiration from "all of those strong Ktunaxa voices that came before me, that provided guidance and strength in terms of knowing that there was a place where Ktunaxa people belonged." Having lost her parents at a young age, Kathryn's two sets of grandparents were "the steadying influence" in her life. She also notes the various people who have gone before us, and who set the intentions to bring us "as close as possible to where we were prior to outsiders interfering in our lives."

Kathryn's recent public service work includes being a member of the First Nations Summit Task Group, serving as Chair of the New Relationship Trust, and being a member of the British Columbia Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council. She continues to leave a lasting impact in Ktunaxa communities, serving as the Ktunaxa Nation Chair and spokesperson, plus as the Chief Negotiator for the ongoing treaty negotiations with Canada and British Columbia.

"The fact that we've got the opportunity to do things based on our needs and our requirements—that's relatively new. Not so long ago, we were in a place where we were fulfilling other people's thoughts of who we should be, and now we are working towards our own goals. At the same time, we know we've got a lot of things that we need to unlearn. There are a lot of things to remove from our thinking that are not ours, and we must bring our own world view back into our direction."

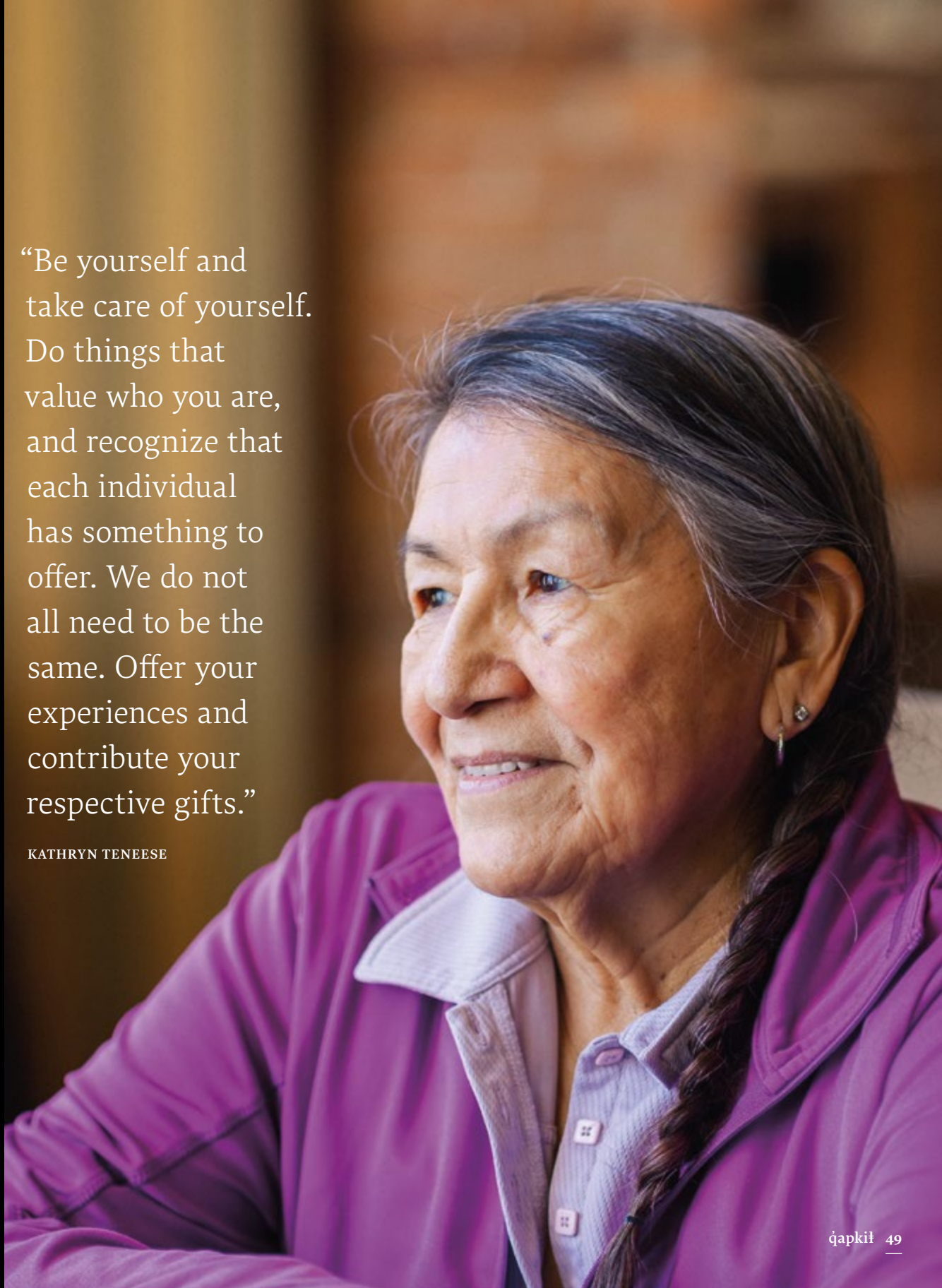
Although Kathryn describes her many accomplishments as having gone by in "the blink of an eye," she remains a role model for up-and-coming Ktunaxa change makers, emanating the Ktunaxa values of taking care of one another, respecting ʔa·kxaʔis q̓api qapsin (all living things) and upholding ʔa·knumuɬtiƛit (Ktunaxa laws).

"Our vision is something we should always be striving for. We should have a continued connection to our homeland in a way that is solidly protected from further intrusions," Kathryn says. "Our connection to our homeland extends far beyond the boundaries of 'our corrals,' as Elder Malyan Michel would say. Sometimes people limit themselves to the rez (reservation) lands."

Ktunaxa Vision Statement

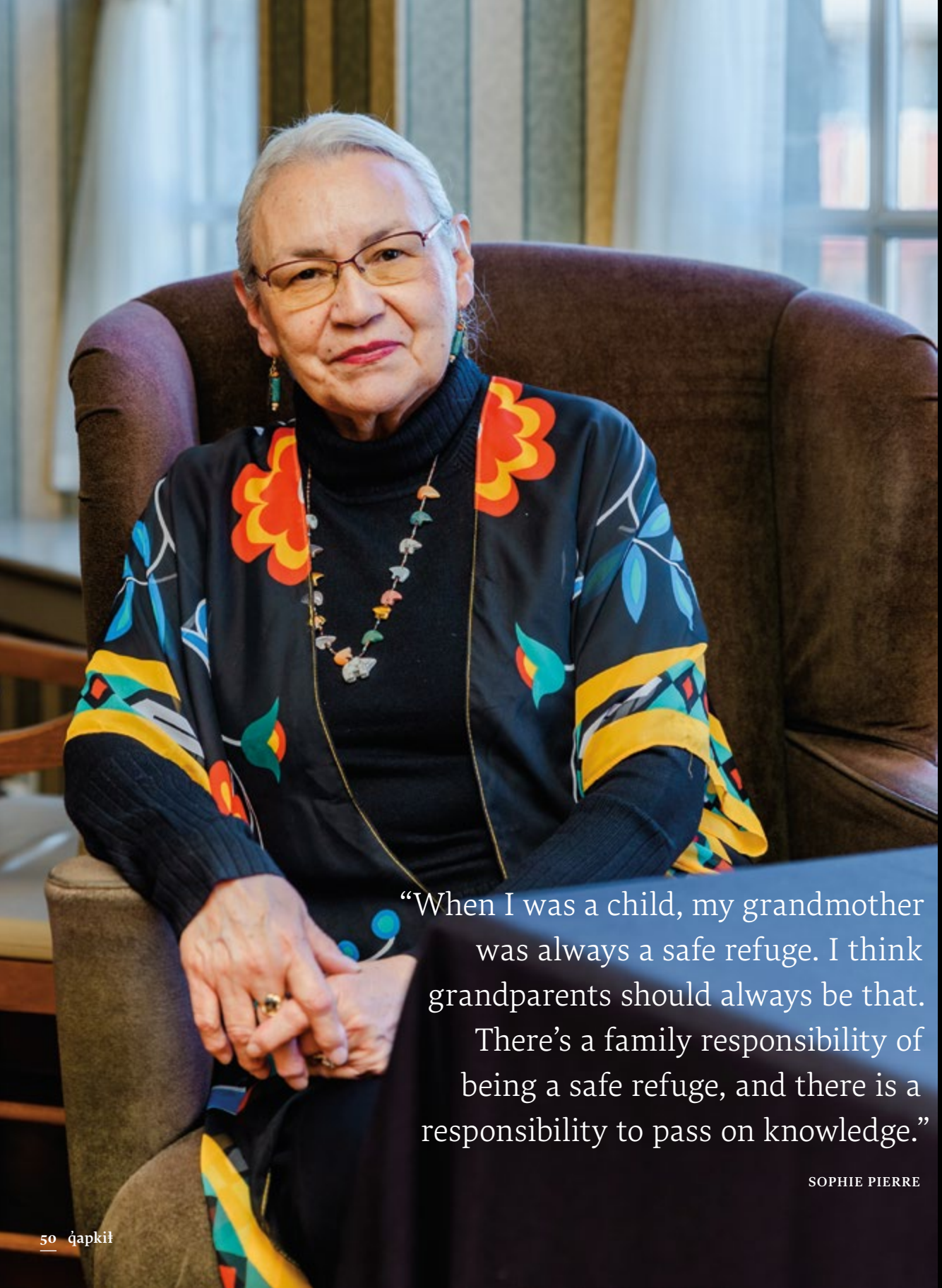
Kɬmaǩqa ksukƚuƚa·k kuǩqani ɬ ǩitqakiƚ haqa ksiʔƚ ɬxa ʔa·kƚukqaʔis ksukiƚq̓ukaʔmi·k kiʔin Ktunaxa naʔs ʔamaǩʔis. Qus piǩaksɬ naʔs ɬxaƚ yaqanakiƚ haqaʔki. Ǩitqawiɬmu kakiƚwiɬkiƚ ʔamakʔis ǩisnikɬik kɬxaƚ qa kiƚkǩaxuxami·k ǩitqakiƚ haqa ɬ ǩisʔin ʔaknumuɬtiƚʔis.

Strong, healthy citizens and communities, speaking our languages and celebrating who we are and our history in our ancestral homelands, working together, managing our lands and resources, within a self-sufficient, self-governing Nation.



“Be yourself and take care of yourself. Do things that value who you are, and recognize that each individual has something to offer. We do not all need to be the same. Offer your experiences and contribute your respective gifts.”

KATHRYN TENEESE



“When I was a child, my grandmother was always a safe refuge. I think grandparents should always be that. There’s a family responsibility of being a safe refuge, and there is a responsibility to pass on knowledge.”

SOPHIE PIERRE

Sophie Pierre

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Sophie Pierre is a Ktunaxa Elder from ʔaq̓am, near ʔa·kisq̓akɬiʔit (Cranbrook). She is known publicly as the former Chief Commissioner of the British Columbia Treaty Commission from 2009 to 2015, and as a respected figure in her community, serving close to three decades as elected Nasuʔkin (Chief) of ʔaq̓am. Sophie has spent her life working tirelessly to promote and uphold the rights of her people.

ʔaq̓am underwent significant economic and social development during her leadership, with an emphasis on sustainable resource management and community engagement.

"I am most proud of the fact that some 30 years ago, long before it came to everyone's consciousness of dealing with the Indian residential school system, that our five Bands came together and made the conscious decision to build the St. Eugene Resort as a way to take back what had been taken away. I will always be most proud of that."

Sophie is a former student of the Kootenay Indian Residential School—also known as St. Eugene Mission—and remembers that "it was a very cold and lonely place, for any child to grow up...there was no love in those buildings." Despite the negative collective experience that the residential school was for Ktunaxa people and members of Shuswap Indian Band, it was decided through a Nation-wide referendum to transform the building into a place of reclamation–a place to reclaim both economic and cultural sovereignty that our people have always known, and in turn, enabling it to be the economic and cultural success that it is today.

"There are no other resorts you can go to that have the dark history of being a former Indian residential school, where the people themselves determined on our own to take what was so negative in our past, and turn it into something beautiful and something positive for all future generations. We had no money—we had to persevere and make it happen by sheer willpower. The people came together for two years to talk about it. Every community voted on it, and every community said yes. It was our collective decision. I make sure to get that story out because I was involved from day one and feel that it is my responsibility to share our story. I am still involved to this day, with ‡kamnin'tik, the newly formed Indian residential school society."

‡kamnin'tik: Children's Truth and Reconciliation Society is an organization created and driven by Ktunaxa Nation citizens and Shuswap Indian Band members to promote and support truth and reconciliation through cultural and educational programming throughout the territory. ‡kamnin'tik is a grassroots organization initiated by and for residential school and intergenerational survivors to support each other, their families and communities; to share their truths and create a better future for the upcoming generations.

"There are two reasons we have created the society. The first reason is that it is internal for ourselves, for former students and descendants to do the healing that is necessary, because it still needs to be done, and the second reason is for public education–to ensure the information gets out there, and that it becomes a part of the whole experience when a guest comes to St. Eugene."

Sophie's significant contributions to public service and Indigenous governance over the years have earned her several honours and awards. She was recognized with the Order of Canada in 2016 and received the Order of British Columbia in 2002 and the National Aboriginal Achievement Award in business in 2003.

Sophie has also received three Honourary Doctorates of Law over the years–from the University of Canada West in 2010, the University of British Columbia in 2012

"I am most proud of the fact that some 30 years ago, long before it came to everyone's consciousness of dealing with the Indian residential school system, that our five Bands came together and made the conscious decision to build the St. Eugene Resort as a way to take back what had been taken away. I will always be most proud of that."

"When things get to be unreachable, I get stressed, or am feeling like I am not accomplishing something, I think about my grandfather Francois Eustace, he was known as Chief Eustace. I often think about him. He was born before Indian reserves were created, and he died in 1953 when he was in his late 80s. He had been our Chief for maybe 40 years and he didn't speak any English."

SOPHIE PIERRE

and Simon Fraser University in 2020. Renowned for her commitment to First Nations economic development, Sophie was recognized as one of the top 50 most influential women in British Columbia by BC Business Magazine.

"In the lifespan of work that I have done—almost 45 years—there have been so many people who have been an inspiration. When things get to be unreachable, I get stressed, or am feeling like I am not accomplishing something, I think about my grandfather Francois Eustace, he was known as Chief Eustace. I often think about him. He was born before Indian reserves were created, and he died in 1953 when he was in his late 80s. He had been our Chief for maybe 40 years and he didn't speak any English.

"He was a really hard worker. He cared and worked hard for the people. To do that, with the struggles that he had, is just so much greater than all of the struggles that we have today. The perseverance that my grandfather had...we are where we are today because of our grandparents and great grandparents, because they never gave up. Everything they did, they were preparing for us, and now my generation...we are always preparing and working for the next generation."

In addition to her political contributions, Sophie has played a critical role in maintaining and preserving Ktunaxa language, culture and traditions, ensuring the younger generation knows the importance of carrying forward Ktunaxa values and principles.

"I am very cognizant of the fact that I had something very special. I had the privilege of growing up as an only child, and because of that I was always with adults, always listening. That is how I was able to retain the language. I went to the residential school for nine months out of every year, but for the other months of the year, I heard nothing but Ktunaxa by listening to all the adults around me. I have a huge responsibility in making sure that everything I was taught, it wasn't taught for me to keep to myself, it was taught for me to pass on."

As a grandmother, Sophie recognizes her role in passing on knowledge and being a safe person to come to, at all times. "When I think of grandparents, I always think back to my own personal experience. When I was a child, my grandmother was always a safe refuge. I think grandparents should always be that. There's a family responsibility of being a safe refuge, and there is a responsibility to pass on knowledge. That is incredibly important. We formed the Indian residential school society so that we can help each other as former residential school students. We can help each other pass on knowledge, not just the story of what happened to us, but pass on the knowledge of our grandparents. When we look at the words 'traditional knowledge', take away the word 'traditional'—it is knowledge and it is our tradition to pass on knowledge. It is knowledge whether it goes back to our ancient traditions or not."

ǂkamnin'tik: Children's Truth and Reconciliation Society

The ǂkamnin'tik Children's Truth and Reconciliation Society promotes truth and reconciliation through cultural and educational programming, driven by Ktunaxa Nation citizens and Shuswap Indian Band members who are residential school and intergenerational survivors. The society offers a wide array of cultural and educational experiences designed to advance truth and reconciliation and build understanding through programs, courses, workshops and more, all designed by Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The society is based out of the St. Eugene Resort, located near Cranbrook, BC.

VISION

A world of unity, respect and understanding of Ktunaxa Nation and Shuswap Indian Band cultures, histories, languages and futures.

MISSION

Bring Indigenous inspiration and innovation into every engagement, and do everything possible to expand knowledge of Indigenous cultures and histories.

PRINCIPLES

We are guided by the Seven Grandfather Teachings in all we do: Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Honesty, Humility and Wisdom.

ACTIONS

- Encourage understanding and education of the histories and cultures of the Ktunaxa Nation and Shuswap Indian Band people.
- Support the ability of survivors and intergenerational Kootenay Indian Residential School students to share their truths and create a better future for their children.
- Advance the truth and reconciliation of Canada with First Nations and our people.
- Promote the cultures and languages of the Ktunaxa Nation and Shuswap Indian Band family.

ǂkamnin'tik
Childrens Truth and Reconciliation Society

→→→ To learn more about ǂkamnin'tik, or to become a member, visit **tkamnintik.com.**

“You have to believe in yourself, and always make sure you are grounded in your culture’s values and principles. Always speak the truth even if you know you are going to stand alone.”

CHERYL CASIMER / ʔAQŁSMAKNIK PIĆAK PAŁKIY

ʔaqłsmaknik pi¢ak pałkiy Cheryl Casimer

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Cheryl Casimer is a prominent member of the Ktunaxa Nation and a respected political executive of the First Nations Summit. She has dedicated her career to advocating for Indigenous rights and self-determination, ensuring that their voices are heard at the highest levels of government.

A member of ʔaq̓am, Cheryl had a childhood that was much different than it is for children today. "I grew up on wild game, lots of canning and no electricity or running water. We had a cellar behind our house where we would store our canned foods. I was tasked with getting them from behind the house. It helped shape who I am today in terms of being independent and strong. To grow up without having the necessities we have today made you a stronger person."

Her political career began when she was elected as a councillor of ʔaq̓am, a position she held for several years. She notes that establishing relationships with neighbouring governments was a key element of being on council, "trying to get them to understand where we were coming from, and that we are not just a community outside of municipal boundaries–an island not to be seen or heard–but rather to become involved in their processes and have them come take part in ours. It was a lot of relationship building when I was on council."

When her time on council came to an end, Cheryl reflected on her goals and aspirations. "Serving my community was my life. When it ended, I sat back and thought, how am I going to be useful? I saw there were elections happening at the First Nations Summit. I doubted myself, but I thought 'I will never know unless I try'. I won. That was nine years ago–I am now going into my fourth three-year term. When complete, it will be 12 years of involvement."

"I tried to do everything, which eventually led me to burnout. I want to build capacity, and try to create space for other leaders, young leaders and women leaders to be effective in their roles."

A major achievement has been Cheryl's involvement in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, both provincially and federally. She worked on the development of the National Action Plan, which aimed to ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples were respected and protected. She also supported the alignment of law related to the declaration, which consisted of thousands of laws provincially and federally. By ensuring that these laws are consistent with the declaration, she has supported the cause of upholding and respecting Indigenous People's rights across the province.

Cheryl also sits on the In Plain Sight task team, which is responsible for working on health-related legislation and shining a light on systemic racism within the health system. Through its efforts, recommendations from the In Plain Sight report have been successfully implemented. She is also working on poverty reduction legislation in the province, an issue that affects many Indigenous communities.

"You have to believe in yourself, and always make sure you are grounded in your culture's values and principles. Always speak the truth even if you know you are going to stand alone."

Cheryl Casimer is a committed and dedicated leader who has made significant contributions to the advancement of Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia. Her tireless efforts and dedication to these issues have been instrumental in driving positive change and ensuring that the voices of Indigenous communities are heard and respected.

"My biggest inspiration is my grandchildren—they are my biggest inspiration to always do better for them."

Codie Morigeau

Kiʔsuk kyukyit, hu qakɬik Codie Morigeau. Hu ṅini Ktunaxa. My name is Codie Morigeau. I am Ktunaxa. On my Ktunaxa side I am the daughter of Betty Andrew, granddaughter of Theresa Andrew and great granddaughter of Baptiste and Adelaide Andrew. My father was Michael Stang and my stepfathers are Leroy Hunt and Michael Shottanana. I am wife to Tenadore Morigeau and a mother of four children and two grandchildren. As Ktunaxa we are all kin, we are all related and interconnected, we have deep connection and responsibility to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and ʔakxaṁis ḳapi qapsin. I have recently been gifted the opportunity to serve Ktunaxa People as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC). As with all things from a Ktunaxa world view, my roles are highly integrated. My passion for the work I do for the Ktunaxa People is based in my duty to make all efforts to protect and build a future for my children, grandchildren and their families, and the Ktunaxa generations to come.

FINDING MY PATH

Like many Indigenous people, I struggled in my early academia, having to move into an alternative education program to complete my grade 12. It was not that I did not have the intelligence or focus for schooling–rather I needed to learn to teach my teachers how I best learn. I began working for the KNC in 2001, as an executive assistant. I worked all sorts of roles with the KNC over the years, with the last 10 years being in senior management. I love our people and I love the future we are striving to create for not only our children and grandchildren, but also the Ktunaxa generations to come.

I spent nearly 20 years at the KNC focusing my attention on education and employment. Lifelong learning is a Ktunaxa value that I have always walked. While I was in the Education and Employment Sector at the KNC, I found great joy in knowing that we provide services that support Ktunaxaniṅtik to fulfill their personal goals and potential. I remember telling youth who were at a crossroads in their lives to just do something so that you are continuing to open new doors and your personal potential. Time will keep passing and the starting line will move further away from your goals otherwise. That is when I decided I had better follow my own advice to get my master's degree, as my own goalpost kept moving further away.

"I love our people and I love the future we are striving to create for not only our children and grandchildren, but also the Ktunaxa generations to come."

WE ARE ALL "ELDERS-IN-THE-MAKING"

In 2018, I decided it was important to take the next step in furthering my education and set a path to obtaining my master's degree. It was important to me that this journey would be as meaningful as possible knowing the time and support I would be needing to take away from my family. I have always wanted to learn more about Ktunaxa culture and ways of being but had little opportunity to learn from Ktunaxa Knowledge Holders as I grew up away from my community.

In 2020, I graduated from the Royal Roads University Master of Arts in Leadership program. This educational journey was rooted in my desire for deeper Ktunaxa and western teachings that could enhance my ability to work for our people. My thesis was entitled "Ktunaxa Traditional Knowledge: Building Ktunaxa Capacity for the Future." It is based on the premise that we are all Elders-in-the-making.

I am forever grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from Anne Jimmie, Robert Louie Sr., Marie Nicholas, Alfred Joseph, Kay Shottanana and Sophie Pierre. They were generous teachers, sharing with me what they know and teaching me how to reciprocate that to others. At times, I did not want my thesis to end as I continued to experience the feeling of euphoria, as their stories and lessons opened and expanded my mind and heart. As stopping time was not an option, I found myself settling into the idea that this was not coming to an end, but rather was just a beginning for me. The concept that we Ktunaxa are all Elders-in-the-making is now how I approach every day, every moment, and every Ktunaxa.

“I remember telling youth who were at a crossroads in their lives to just do something so that you are continuing to open new doors and your personal potential.”

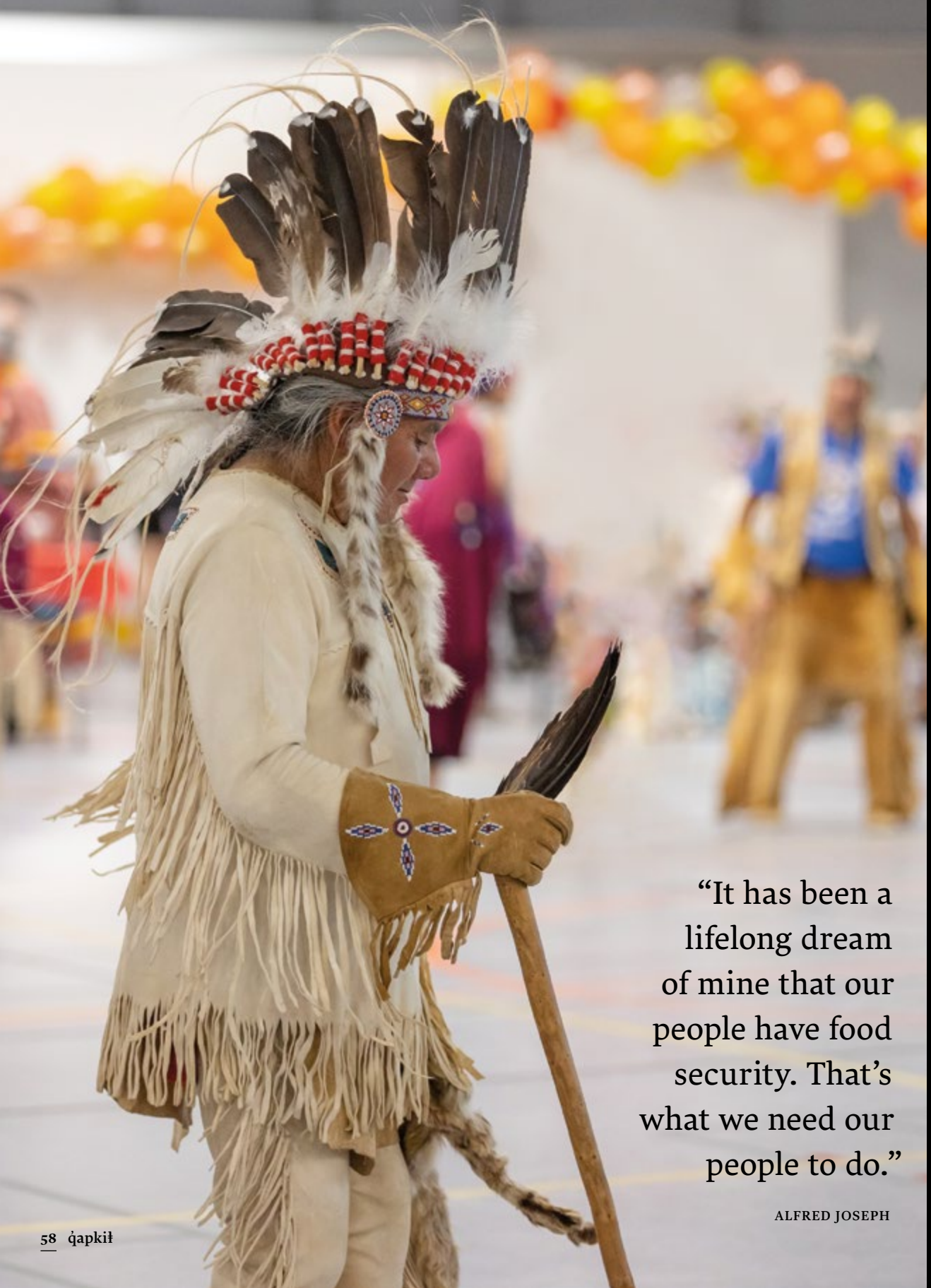
CODIE MORIGEAU

The learning we did together has instilled in me a stronger Ktunaxa foundation that is based on showing love and kindness to all Ktunaxa people, and to seek to build a stronger future for Ktunaxa generations to come. I have been gifted the opportunity to continue to learn Ktunaxa spirituality and ceremony from Nasu?kin Jason Louie, and these opportunities have been the most fulfilling experiences for me. Integrating both Ktunaxa and western teachings will help us launch forward into the future for the generations to come.

I encourage everyone to seek opportunities for Ktunaxa teachings–Ktunaxa Elders and Knowledge Holders are keen to share and teach what they know to those who want to learn and respect the discipline of our practices and ceremonies. Be courageous–let an Elder or Knowledge Holder that you feel comfortable with know that you would like to learn, and ask if they would be willing to help teach you.

Today I am not afraid to ask my cultural leaders “can I come?” I now realize how many Ktunaxa are willing to say “yes, join us, you are welcome.” I would like to thank my Elders and Knowledge Holders for the teachings and experiences they have provided me through safe spaces to be vulnerable. These precious moments and teachings are cornerstones for me as I walk this journey to learn what it is to be Ktunaxa. You have taught me that, first and foremost, acceptance is a Ktunaxa value. It makes us strong and protects our future.

I am forever grateful to those who have contributed to my life and journey.



"It has been a lifelong dream of mine that our people have food security. That's what we need our people to do."

ALFRED JOSEPH

Alfred Joseph

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Alfred Joseph is a respected Elder from ʔakisq̓nuk. He is known for his love of the outdoors and sharing his knowledge with the next generation. A past Chief of ʔakisq̓nuk, Alfred is passionate about preserving the Ktunaxa language. He has been teaching the language on and off for over 40 years and, although he didn't grow up speaking Ktunaxa, he was always listening.

"The only words I knew were when I would hear Mom and Dad talk a little bit, or Auntie would talk. But they would never talk to us. They would talk with Granny, or their mom, or with each other. I would just listen and that's how I learned the language. When I first started speaking, I sounded like I was six or eight years old.

"Back in the day, it was our grandmother and our parents who basically said, 'Get off the reserve,' because they were thinking, in order to make it in this world, you had to get off the reserve and join the bigger society—which was a way of making the Ktunaxa disappear. I think that's why they never pushed the language, because they figured we would never use it. They were two generations that went to the Mission and they could see that suyapi (white people) were increasing in numbers here."

"When people would talk, I would make a point of answering in Ktunaxa."

Alfred also attended the Kootenay Indian Residential School, now commonly known as St. Eugene Mission. He is part of a generation of Ktunaxa Elders who are linguistically known as "silent speakers" because they may have a good understanding of their language, but do not speak it. "When I was growing up, we never answered in Ktunaxa, we answered in English. We never practised the language at all through speaking."

Reflecting back, Alfred shares that he has always been interested in the language. "In 1972, when we first got our Band office, we had a little trailer there. Old Alice White would be bawlin' the heck out of us in Ktunaxa–when we were speaking only English she would say, 'Why you guys talkin' like that? You shouldn't be talking like that—learn your language.' And Marie Nicholas, every time she would hear me in the room, she would start talking to me in Ktunaxa and I wanted to reply to her in Ktunaxa. When people would talk, I would make a point of answering in Ktunaxa."

Since that time, Alfred has been involved in a number of language groups that would last a few years at a time, some running out of the Band hall and some running out of his own home. The groups would rise and fall with engagement from learners, as well as with the passing of fluent speakers. Now he teaches a class every Tuesday night online, a practice initiated during the pandemic, which has allowed Ktunaxa language learners to access the language from all different locations. "It is time that our Bands and our Ktunaxa Nation Council change their focus, to realize what's important and focus on the language."

Along with language, Alfred's vision for the future of Ktunaxa people is of self-sufficiency and food security. Alfred lives on a small ranch on the ʔakisq̓nuk Reserve, where he raises chickens, cattle and horses and spends his time hunting, fishing and guiding. He wants to see our communities return to the old ways of growing our own food, being self-sufficient and not relying on grocery stores or the food bank.

"All of our members should be producing enough food to support the food bank, rather than being supported by the food bank. Every house in our community should have a garden, and if they don't want to do a garden, then they pal up with someone else and they can help with the weeding or something. It has been a lifelong dream of mine that our people have food security. That's what we need our people to do."

Alfred wishes to see the younger generations take hold of Ktunaxa principles of accepting and helping one another, and leave behind the things that are not helping our communities, like drugs and alcohol. "They need to have a vision for a better life. Our communities need to focus on this and put some money towards dealing with it. The younger people that are on drugs and alcohol need to talk, and be honest, and say why they are using it. Not that we are going to judge them, just that we need to know what is the problem. What is the cause of it? Drugs and alcohol are the first thing that people have to let go of. Once the younger generation sees that, I think they'll switch from those things that are not helping our people to the things that are helping."

Eldene Stanley

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Eldene Stanley of the Ktunaxa Nation is a respected member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, where she works in Aboriginal Policing. She is known for her dedication to keeping her community safe and her passion for health and fitness.

A member of ʔakisq̓nuk, Eldene moved to Cranbrook when she was a child. She graduated from Mount Baker Secondary School and quickly pursued her dream of joining the RCMP. She began her career as an auxiliary police officer with the RCMP from 1987 to 1990, and then began depot training in Saskatchewan. Being physically fit, Eldene was totally in her element. "I played a lot of sports growing up. I was a fastball player, a hockey player, and I did track and field. Being from ʔakisq̓nuk, that's what you do quite young—lots of sports."

Eldene believes that a strong body equals a strong mind. She encourages her community to lead healthy lifestyles, emphasizing the importance of staying active and taking care of oneself. She is a role model for Ktunaxaniṅtik, showing them that they can achieve anything they set their minds to. "Health is the number one thing we ask the Creator for. We want to grow old and be healthy, have bright white hair, good health, a strong body and a strong mind. Without our health we have nothing."

"Health is the number one thing we ask the Creator for. We want to grow old and be healthy, have bright white hair, good health, a strong body, and a strong mind. Without our health we have nothing."

As a junior constable with the RCMP, Eldene worked long hours, often overtime, holidays and long weekends. Her first posting was in Dawson Creek, a 12-hour drive from Cranbrook. Upon returning to Cranbrook, Eldene started out with general policing duties and highway patrol before she moved in to Aboriginal Policing. In this role, Eldene has loved being able to work with youth; it has also allowed her to stay connected to her culture and community. She has been involved in the Aboriginal Policing Summer Student Program, Ktunaxa Running Club, Ktunaxa Boot Camp and Ktunaxa Nation Dance Troupe–born from her vision to bring traditional beliefs into everyday contemporary living.

"I started dancing powwow in my twenties. The first time I competed at a powwow, I placed third. After that, I was hooked. People mentored me along the way, and I kept going and going. I upgraded from my beginner regalia, to a more contemporary-style regalia. I eventually stood out as a fancy dancer, placing first in competitions. When I became an RCMP officer, dancing was put on the back burner. I was a new police officer and when you're new you have no extra time."

Despite the demands of working in the RCMP, Eldene has remained committed to her health and fitness, running and training to stay in shape. "When I was younger I liked to do 10-kilometre races and half marathons. Now, I do five- to 10-kilometre races." Eldene has started doing sprint triathlons–swimming 750 meters, followed by cycling and a run.

"I was doing a triathlon in Coeur d'Alene and it took me 40 minutes to swim 750 metres. The waves were over my head. Water is a spirit...it is so powerful. If we don't respect the water, it can take your life. The story of Wasa tells us this...those teachings are so important. I went to the water, offered my tobacco. Told it who I am and why I was there. I asked it not to hurt me. That kind of storm hadn't happened in 90 years."

Eldene went to the World Police Fire Games in August 2023. "I am in it to be in it. It is a privilege. I run for Ktunaxa, and I run for those who can't...a lot of people are grieving right now—I think about them too. It's not about the race, it's about being together."

“I run for Ktunaxa, and I run for those who can’t...a lot of people are grieving right now—I think about them too. It’s not about the race, it’s about being together.”

ELDENE STANLEY

Yaqnukat

Banff National Park

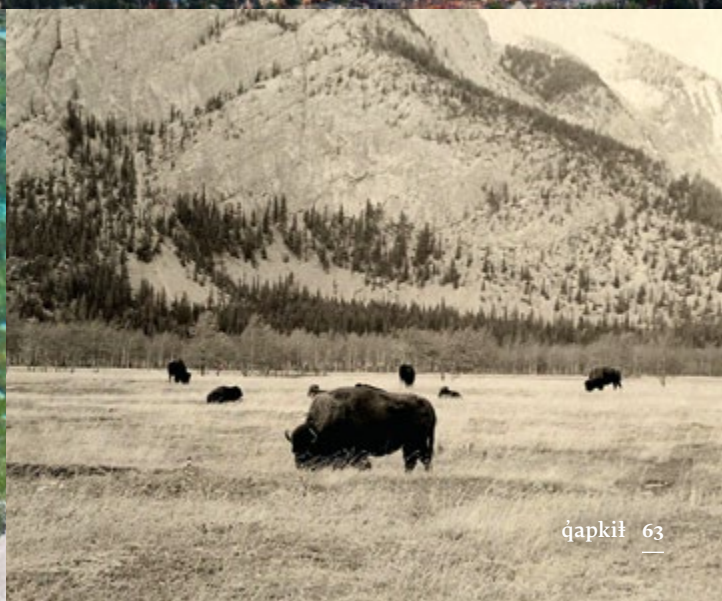
Yaqnukat—the area of Banff National Park—was Canada's first national park. Before it was created as a national park in 1885, it was an area well used for travel, trade, harvest and ceremony by the Ktunaxa, Stoney Nakoda (Bearspaw, Wesley, Chiniki), Blackfoot (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), Secwépemc, Tsuut'ina, Cree, and others.

Connecting with the territory of Kyawaʔama – Land of the Grouse (Kootenay National Park) and Ktunaxa homelands in the East Kootenay, the area of Yaqnukat was an essential part of the seasonal migration routes for the Ktunaxa. Meeting in the area that is now known as Banff National Park, many First Nations and Indigenous people were able to trade items from further west, like swaq̓mu (salmon), oolichan oil and berries, for prairie foods like Kamquq̓ukuɬ ʔiyamu (bison).

The creation of Banff National Park at Yaqnukat restricted travelling, hunting, harvesting and trading by the Ktunaxa and other Nations in the area, and coincided with the creation of the reserve system, travel pass system and Indian Act. In the park, hunting by Indigenous people was prohibited beginning in 1890.

Ḵutmik (hot springs) at the Cave and Basin played a significant part in the desire to create the park. The area of the park also contains one of the longest and most complete collections of sedimentary rocks in the world, including the Burgess Shale. The area of Yaqnukat contains the headwaters of the Bow, Red Deer and North Saskatchewan rivers. Banff National Park is one of seven parks that form the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site, as designated by UNESCO.

Yaqnukat – Banff
Ḵutmik – Hot Springs
Swaq̓mu – Salmon
Kamquq̓ukuɬ ʔiyamu – Bison



ʔamakʔis Miɂqaqas

Glacier National Park

Glacier National Park—found in the northern portion of ʔamakʔis Miɂqaqas—is in the centre of the Selkirk and ʔkuẏamina (Purcell) mountain ranges. Located in close proximity to Ktunwakanmituk Miɂqaqas – Land of the Chickadee (area of Mount Revelstoke National Park) Glacier includes the location of the final connection point of the cross-country Trans-Canada highway at the Rogers Pass Historic Site. Glacier was one of BC's first national parks, established in 1886 at the same time as Yoho National Park.

Together with Mount Revelstoke National Park, Glacier is situated between Nałmuqɂin ʔakuẏuɬiʔit (the Rocky Mountains) to the east and what's known as the "interior dry plateau" to the west. The natural territory contains interior old growth ʔiɂnaẗ (cedar) and namłasuk (hemlock) rainforests, ḱisiɂqał (alpine spruce), nisnap (fir) and endangered ẏanłaẗana (whitebark pine), as well as unique subalpine meadows. Due to its climate—which is warmer than the Rockies to the east—and its significant precipitation, the area is known to contain more tree species than many other regions in the province.

Nałmuqɂin ʔakuẏuɬiʔit – Rocky Mountains
Ẏanłaẗana – Whitebark pine
ʔiɂnaẗ – Cedar
Namłasuk – Hemlock
Ḱisiɂqał – Alpine spruce
Nisnap – Fir
Ḱustiḱ – Western larch, Tamarack

ʔamakʔis Ya·kɬi·ki

Jasper National Park

Jasper National Park is the largest of the parks within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, located on the northern edge of ʔamakʔis ʔaknuqɬułaḿ – Land of the Eagle (Yoho National Park). Established as Jasper Forest Park in 1907, it received national park status in 1930.

Ya·kɬi·ki (Yellowhead Mountain and Pass) was an important Ktunaxa seasonal hunting and harvesting route. The territory was shared with other Nations, who would frequent the territory or live there seasonally, including the Anishinabe, Aseniwuche Winewak, Dane-zaa, Nêhiyawak, Secwépemc, Stoney Nakoda and Métis Peoples.

The Ktunaxa would travel to the area of Jasper National Park through Ḱunanuqɬiʔit (Kootenay Plains) from the general areas of ʔaknuqɬuk (Golden), Kyawaʔama – Land of the Grouse (Kootenay National Park) or Yaqnukat (Banff).

Jasper contains several colonial national historic sites, including Athabasca Pass, Jasper House, Jasper Park Information Centre, Maligne Lake Chalet and Guest House, and Yellowhead Pass. Jasper is part of UNESCO's Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site.

Ya·kɬi·ki – Yellowhead Mountain and Pass
Sina – Beaver
Kiɬq̓aɬɬi – Elk

Kyawaʔamak

Kootenay National Park

Ktunaxa have used the area known as Kyawaʔamak – Land of the Grouse for generations to gather, harvest, practise ceremony, hunt, trade and more. Kootenay National Park was established in 1920 as part of an agreement between the federal and provincial governments to build Highway 93 South, previously known as the Banff-Windermere Highway.

The park ranges from the Continental Divide icefields to the upper Columbia Valley, including alpine, subalpine and montane ecoregions. It offers an important ecological link between the Columbia and Bow valleys in Alberta and shares boundaries with Yoho and Banff national parks and Mount Assiniboine Provincial Park. The Vermilion and upper Kootenay Rivers are important headwaters of the Columbia River watershed and were essential travel corridors for the Ktunaxa.

The park contains many areas of importance to Ktunaxa history and culture, with many namesakes taken from Ktunaxa language or historical uses, such as Kakyuɬki (area of Radium) and ƙutmik (hot springs), yakyuɬki (Paint Pots), Ochre Creek, Numa Falls, Redstreak and Vermillion Crossing.

The Ktunaxa would travel seasonally through the area on route within ʔamakʔis ʔaknuqłułaḿ – Land of the Eagle to what is now known as Yoho and Banff national parks, and further north to Ƙunanuqłiʔit (Kootenay Plains) and Ya·kłi·ki (Yellowhead Mountain and Pass) within the area known as Jasper National Park.

This part of Kyawaʔamak—now called Kootenay National Park—is home to kławła (grizzly), nupqu (black bear), q̓uq̓ni/ƙuq̓ni (lynx), ʔaɬpu (wolverine), ka·kin (wolf), kyanukxu (mountain goat), kwiłqłi (Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep), niɬnapku (moose), kiłq̓aɬłi (elk) and ɬupqa (mule deer), as well as westslope cutthroat qustiƙ (trout) and tuhuł (bull trout). It is also the most northern location of rubber boa ʔa·knułaḿ (snakes), found near kakyuɬki ƙutmik (Radium Hot Springs). Over 180 species of birds have been recorded in the park, which also provides important subalpine habitat for endangered q̓anłaƭana (whitebark pine) and open forest and grassland habitat for the endangered American badger.

Kakyuɋki – Radium
K̓utmik – Hot springs
ʔakmakana – Big Vermillion Creek
Yakyuɋki – Paint Pots / Where clay was found
KyaknuqtiʔitK – Invermere

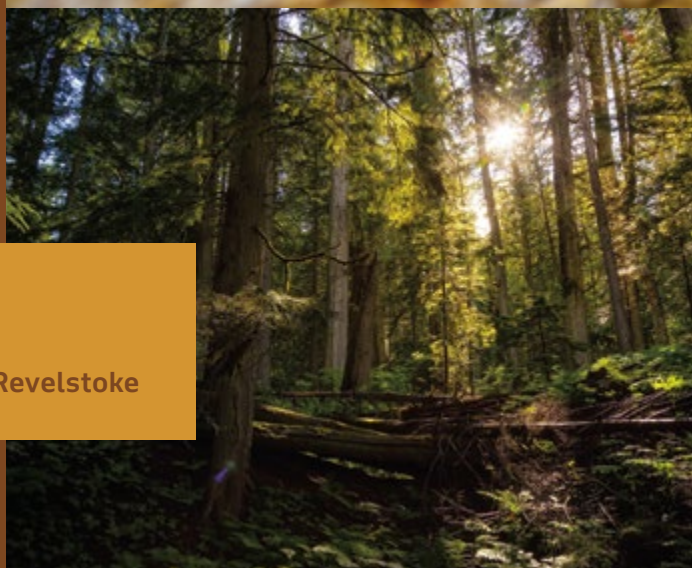
Ktunwakanmituk Mi̓ɂqaqas

Mount Revelstoke National Park

In the northern part of ʔamakʔis Mi̓ɂqaqas – Land of the Chickadee is Mount Revelstoke National Park. Established in 1914, it sits in close proximity to the city of Revelstoke and is found in an inland temperate rainforest within the Selkirk Range of the Columbia Mountains. The Columbia mountain ranges also include the ʔkuu̓yamina (Purcell), Selkirk, Cariboo and Monashee.

The terrain includes old-growth ʔi̓ɂnaʔ (cedar) and namłasuk (hemlock) forests, subalpine meadows with beautiful summer wildflowers, distinct rugged mountainous zones and rare wetlands. The areas of Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks support a band of old-growth forests that extend from the United States border north to Wells Gray Provincial Park.

Subalpine meadows in the park are filled with bright colours in August and contain wildflowers such as glacier lily, paintbrush, monkeyflower, lupine and fireweed. kławła (grizzly bear), naxni (caribou), kyanukxu (mountain goat), white-tailed ptarmigan and many more species all live in the park area.



ʔkuu̓yamina – Purcell mountain range
ʔamakʔis Mi̓ɂqaqas – Land of the Chickadee
Ktunwakanmituk Mi̓ɂqaqas – Territory near Revelstoke

ʔamakʔis ₵aṁna

Waterton Lakes National Park

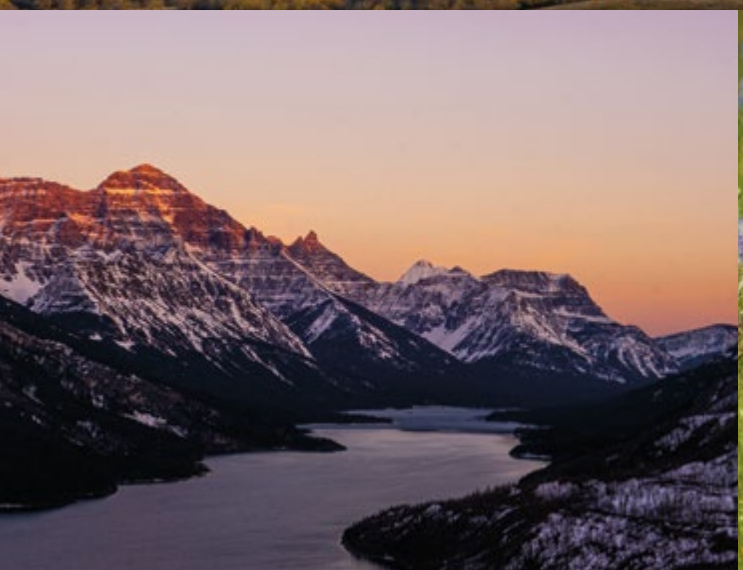
Sitting on the eastern edge of ʔamakʔis ₵aṁna – Land of the Wood Tick, Waterton Lakes National Park was established in 1895 and constitutes half of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Ktunaxa historically hunted and harvested in this area alongside the Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) and other Nations.

The park is connected to what is known as the Crown of the Continent ecological landscape, where five distinct ecological regions meet: foothills parkland, montane, lower subalpine, upper subalpine and alpine. The area of Waterton Lakes National Park contains over 1,000 plant species across grasslands, shrublands, wetlands, forests and alpine areas, as well as many seasonal wildflowers. Nearly 175 of these plant species are rare or not found elsewhere in Alberta or across Canada.

Hundreds of archaeological sites have been identified in Waterton Lakes National Park. The vast majority are Indigenous sites, including ceremonial sites, harvesting and fishing camps, bison drive lanes and more. The area contains a portion of ʔakhaqałuq·unqa ʔaǩamina, the South Kootenay Pass route that the Ktunaxa travelled during their annual harvesting, hunting and trade journeys.

The Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park was included on the World Heritage list in 1995 for its ecological processes and scenic beauty. Waterton Lakes National Park and Glacier National Park were both recognized as the International Dark-Sky Association's first International Dark Sky Parks, for their renowned night skies and night-sky viewing opportunities. Waterton Lakes National Park forms the core area of the Waterton Biosphere Reserve, established in 1979. The park also contains two colonial national historic sites: the first oil well in western Canada and the Prince of Wales Hotel.

ʔakhaqaɬuq·unqa ʔaǩamina – South Kootenay Pass
ʔamakʔis ¢aṁna – Land of the Wood Tick
Nupqu – Bear



ʔamakʔis ʔaknuqłułam

Yoho National Park

Within the territory of ʔamakʔis ʔaknuqłułam – Land of the Eagle, the area of Yoho National Park has been used for generations by the Ktunaxa as a route north and east from the Columbia River and through the Rockies as part of seasonal travels for hunting, harvesting and ceremony.

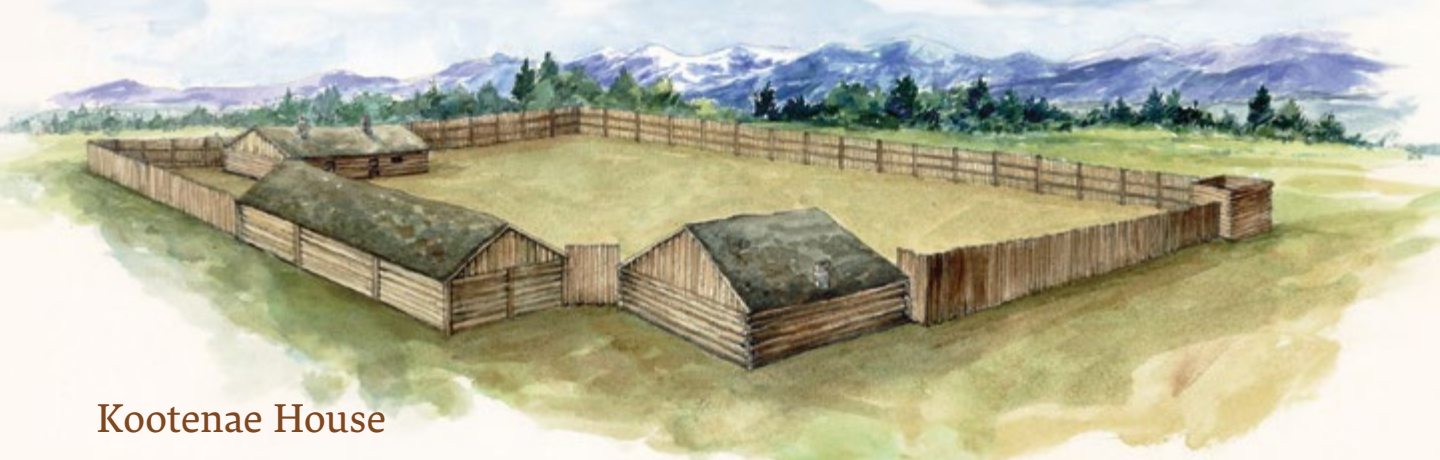
The Kicking Horse River winds its way through Yoho and is a main tributary of the upper Columbia River watershed and is designated as a Canadian Heritage River. The travel route now known as Howse Pass was significant for the Ktunaxa, through to the plains from the Columbia River valley.

Yoho National Park was established in 1886. Burgess Shale fossils are found within national parks sites, including Yoho and Kootenay. These fossils preserve soft-bodied marine organisms said to have existed about 500 million years ago. The Burgess Shale fossil site found in Yoho was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980. This UNESCO site was expanded in 1984 and 1990 to include seven other parks that now form the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site.

The Ktunaxa are currently actively engaged in a unique aquatic reclamation project within the park, in collaboration with Parks Canada.

ʔamakʔis ʔaknuqtułam – Land of the Eagle
ʔaknuqtuk – Golden
Sina ʔakɬik ʔakinmituk – Beaverfoot River

Howse Pass, 1902.



Kootenae House

Just prior to 1800, the Ktunaxa travelled to Fort Edmonton to establish a trade relationship with the North West Company. This relationship resulted in David Thompson travelling to Ktunaxa territory numerous times and establishing the Kootenae House trading post near ʔakisq̓nuk to further develop this trading relationship. Built in 1807, Kootenae House was the first trading post in the Columbia Basin, established at the confluence of Toby Creek and the Columbia River, northwest of ʔakisq̓nuk and north of Invermere near Athalmer. It is now a national historic site of Canada.

Kootenae House was a place of gathering and trade until about 1812 when it closed due to hostility from the Ktunaxa's eastern neighbours the Peigan. Survival skills, salmon, furs, horses and other items were traded for tools and other materials. The Ktunaxa played a vital role in keeping the early explorers alive during unprepared winters in the territory. Kootenae House then became a launching point for David Thompson as he surveyed and mapped the Columbia and Kootenay river systems.

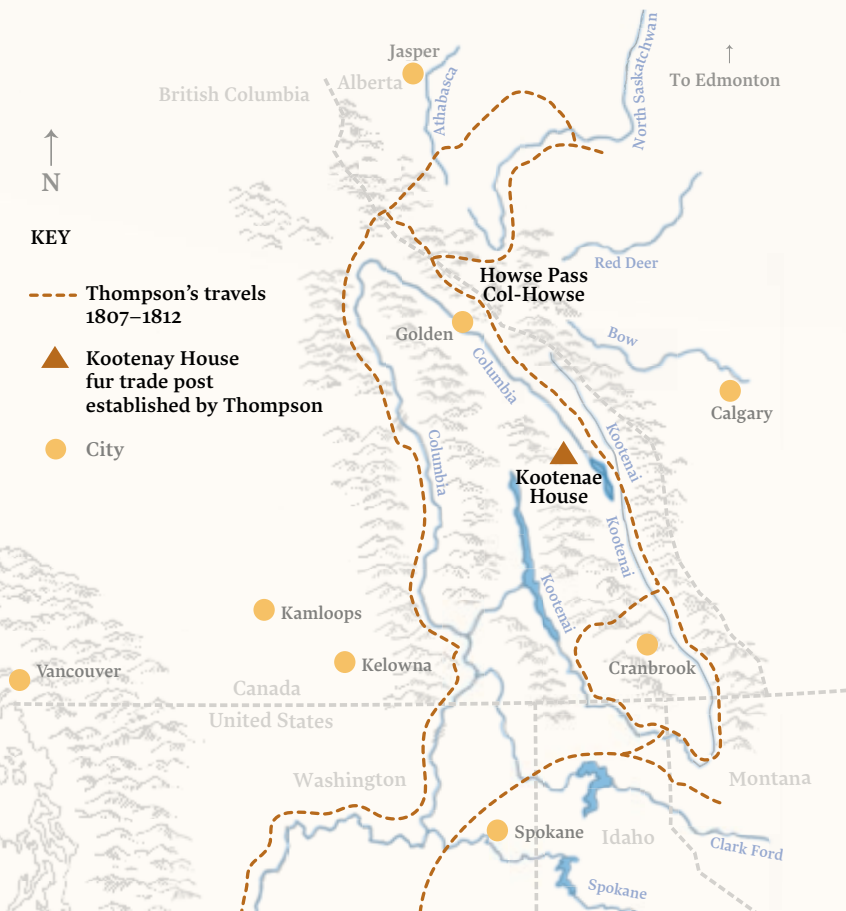
As newcomers arrived in Ktunaxa territory and began claiming lands and resources, Ktunaxa people were displaced from participating in the economy within and surrounding ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. The lands were being taken, gold and other minerals were being extracted in unsustainable quantities, and the Ktunaxa were exiled to Indian reserves under the rule of the Indian Act—legislation that still impacts the lives of Ktunaxa today.

HISTORY OF KTUNAXA BUSINESS

We acknowledge the lands and resources of our ancestors, and the prosperity that has been granted to us through the richness and diversity of our homelands that—through our language, legends and stories—have seen our ancestors prosper throughout our history.

There is a misconception that Ktunaxa are not business people. This misconception was enhanced by the systemic exclusion of Indigenous people from participating in the economy. Ktunaxa people know our strong economic environment predates the arrival of the newcomers.

The archaeological record documents evidence of extensive trade networks between Tribes throughout North America, and the Ktunaxa were no different, travelling east to trade with prairie people such as the Blood, Pikani and Kainai Tribes; west to connect with Okanagan and Salish communities; and north to trade with the Secwépemc and others.



Yawuʔnikʼ Kootenayi

In 2015, paleontologists announced they had identified a newly found marine creature fossil that lived in Kyawaʔamak – Land of the Grouse within Ktunaxa territory near Marble Canyon. Named Yawunik Kootenayi after Yawuʔnikʼ from the Ktunaxa creation story, and Kootenayi after the region, the creature is about 10 centimetres long, has two pairs of eyes and "prominent grasping appendages." It is estimated to have lived as much as 508 million years ago.

Identified by a team from the University of Toronto, the Royal Ontario Museum and Pomona College in California, this was the first new species identified in the Marble Canyon site, located in Kyawaʔamak, south of the internationally renowned Burgess Shale formation in Yoho National Park.

Internment Camps in the Parks

During World Wars I and II, internment camps were established across the country to detain people considered "enemy aliens" of Canada. The term "enemy alien" referred to people from, with roots in, or having passports of countries that were at war with Canada. During the First World War, this included immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, Germany and Bulgaria; during the Second World War, this included people with Japanese, German and Italian ancestry.

Four camps were located in the National Parks of Banff, Jasper, Yoho and Mount Revelstoke. Internees worked as forced labour in the parks on roads and infrastructure, developing tourist facilities, cutting trails and doing other projects, like building a portion of the golf course in Banff National Park.

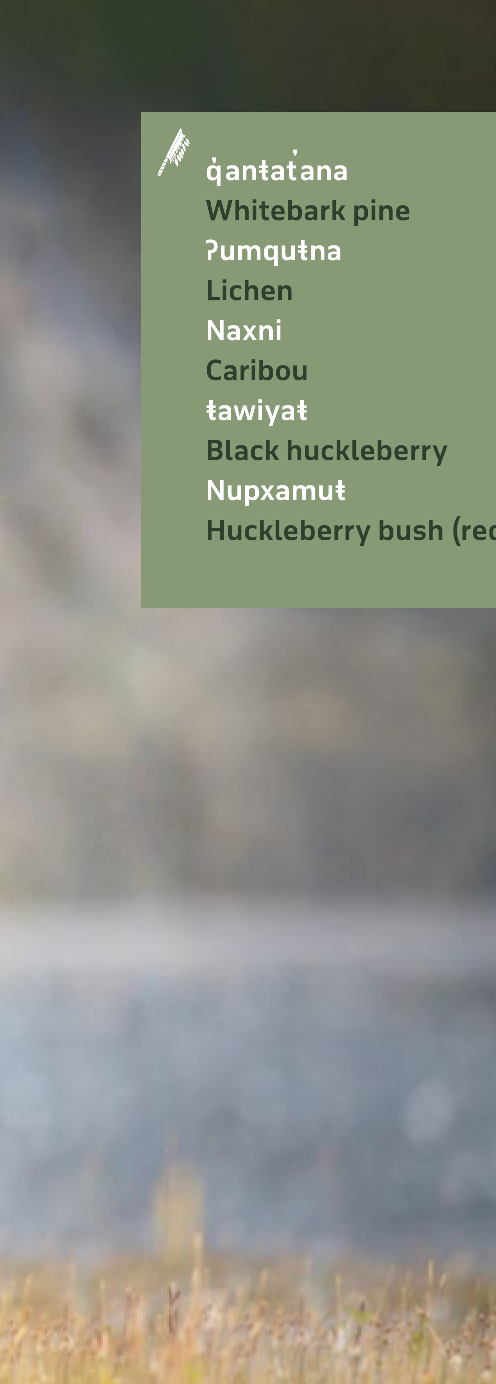
Above: Mount Revelstoke internment camp. Photo: Revelstoke Museum & Archives.
Above-right: Otter internment camp, Yoho National Park. Photo: Library & Archives Canada.

Mount Revelstoke National Park and the Ktunaxa

Troy Hunter

Parks Canada / Mindy Skinner.

Kootenay Lake Historical Society.



q̓anłat̓ana
Whitebark pine
ʔumqułna
Lichen
Naxni
Caribou
ławiyał
Black huckleberry
Nupxamuł
Huckleberry bush (red)

The Ktunaxa place name for the area of Revelstoke is Ktunwakanmituk Miȼqaqas – Land of the Chickadee. Mount Revelstoke National Park has become the western gateway to Rogers Pass. In historic times, the Ktunaxa had an immense wealth of knowledge of every valley in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and were capable of long-distance travel—from the prairies to the far reaches of the Columbia. This included voyaging into Ktunwakanmituk Miȼqaqas, which was likely a rendezvous or meeting place of the Tribes.

The park is adjacent to the Columbia River and close to what was known as "Death Rapids." For the Ktunaxa, those rapids were not just formidable, they were deadly and had to be avoided by using the portage method. It also seems that the Death Rapids were a natural geological barrier that may have somewhat divided the Secwépemc on the north and the Sinixt and Okanagan on the south, with both sides often fighting each other.

In addition, the Upper Ktunaxa were known to pass by Ktunwakanmituk Miȼqaqas when going down the Columbia to places such as Beaton, Halcyon Hot Springs (Big Medicine) or Nakusp, usually in their dugout canoes, while the Lower Ktunaxa and others used the sturgeon-nosed canoe. Likely they would have been carrying loads of dried bison and buffalo robes on trading and gambling expeditions to neighbouring Tribes.

The Ktunaxa would have also used Ktunwakanmituk Miȼqaqas for hunting and gathering from time to time. The last caribou in the park was moved to another herd on March 28, 2023, as it had no chance of survival where it was. For the Ktunaxa, caribou were so abundant that if any Ktunaxa person wanted one, they would just harvest it—but the Ktunaxa were always careful to not hunt them too much for they were tame as cows and even grazed alongside Ktunaxa teepees at their hunting camps. Caribou made some of the choicest soft white buckskin that the Ktunaxa were famous for.

There is also medicine that grows in the park that the Ktunaxa used, as well as huckleberries. Q̓anłat̓ana (whitebark pine) was used by the Ktunaxa—today it is considered an endangered species. Many of the usual tree species that the Ktunaxa used for sturgeon-nosed canoes are found in the park, including white pine, cedar, birch and maple. Additionally, lichen—which caribou eat—was used by the Ktunaxa to form a pit-cooked kind of moss bread.

The Ktunaxa also used Kootenay argillite, which has a source south of Ktunwakanmituk Miȼqaqas, with some also showing up at the Gap in southwest Alberta, almost 500 kilometres distant.

The Ktunaxa were both salmon and buffalo people—and much more—who travelled far and wide, not just for sustenance but for economic purposes.

The Pass

Troy Sebastian | nupqu ʔakɬaṁ

When I was a kid, my family was on the road every summer. During these long drives, I lived in the back seat of our Ford Granada while Mom and Dad rode up front, switching driving duties for snacks and naps. This was in the late 1970s and early 1980s during the "seatbelts recommended" era of highway driving that was as commonplace then as it is unbelievable today. The back seat was my home on the long drives we took across our territory–ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. There, I could imagine Star Wars, GI Joes, dinosaurs, Napoleon and all sorts of other places that kept my mind in the world of my imagination and off the long drive.

We drove everywhere. Our trips would take us to Lethbridge powwows, Wycliffe rodeos, hot springs in Radium, Fairmont and Banff. We drove over the Rogers Pass to and from the Okanagan so many times I knew exactly when the avalanche tunnels began. I made sure I was awake for the sudden darkness that would take our car. In that darkness, I would imagine we were travelling through space—and in a way we were. We travelled across the whole world, every summer–as a family, we were roadrunners.

I distinctly remember the first time I knew we were in Kootenay National Park. I could not believe my eyes, seeing bighorn sheep on the side of the highway, completely indifferent to us and every other passing vehicle. Here, the mountains were right upon us. The summer heat was intense yet beautiful. But it wasn't the natural beauty of the climate or the vibrancy of the wildlife that stuck in my mind—it was how we were treated.

As we approached the park entry gate, I could feel Dad's tension rise and my mom's concern was clear. This is where park visitors are required to pay for a park pass. Even today, a park pass is required for all visitors who want to camp and use Kootenay National Park. The staff asked us to pay for a pass. My dad refused. He said, "This is our land. Why should we pay for a park pass? You should pay us."

ġapkikiɬtikna'tit
To walk all over, to travel all over the country

Eighty years after the end of the reserve pass system, we continue to face another pass system.

My dad refused Parks Canada's demands. We were Ktunaxa and this was our land. The park staff didn't see it that way and insisted we had to pay. My dad refused and we drove on without giving them a dime. As we drove off from the park entry gate and continued into Kootenay National Park, it felt like we were under watch, that our movement was noted and that we had passed a threshold. I was no longer dreaming in the back seat. I could see and feel the world of the front seat. These feelings were not without precedent.

The park pass was not the first pass Ktunaxa have been forced to deal with. Canada administers the Indian Act, a federal legislation that establishes laws pertaining to "Indians, and lands reserved for Indians." For decades, Canada operated the reserve pass system as part of the Indian Act. This law required any status Indian to have a pass signed by a government agent to leave the reserve. The pass systems became law in Canada in 1885, the same year that Banff National Park was established. Canada forced our people, through the Northwest Mounted Police and its successor, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to stay on reserve and to only leave with an approved pass issued by the Indian Agent—a government official. When the pass system ended in 1941, my dad was 17 years old.

The staff asked us to pay for a pass.

My dad refused.

He said, "This is our land. Why should we pay for a park pass? You should pay us."

I can only imagine what life was like under a system of law that restricted our movement, in our own territory, as Indigenous people. The thought of it alone is both deeply saddening and infuriating. I feel my dad's frustration at being faced with another pass system, one that required him to pay to access lands that have always been Ktunaxa's.

Then, as today, there is no treaty between Canada and the Ktunaxa on the use of our territory ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. As a result, Parks Canada operates through the colonial erasure of Ktunaxa title and rights to the land, as though the Ktunaxa have no rights to the land whatsoever.

The truth is that Kootenay National Park is ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. There is no formal or legal agreement between the Ktunaxa and Canada for the use, sale or occupation of Ktunaxa lands. And yet, the Ktunaxa must pay to use and access our own country. Eighty years after the end of the reserve pass system, we continue to face another pass system.

During our drives my family stopped everywhere—at park stops, lookouts, motels, hotels, camping grounds, this reserve or that, from ʔakisq̓nuk to Head of the Lake. We covered a lot of ground. There were so many places to visit and people to see. No matter where we were, we were tied to Ktunaxa territory and never far from home. Thinking back on it now, this was just common practice for the Ktunaxa: to travel when the snow and ice had melted and our beautiful land was easier to travel. But there is a deeper truth here. I am amongst the first generations of Ktunaxa who never faced the restriction of the Indian Agent and the reserve pass system. When we grew up, we were allowed to leave the reserve freely without the restriction of the government of Canada.

I think of my dad and all of the Ktunaxa from that era, those who had to live under the reserve pass system, those who routinely faced discrimination and hostility for leaving the reserve. I think of where life will take us, of what is possible and what still needs to change. Will there be a time when the Ktunaxa can freely travel in our own territory without having our movement restricted by the government of Canada? Will we, as Ktunaxa, be able to visit Kootenay National Park, a park named after Ktunaxa Peoples, and not have to pay for a pass? When will our rights and title be recognized in our own territory?

Perhaps one day we can tell a different story about the park. Until then we keep driving. Keep visiting our relations. Keep telling our stories as Ktunaxa people. We carry on. Staying strong as ever. Proud to be Ktunaxa.

ʔaq̓a‡k̓aʔxuʔ‡ – Area cut for a line
Kqa·ɬin – Walk
Hu‡ ʔasna‡a – Let's go together

Introduction of a Border

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the continent was being divided and segregated by colonists such as Britain, the United States, France, Russia and Spain. Like other Indigenous Nations, Ktunaxa communities and people were caught in the middle of the ambitions of empires and the many issues that came with the desires for land, resources and fortune.

The Treaty of 1818 was signed in the United Kingdom and established the boundary between British North America and the United States along the 49th parallel from Minnesota to the Rocky Mountains. North of this boundary and west of the Rockies, Ktunaxa and other Indigenous territory was now considered shared territory among the two colonizing powers.

The influx of American and British settlers brought many issues to Ktunaxa territory. The search for natural resources—including metals like gold, silver, zinc and other ores—attracted newcomers, who also brought with them racism, exclusion, violence and disease.

After tensions escalated in the territory for all parties—especially the Ktunaxa and other Indigenous Nations—British North America and the United States signed the Oregon Treaty in 1846, establishing a border crossing through Ktunaxa territory that would split the Nation, communities and families.

The community of Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi ‘it, also known as Tobacco Plains, is located directly north of the border that now divides Canada and the United States. Each year the community hosts its annual border walk, where members of the Nation and communities on both sides of the border come together to walk across the line—a reminder to officials that the history of the Nation and its territory predates the establishment of colonial boundaries.

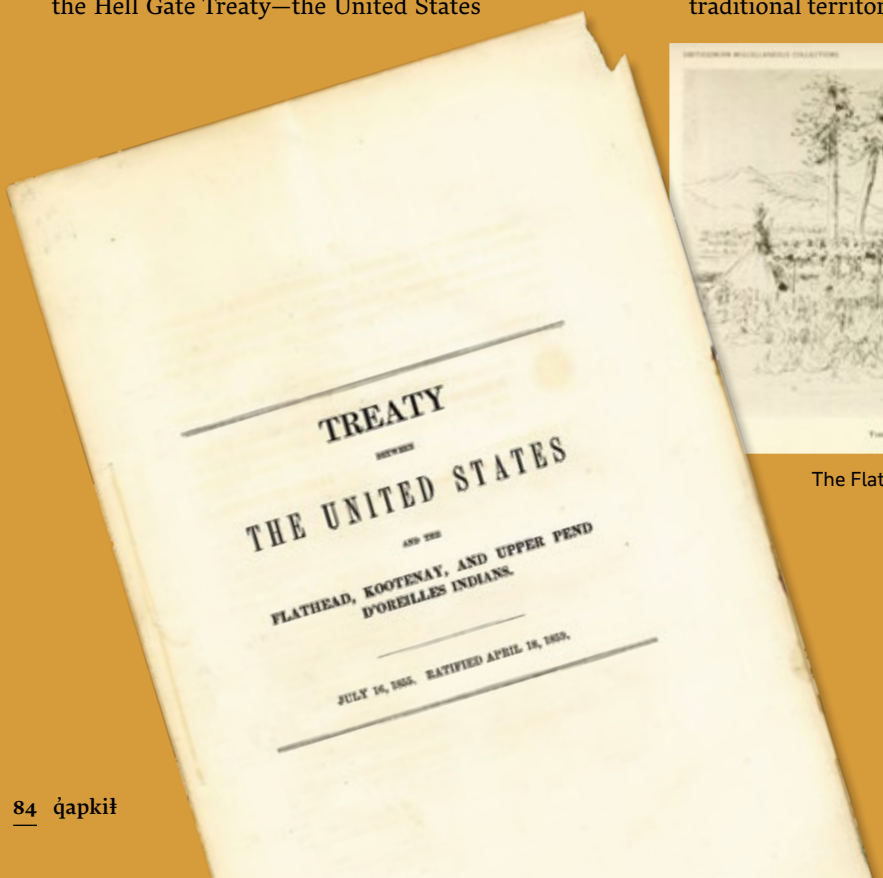
The Hell Gate Treaty of 1855

In 1853, the United States was attempting to divide and establish boundaries around the colonial settlements of Montana, Washington and Oregon. At the same time, the United States continued an aggressive policy of removing Indigenous communities from their traditional territories. In 1855, United States administrators attempted to consolidate all the Indigenous communities in what is now considered western Montana, including the Kootenai/Ktunaxa; Séliš – Bitterroot Salish/Flathead; and Qlʼispé – Kalispel/Upper Pend d'Oreilles tribes, alongside other communities in eastern Washington.

Negotiators on behalf of the United States considered all of these communities to be of one single Nation, and appointed one Chief as a leader of all of the communities collectively, creating an unequal divide amongst the Nations. In spite of opposition to the plan to combine the culturally separate Nations into one reservation, and poorly translated terms of a treaty—known as the Hell Gate Treaty—the United States pushed forward the terms of the treaty and the creation of the Flathead Reservation, requiring each Tribe and Nation to now live within the reservation boundary.

The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho did not travel to the signing of the treaty, but were considered by the United States administrators to be bound by it. Despite this assumption, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho never left its traditional homelands on the banks of the Kootenai River in Northeast Idaho near Bonners Ferry.

Millions of acres of traditional territory was taken from each community. Even with the initial disproportionate terms in the treaty, the United States dishonoured the agreement with the further annexation of land in 1908–09, by taking territory for the creation of the National Bison Range. Paying $1.56 per acre at the time, the decision was eventually considered unconstitutional and reparations were paid, although no amount would ever truly compensate for the dislocation of Tribes from their traditional territory.


TREATY

BETWEEN

THE UNITED STATES

AND THE

FLATHEAD, KOOTENAY, AND UPPER PEND D'OREILLES INDIANS.

JULY 16, 1855. RATIFIED APRIL 18, 1859.

The Flathead Treaty Council, July 1855. Gustav Sohon.

GENERAL ALLOTMENT ACT OF 1887: THE DAWES ACT

In 1887, the Unites States government unilaterally drafted and implemented a scheme to further annex Tribal territory through an attempt to make Indigenous Peoples into agrarian agricultural communities. The General Allotment Act of 1887—commonly known as the Dawes Act–was responsible for dividing up reservations into privately held land allotments based on age and family status. The Act essentially converted the reservations into a government-imposed structure of private property and individualistic pursuit. It also attempted to further divide Tribal people based on their "Native-ness" according to government policy.

After the system of reservation land tenure was changed, Tribes were able to sell previously allotted lands into private ownership. However, before this could take place, the United States government needed to determine which Tribal members were eligible for allotments, based on their "Indigenous-ness," constructed on cultural heritage. The result was a significant loss of land for Tribes across the country, which wedged a divide between community members now no longer a part of the Tribe, based on government policy.

In 1904 the Flathead Allotment Act was passed, which allowed for the survey and allotment of reserve territory without consent of the Tribes. Later the Flathead Irrigation Project was created with a claim of encouraging Tribal members to move to an agrarian lifestyle. However, while the Tribes paid for the irrigation, non-Tribal farmers were seen as the primary beneficiaries of the infrastructure. After the Indian Reorganization Act was passed in 1934, Tribal governments were finally given the freedom to create their own governance entities, which resulted in the creation of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

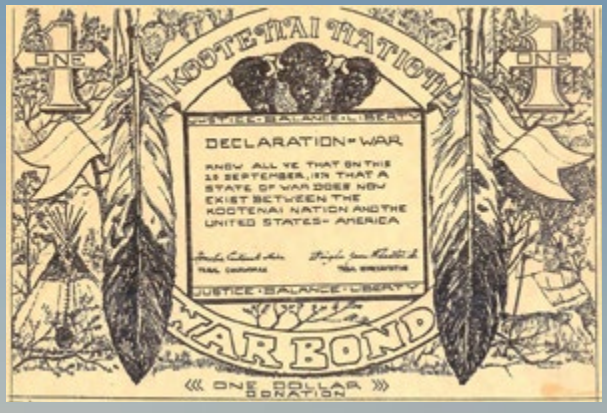
THE WAR OF 1974

As a result of the Hell Gate Treaty and Dawes Act—together with many years of challenges related to social, economic, health, housing and other determinants of health—members and leadership of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTI) were ready to put pressure on the United States government to change the social conditions of their community.

In 1960, the Tribe was awarded $425,000 in a land-claims settlement for the territory lost from the Dawes Act implementation. With conditions worsening in the community and no clear signs of improvement, in September of 1974 the KTI declared war against the United States.

Initiated as a way to draw national and international attention to the conditions of the community and the dishonour of the United States government through the Hell Gate Treaty and Dawes Act, the declaration was considered a "war of the pen" with no intent to engage in formal conflict.

Eventually, the KTI was deeded 12.5 acres of land at the mission in the heart of its territory near Bonners Ferry. This was the beginning of recognition and the creation of a formal land base that the Tribe could build from. Now with over 2,500 acres of land, the KTI consider this a turning point for the community.



Kootenai Tribe of Idaho 1974 War Bond.
Image: Boundary County Historical Society & Museum.

Photo: Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development.

Reclaiming and Restoring Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes operate and manage an essential habitat for Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu (bison) in their territory, located in the centre of the Flathead Reservation. The 18,766-acre National Bison Range is co-managed by the Tribes and the United States Fish & Wildlife Service as a National Wildlife Refuge.

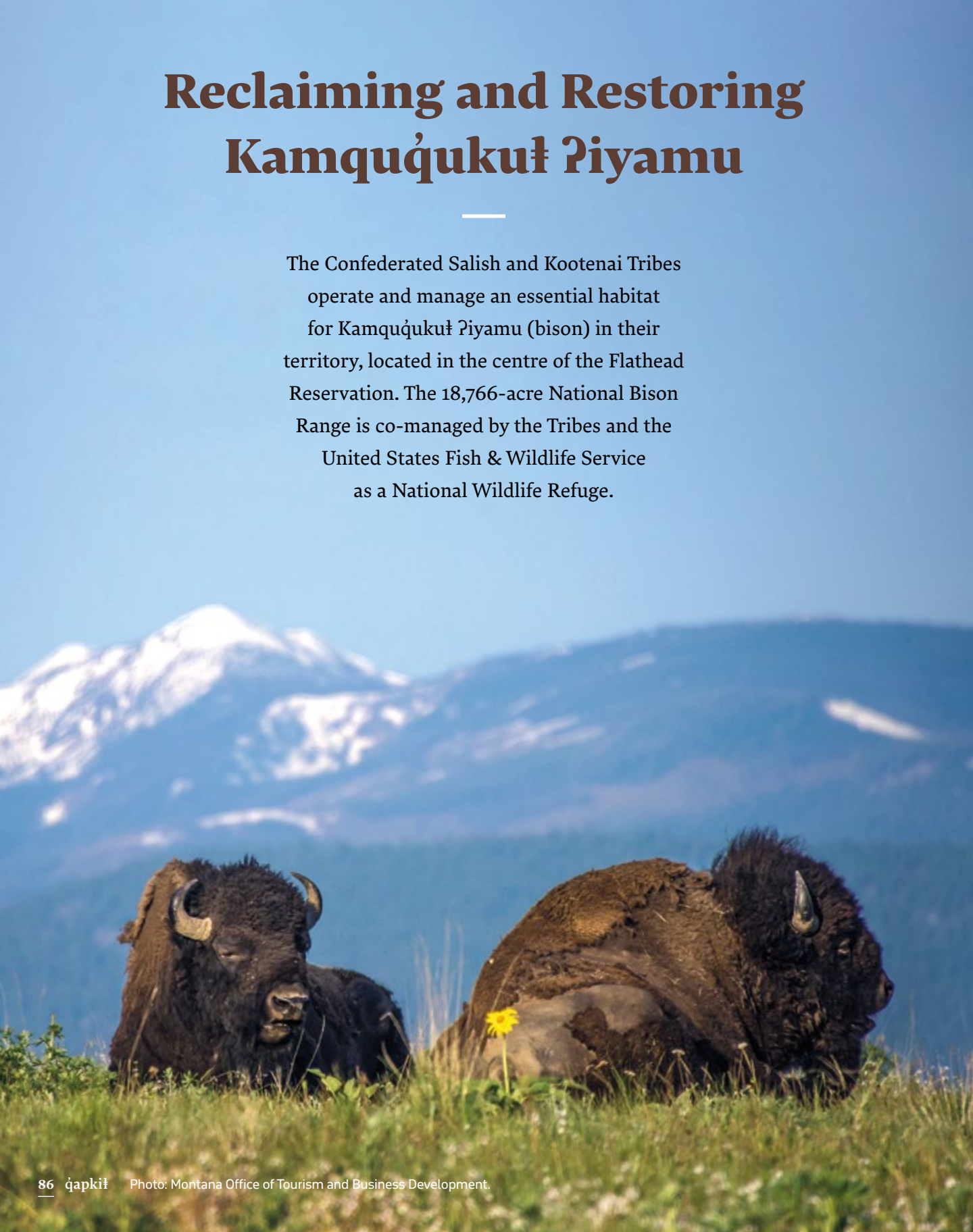


 Photo: Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development.

In the 1870s, the continental population of Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu had been dangerously impacted after decades of cumulative effects, including overhunting and intentional eradication. During this period, a small number of plains bison calves had been brought to the Flathead Reservation, historically attributed to a Ql'ispé – Kalispel Tribal man named Samuel Walking Coyote. Over time, the numbers steadily increased into a small herd.

These Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu were eventually acquired by Michel Pablo and Charles Allard, two part-Indigenous men who continued to graze the Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu at Flathead. Pablo and Allard bolstered the herd by acquiring and introducing Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu from other herds across the continent, including the territories near what are now Kansas, Texas and Saskatchewan.

This group of plains Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu became commonly known as the "Pablo-Allard herd"—now renowned within preservation and conservation circles and said to have genetically supported many other Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu herds now grazing the continent.

Despite promises signed as part of the Hell Gate Treaty of 1855, including establishment of the Flathead Reservation boundaries for the Kootenai/Ktunaxa, Séliš-Bitterroot Salish/Flathead and Ql'ispé-Kalispel/Upper Pend d'Oreilles Tribes, in the early 1900s the United States government annexed millions more acres of Tribal land, including the land that is now the National Bison Range (NBR).

After losing grazing territory due to government interference and the death of Charles Allard, the Pablo-Allard herd was sold to the Canadian government and moved north, initially to Elk Park (later Elk Island National Park) west of Edmonton and then on to Buffalo National Park (later Wood Buffalo National Park) in what is now northern Alberta.

In 1908 the United States government then decided to establish the NBR and needed Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu. Members of the Pablo-Allard herd and its descendants were able to be brought back to populate the NBR. Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu from the Pablo-Allard herd were also taken to Yellowstone National Park to support repopulation efforts there in the early 1900s.

Between 1994 and 2016, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) pursued a new relationship through a partnership agreement with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service to steward and manage the NBR. The Tribal Self-Governance Act and other agreements led to the eventual shared management of the NBR, with the first self-governance agreement for the NBR signed in 2004.

Some resistance from government officials over the years resulted in the partnership ending, being revived, and ending again. Eventually, formal legislation for co-management of the NBR was incorporated into the Montana Water Rights Protection Act, which was signed into law in December 2020. Considered unique in the United States, the CSKT now manages all or part of the NBR's cultural and educational programs, as well as fire safety and other roles and responsibilities on the NBR.

The CSKT Natural Resources Department also established and manages the 91,000-acre Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness, the first Tribally designated wilderness area in the United States. Supporting species-at-risk in CSKT territory—such as bighorn sheep, peregrine falcons and trumpeter swans—the Tribes also manage the Little Money Bighorn Sheep Special Management District and Ferry Basin Elk Special Management District.

Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu – Bison/buffalo

The Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu (Buffalo) Treaty

On September 24, 2014, a coalition of Indigenous Nations collaborated and gathered together to sign a treaty to honour, cooperate, renew and restore Kamquq̓ukuł ʔiyamu, or buffalo, to their rightful place on the land.

Signed on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, the Nations and Tribes present included the:

Blackfeet Nation

Kootenai and Salish Tribes of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Reservation

Kainai/Blood Tribe

Siksika Nation

Piikani Nation

Assiniboine and Gros Ventre Tribes of Fort Belknap Indian Reservation

Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of Fort Peck Indian Reservation

Tsuut'ina Nation

Over time, more and more Nations, Tribes, councils and supporting institutions and organizations have signed on to the treaty. This includes the Ktunaxa Nation, which, in May 2018, signed on to the treaty during the annual treaty meeting when it was hosted by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

In addition to the excerpts on the next page, the treaty also includes articles on conservation, culture, economics, health, education, research, and partnerships and supporters.

→→→

Find out more and about how you can participate at **buffalotreaty.com.**

 Photo: Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development.

Creator gave us many gifts and teachings to survive this world. One of those teachings is everything is interrelated. In the Indian practice, the interrelated world is realized through Treaty-making with all my relations.

RELATIONSHIP TO BUFFALO

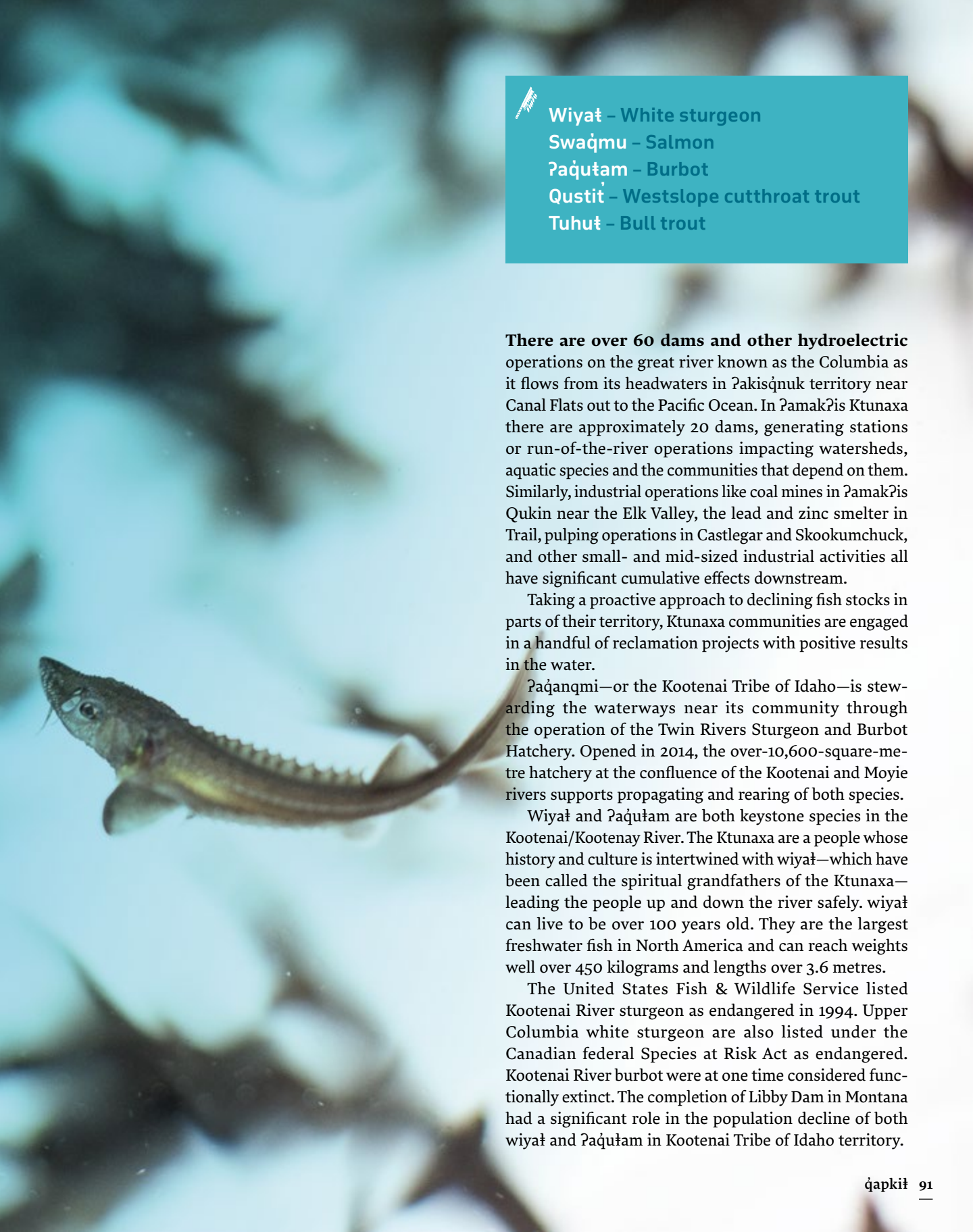
Since time immemorial, hundreds of generations of the first peoples of the FIRST NATIONS of North America have come and gone since before and after the melting of the glaciers that covered North America. For those generations, BUFFALO has been our relative. BUFFALO is part of us and WE are part of BUFFALO culturally, materially, and spiritually. Our on-going relationship is so close and so embodied in us that Buffalo is the essence of our holistic eco-cultural life-ways.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE TREATY

To honor, recognize, and revitalize the time immemorial relationship we have with BUFFALO, it is the collective intention of WE, the undersigned NATIONS, to welcome BUFFALO to once again live among us as CREATOR intended by doing everything within our means so WE and BUFFALO will once again live together to nurture each other culturally and spiritually. It is our collective intention to recognize BUFFALO as a wild free-ranging animal and as an important part of the ecological system; to provide a safe space and environment across our historic homelands, on both sides of the United States and the Canadian border, so together WE can have our brother, the BUFFALO, lead us in nurturing our land, plants and other animals to once again realize THE BUFFALO WAYS for our future generations.

Ktunaxa Reclaiming and Stewarding the Health of Waterways

The impacts of colonization through the effects of settlement, industrial and other forms of pollution, and the creation of dams and other water diversions have had a negative influence on the health of waterways within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa over time. The population of a number of aquatic species—in particular keystone species in the territory like swaq̓mu (salmon), wiyaƚ (white sturgeon), ʔaq̓uƚam (burbot), qustiƛ̓ (westslope cutthroat trout) and tuhuƚ (bull trout)—have all been significantly impacted.



Wiyaƚ – White sturgeon
Swaq̓mu – Salmon
ʔaq̓uƚam – Burbot
Qustiƛ̓ – Westslope cutthroat trout
Tuhuƚ – Bull trout

There are over 60 dams and other hydroelectric operations on the great river known as the Columbia as it flows from its headwaters in ʔakisq̓nuk territory near Canal Flats out to the Pacific Ocean. In ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa there are approximately 20 dams, generating stations or run-of-the-river operations impacting watersheds, aquatic species and the communities that depend on them. Similarly, industrial operations like coal mines in ʔamakʔis Qukin near the Elk Valley, the lead and zinc smelter in Trail, pulping operations in Castlegar and Skookumchuck, and other small- and mid-sized industrial activities all have significant cumulative effects downstream.

Taking a proactive approach to declining fish stocks in parts of their territory, Ktunaxa communities are engaged in a handful of reclamation projects with positive results in the water.

ʔaq̓anqmi—or the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho—is stewarding the waterways near its community through the operation of the Twin Rivers Sturgeon and Burbot Hatchery. Opened in 2014, the over-10,600-square-metre hatchery at the confluence of the Kootenai and Moyie rivers supports propagating and rearing of both species.

Wiyaƚ and ʔaq̓uƚam are both keystone species in the Kootenai/Kootenay River. The Ktunaxa are a people whose history and culture is intertwined with wiyaƚ—which have been called the spiritual grandfathers of the Ktunaxa—leading the people up and down the river safely. wiyaƚ can live to be over 100 years old. They are the largest freshwater fish in North America and can reach weights well over 450 kilograms and lengths over 3.6 metres.

The United States Fish & Wildlife Service listed Kootenai River sturgeon as endangered in 1994. Upper Columbia white sturgeon are also listed under the Canadian federal Species at Risk Act as endangered. Kootenai River burbot were at one time considered functionally extinct. The completion of Libby Dam in Montana had a significant role in the population decline of both wiyaƚ and ʔaq̓uƚam in Kootenai Tribe of Idaho territory.

ʔaq̓anqmi created a sturgeon-conservation aquaculture program in 1989 to change the pace of loss of both species. It constructed the first wiyaƚ hatchery in 1991 and still supplies thousands of young fish to the river each year. Staff at the current hatchery catch wiyaƚ in the spring, bring them to the hatchery to collect eggs from spawning females, and return the females to the Kootenai River.

Young fish are reared in the hatchery for 16 to 18 months before being released, with an average of about 10,000 fish being released annually, supporting population increases along the waterway. The hatchery contains over 150 tanks of different sizes for both wiyaƚ and ʔaq̓uƚam. The hatchery is the first facility in North America built to rear and release ʔaq̓uƚam to rehabilitate a native population.

ʔaq̓uƚam—also known as burbot, lingcod or freshwater ling—is another important aquatic species for the Ktunaxa. ʔaq̓uƚam were once a primary winter food source for the Ktunaxa, but the population fell to an estimated 50 fish through many miles of the Kootenai River in Idaho. The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho has been collaborating with the University of Idaho on ʔaq̓uƚam spawning techniques to support the hatchery, as well as habitat restoration techniques in its territory to improving spawning success.

In the Canadian portion of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, the Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC) has been a prominent participant of the Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative since its beginning. The affected wiyaƚ population in the upper Columbia currently extends from Lake Roosevelt in the United States, upstream to Revelstoke Dam in BC. The Ktunaxa have suspended fishing and harvesting of wiyaƚ within ʔamakʔis Mi¢qaqas, or the Arrow Lakes and Columbia region.

In Kootenay Lake, the Kokanee swaq̓mu is an iconic species but has seen population collapse in the last 10 years due to human-caused impacts to the ecosystem, as well as natural causes. At the north end of the lake numbers exceeded one million regularly; unfortunately, now biologists are seeing numbers under 100,000 in the last seven years.

The KNC is leading Kokanee recovery efforts as part of the Kootenay Lake Action Plan, in collaboration with the Province of BC. The efforts include reducing predator pressure on juvenile Kokanee to support population recovery. Targeted fish that are captured, such as Gerrard rainbow trout, are then distributed to Ktunaxa communities.

In partnership with the BC Ministry of Forests, the KNC has also started a program to help bring back ʔaq̓uƚam to the St. Mary and Kootenay rivers. The ʔaq̓uƚam population has been in decline in these rivers for the last 30 years, from impacts such as mining, forestry, dams, overfishing and rising water temperatures. ʔaq̓uƚam can grow to as much as 1.5 metres in length and over 14 kilograms. Lower Kootenay River ʔaq̓uƚam below Kootenai Falls are a red-listed species and other populations in the upper Kootenay are also of serious concern.

DAMS

The building of dams, hydroelectric facilities and other water-diversion infrastructure has forever changed the watershed within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Since the beginning of damming the mighty Columbia River with Rock Island Dam in 1933, Bonneville Dam in 1938, Grand Coulee Dam in 1941 and Chief Joseph Dam in 1955, the waterway has been impeded to the point of creating near-extinction events for some aquatic species.

The creation of dams has a legacy of displacement for many Indigenous communities. Flooding and destruction of villages, sacred ceremonial sites and fishing and harvesting places, and permanent changes to the landscape of traditional territories, all perpetuate colonial relationships.

On the Flathead River, what was initially known as Kerr Dam in 1927 was to be built on the Flathead Reservation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT).

Today through the leadership of Ktunaxa communities, efforts are being made to revive fish stocks in spite of the dams blocking the natural flow of the river.

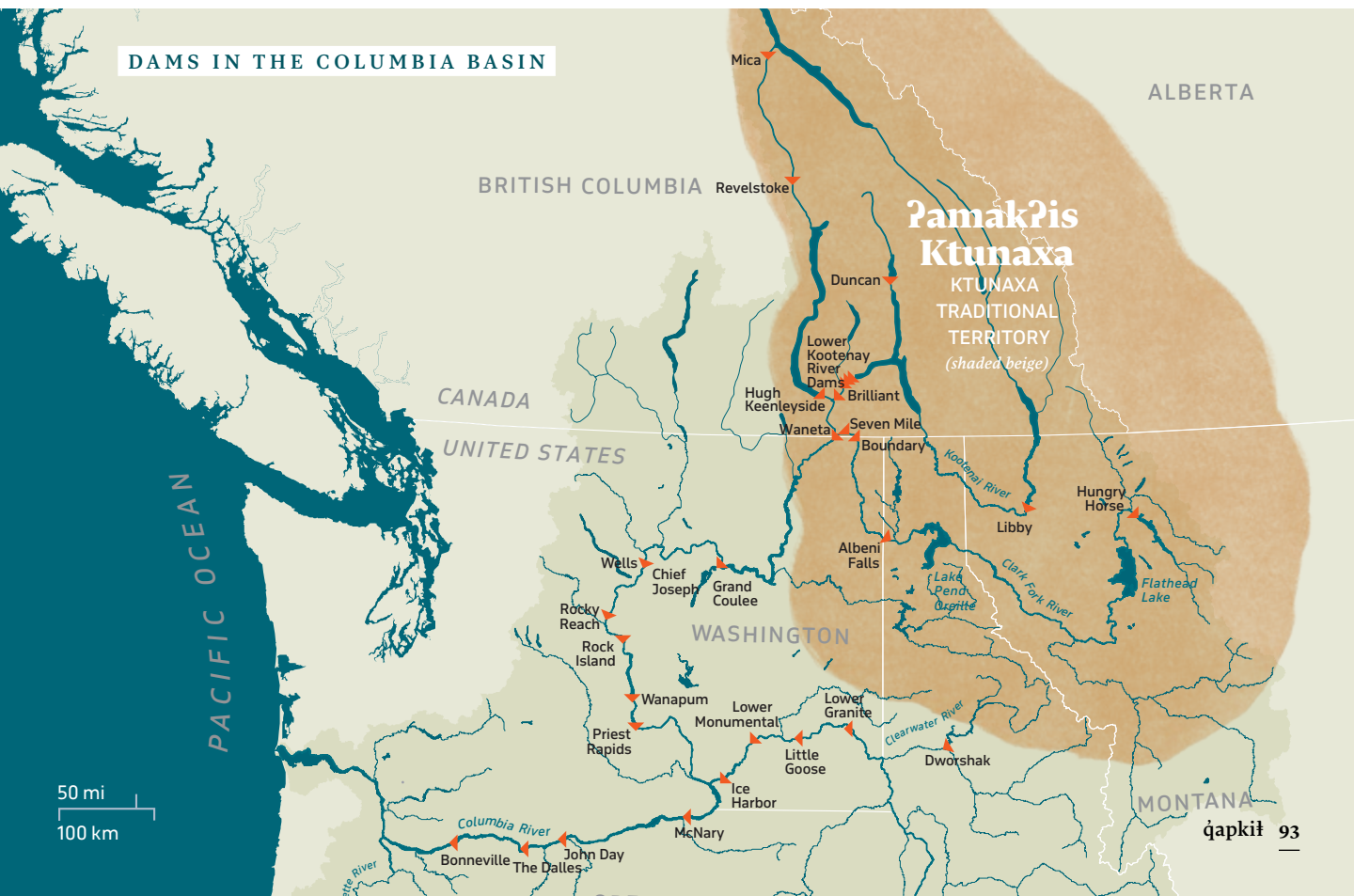
None of the Tribes were included in its development or discussions about the impacts the dam would have on the Tribes, the waterway or the natural landscape. The dam was to be built on a spiritual site known as the Place of Falling Waters.

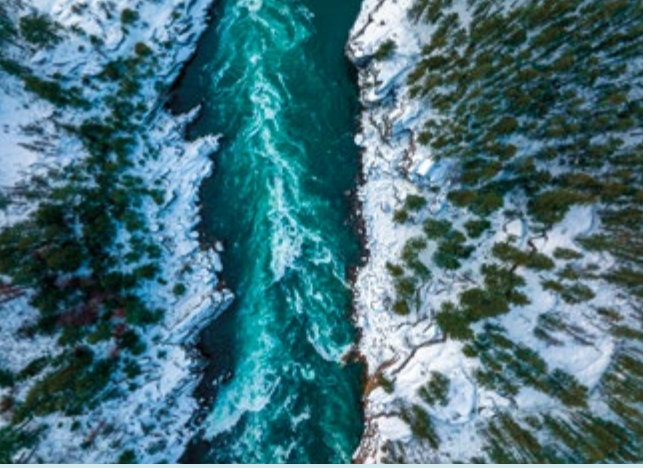
The dam was completed in 1938, and eventually the Montana Power Company was pushed by the Tribes to sign a lease with the CSKT to provide royalties, as promised in the Federal Water Power Act and the 1855 Hell Gate Treaty. In 1980, the CSKT challenged the renewal licence to the dam and renegotiated fairer compensation and—in a historic move—negotiated to take over management of the dam approximately 30 years later.

In 2015, the CSKT celebrated the acquisition of the dam and the creation of Energy Keepers, the Tribal corporation that operates the dam. Renamed as the Séliš Ksanka Qlispé project, the dam was the first major hydroelectric facility in the United States to be operated by a Tribe.

Today through the leadership of Ktunaxa communities, efforts are being made to revive fish stocks in spite of the dams blocking the natural flow of the river.

»»→ Find out more about the Séliš Ksanka Qlispé Project: **energykeepersinc.com**.





KOOTENAI TRIBE OF IDAHO AQUATIC RECLAMATION WORK

The Kootenai River Ecosystem Restoration Project is using nutrient restoration and biomonitoring to recover a productive, healthy and biologically diverse Kootenai River ecosystem in collaboration with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

The Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program is an ecosystem-based initiative designed to restore and maintain habitat conditions that support all life stages of Kootenai River wiyaŧ, ʔaq̓uŧam and other native fish.

The Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Project is protecting, enhancing and maintaining wetland and riparian wildlife habitats as part of ongoing impacts associated with the Albeni Falls hydroelectric project. This hydroelectric facility impacts migratory waterfowl, raptors, deer, bear and moose—all significant species to the Kootenai community.

Two additional projects are the Kootenai River Floodplain Ecosystem Operational Loss Assessment, Protection, Mitigation and Rehabilitation Project, and the Reconnect Kootenai River with the Historic Floodplain Project. These are both supporting restoration of floodplain habitats and functions, depressional wetlands, stream channels and riparian areas to enable critical life stages for species and populations dependent on floodplain productivity. Sustainable, long-term benefits to the Kootenai sub-basin include reconnecting tributaries to the mainstem Kootenai River, restoring wetland environments and improving the natural cycling of nutrients.

UPPER COLUMBIA UNITED TRIBES

The Upper Columbia United Tribes are engaged in ambitious and historic work to bring back swaq̓mu to the upper Columbia River after a generation of man-made population decline through dams and other industrial activities. Reclaiming cultural, environmental and economic benefits of salmon in the upper Columbia, this work has been under way for many years and is starting to grow significantly for the benefit of future generations.

At one time producing runs estimated between 10 and 16 million fish, the Columbia River had among the largest swaq̓mu runs on earth. Prior to the creation of dams on the river, millions upon millions of pounds of fish were taken from the river for canning and other harvesting purposes by commercial fisheries, significantly depleting salmon runs. Little Falls Dam, built in 1910, blocked returning adult salmon from reaching the productive Spokane River watershed. Then in 1941 Grand Coulee Dam was built, followed by Chief Joseph Dam, both stopping the ability of swaq̓mu to spawn upstream.

With effective fish passage systems, current habitat conditions and available fish stock, reintroduction efforts could result in 76,000 adult sockeye and 44,000 adult summer/fall chinook produced in the target areas.

Adding to further stresses on the waterway, the 1964 Columbia River Treaty added more and more dams on both sides of the imposed international border. In 2015, Columbia Basin Tribes and First Nations developed a joint paper to demonstrate how swaq̓mu can be successfully reintroduced into the upper Columbia River basin. The reintroduction is taking place in four phases of research and evaluation.

The first phase of research, completed in 2019, consisted of a reintroduction stock assessment focusing on chinook and sockeye swaq̓mu, as well as habitat assessments, fish passage technology evaluation related to dam operations, and life-cycle modelling. With effective fish passage systems, current habitat conditions and available fish stock, reintroduction efforts could result in 76,000 adult sockeye and 44,000 adult summer/fall chinook produced in the target areas.

→→→ Visit **ucut.org** for more information and to support this important work.

Bringing the Salmon Home

The Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative

The Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative is an Indigenous-led collaborative effort of five governments—the Ktunaxa Nation, Syilx Okanagan Nation, Secwépemc Nation, Canada and British Columbia—to support the sacred work of salmon reintroduction into the upper Columbia River region.

For more than 80 years, dams have blocked salmon from returning to the upper Columbia region. This initiative continues multi-generational efforts to heal a complex salmon system impacted by hydroelectric dams, human development and habitat disruption the length of the Columbia River.

The initiative is supported by collaborative, consensus-based governance processes, with a long-term vision to return fish stocks for Indigenous food and social and ceremonial needs, and to benefit the region's residents and ecosystems as a whole.

→→→ columbiariversalmon.ca

→→→ Watch a short documentary on Bringing the Salmon Home: The Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative at **vimeo.com/822794112**.

Celebrating the Youth Salmon Warriors Gathering

We have come to the headwaters of the mighty Columbia River from our strong Secwépemc, Syilx Okanagan and Ktunaxa Nations, where we have created true connections and honour one another.

We are here as salmon's witness.

Our sacred relative has been gone from these waters for too long but, even still, their spirit is here because we are here, and we will never stop fighting for their right to come home.

Youth Salmon Warriors Gathering participants at the headwaters of the Columbia River, Canal Flats, BC.

These powerful words opened the Youth Salmon Warriors Statement created by young people from the Secwépemc, Syilx Okanagan and Ktunaxa Nations as part of their historic tri-Nation gathering at the headwaters of the Columbia River in 2022.

For five days, 21 young people from the three Nations gathered together for the first annual Bringing the Salmon Home—Youth Salmon Warriors Gathering.

The young people were supported by Elders, Knowledge Keepers and leaders from each of the Nations. Creative facilitators Sofia Terbasket-Funmaker and Xastitkw Michel used IndigenEYEZ processes to guide the young people in building strong connections with each other and the salmon.

"We created connections that we didn't know we were going to make. We've made friendships we didn't know we were going to make. And, for the future, those connections are what are going to bring back the salmon, what's going to bring back our culture, what's going to bring back our language, what's going to bring back everything. Because we were never just one Nation surrounded by other Nations—we were intermingling together, we spoke each other's languages, we listened to each other's creation stories," says Syilx Okanagan Nation member Morgan Rashke.

It's been more than 80 years since salmon, blocked by dams, have returned to the source of the river. As part of their journey to bring salmon home, the young people learned how to can Columbia River-Okanagan sockeye salmon provided by the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

And then, in a deeply moving ceremony, they returned the salmon remains to the river.

"Our languages aren't extinct—they're sleeping, and they're waking up. And our salmon aren't extinct from the Columbia River—they're coming home," says Ktunaxa Nation member Martina Escutin (Shovar).

"The youth are strong and we have a lot of perseverance. And this knowledge that we've learned, we'll continue to integrate throughout our lives," adds Secwépemc Nation member Nikeshia Harry.

"Our languages aren't extinct—they're sleeping, and they're waking up. And our salmon aren't extinct from the Columbia River—they're coming home."

MARTINA ESCUTIN (SHOVAR)

We Are Salmon Warriors

Youth Salmon Warriors Statement

To mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2022, we share this vital Youth Salmon Warriors Statement created by Ktunaxa, Syilx Okanagan and Secwépemc youth, as part of the Bringing the Salmon Home Initiative.

We have come to the headwaters of the mighty Columbia River from our strong Secwépemc, Syilx Okanagan and Ktunaxa Nations, where we have created true connections and honour one another. We are here as salmon's witness. Our sacred relative has been gone from these waters for too long, but even still, their spirit is here because we are here, and we will never stop fighting for their right to come home. Our bodies yearn for our salmon. Salmon teaches us to never stop, to never give up. Salmon is us, and we are salmon. We returned our salmon relative's bones to the water while we sang and prayed. We have reminded these waters that our salmon are coming home, just as we have come home to ourselves and to one another. With our fists up and our hearts open, we raise our voices and tell you that we are strong just like salmon. We know that by honouring our creativity, we learn to express our true selves, that part of us where our ancestors sing and where our salmon hearts beat strong. We are standing up for our salmon and we are raising our voices for the people to hear: Put aside politics and keep our salmon and us young people at the centre because we can show you the way. Because we are walking forward with the truth in our hearts that our salmon are coming home.

We are salmon warriors.

We are salmon warriors.

Illustration by Ktunaxa artists Darcy Luke and Marisa Phillips. "It is meant to symbolize 'Ktunaxa being Ktunaxa on the land' and the tangible and intangible connection between ʔamak ¢ wuʔu (the land and water) and ʔa·kxaṁ is ɑ̓api qapsin (all living things). This interconnectedness means nothing is in isolation—if wuʔu is impacted, so in turn is everything else."

My Salmon Warriors Experience

Naya Duteau

Kiʔsuk kyukyit, hu qakɬik Naya Duteau. I am from ʔakisq̓nuk, which is part of the Ktunaxa Nation. I live in ʔa·kisk̓aqɬiʔit (Cranbrook, BC).

My experience of the camp was that I needed to learn more about what salmon meant to the Ktunaxa people. I need to find out the salmon song and their associated ceremonies. What I do know is ʔa·kxaʔmis q̓api qapsin—as Ktunaxa, we respect all living things—there's a balance that connects land, water, animals and ʔa·kɬsmaq̓nik. It's a philosophy of everyday life.

We help the salmon, and the salmon will help us. They need clean water and a complete water system to survive. It is our job to help provide that to them. Unfortunately, human impacts have spiralled climate change and, in return, have made life difficult for our salmon and biodiversity. As salmon warriors or water guardians, we need to pay attention to our Elders, teachings and the changing world around us.

I'm thankful for the camp because we talked and did things I had never thought of before. I noticed the youth from other Nations knew more about their traditional stories of salmon than I did. Also, we canned salmon, which was an activity I had never done before. Because of the camp, I've reached out to my Elders to learn more about salmon and what it means to the Ktunaxa people. I am still learning and will continue to do so.

"What I do know is ʔa·kxaʔmis q̓api qapsin—as Ktunaxa, we respect all living things—there's a balance that connects land, water, animals and ʔa·kɬsmaq̓nik. It's a philosophy of everyday life."

Kiʔsuk kyukyit – Good day (greeting)
Hu qakɬik – My name is
ʔa·kɬsmaq̓nik – People
ʔa·kxaʔmis q̓api qapsi – All living things

Yaqsuʔmiɬ

The White Pine Sturgeon-nose Canoe

The white pine sturgeon-nose canoe is an iconic symbol that has been linked throughout history to Ktunaxa people, specifically yaqan nuʔkiy—also known as Lower Kootenay or historically referred to as Flatbow Kutenai. The building of the sturgeon-nose canoe is truly an art, and one that is experiencing a resurgence thanks to Ktunaxa who have learned this skill from their Elders and Knowledge Holders. The keepers of this tradition are highly skilled and are actively working to pass this important knowledge on to the next generation.

Watch a short film on the story of the return of the white pine sturgeon-nose canoe to the Lower Kootenay River at Creston in summer 2014, accomplished through the guidance of master canoe builder Wayne Louie. The unmistakable shape of the sturgeon-nose canoe came to life thanks to the wisdom of Wayne and the help of many youth, community members and supporters, who together harvested the material, prepared it for assembly and constructed the canoe.

→→→ Find "The Rebirth of the White Pine Sturgeon-nose Canoe" at **vimeo.com/110410378.**

ʔa·knusti

Guardians

Ktunaxa ʔa·knusti perform a critical role of stewarding the lands of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Patrolling, scouting, monitoring and protecting are just some of the efforts to restore ecological balance and protect traditional food security. ʔa·knusti activities are seasonally based and involve working in challenging environments and weather. A solid understanding and application of Ktunaxa values is a requirement for ʔa·knusti, while supporting mentorship of the next generations of Ktunaxa.

Cisco Luke-Jimmy

Lance Thomas

CISCO LUKE-JIMMY

I hike a lot to find "areas of potential." If we like the area, we will begin doing an archeology impact assessment, which means we dig shovel tests. To find flakes or debitage (the flakes and chips left behind from producing stone tools), sometimes we will do an "evaluative unit" to get a better understanding of the stratigraphy in the area; this involves peeling, layer by layer, the earth with a shovel or trowel.

When I am working with a field director, I watch how they take notes; they write as much as possible to make sure no history is lost. I'm all over the Kootenays in the summertime, but last summer (2022) I was mostly in Trail helping field technicians do archeology assessments. This is where I found my very first projectile point. I will never forget that day—the day I saw how intelligent, patient and strong our ancestors had to be in order to survive.

When Mother Nature is taking a well-deserved nap, I'm in the Ktunaxa Nation building, learning how strong and determined my coworkers are to make ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa strong again after the colonization it went through. No matter what sector I walk into, I see everyone using their voices to fight for our rights to our land.

My favourite aspect of my job is finding out how incredible our ancestors were to travel long distances but leave such a small carbon footprint. That may be more difficult to do today, but it makes it that much more meaningful when we see artifacts and signs that we were travelling far and near.

Last summer, I was part of the Salmon Warrior camp that was held in ʔakiskq̓nuk with the other Nations. I learned how important it is to use all of our voices as one to stand up and protect the salmon. We need to sing our songs and pray for our swaq̓mu (salmon), ntytyix (spring salmon in the nsyilxen language of the Syilx people) and sqlélten (salmon in the Secwepemctsín language of the Secwépemc people) to come back home.

To me, being an ʔa·knusti means that I am here to use my voice to protect the land that Naɬmuqɬin gave us, and to make sure that the archeologists understand the rich history that lays beneath them. It also means I am here to bring back our songs and dances that were stolen and lost from colonization.

LANCE THOMAS

My main activities include a lot of fisheries work, such as shoreline habitat patrols, Gerrard rainbow trout reduction on the north end of Kootenay Lake, electro-fishing for burbot in the St. Mary's River, placing temperature loggers in various rivers and tributaries in our region, and helping out on some archeological digs and recces.

I do a lot of my fisheries work alongside our fisheries guardian Kenton Andreashuk. My goal is to become a fisheries guardian myself. The data we collect depends on the project. For example, in some cases we would measure and weigh a fish and also identify the sex, if possible, and sometimes tag them.

Jared Cayenne with youth in the field in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa

In the summer I am mostly in the West Kootenay and on Kootenay Lake, and as the field season slows down in the winter months I do various tasks in the office or on the slopes. I am learning a lot on the land and from my colleagues, and my favourite aspect of this work is being on the water—it is so calming and relaxing, especially on a hot summer day.

Being a guardian of the land is very important to me as a role model and as a man, which is why my goal is to become a fisheries guardian, to continue to protect what we have left. I am grateful to be alive and healthy, along with my loved ones.

JARED CAYENNE, LINDSEY WHITEHEAD, DEAN NICHOLAS

We started our roles as ʔa·knusti in March 2021. We have come to learn that ʔa·knusti has a different meaning depending on whom you ask in the communities. Some refer to ʔa·knusti as a midwife type of role. Others refer to it as a scout or eyes-on-the-land for the people. One of the first opportunities we took advantage of was going to shadow the rangers of the Xeni Gwet'in First Nation (located west of Williams Lake, BC) to see how they ran their guardian program. Their circumstances are a little different in regards to their title land, as it was won in a court case against the Crown, so they are able to manage their resources and animals how they see fit on their title lands, without government interference.

In the 2021–22 trapping season, we started using one of ʔaq̓am's traplines, located north of Cranbrook at about Fort Steele and north to Columbia Lake. It goes to the height of land to the east and to the Kootenay River to the west. This particular trapline hasn't been used for about 60 years or so. We decided on a spot within the trapline, close to bighorn-sheep wintering range habitat located near the Quartz Lake area, to help manage the over-predation in that herd. We set a goal of 20 coyotes for the year and to catch at least one wolf, as none of us had caught one prior to this trapping season. We ended off the season with 21 coyotes, four foxes and one wolf. We caught the wolf on one of our last days having the traps out, which was a great ending to the season.

One reason we think that passing these skills on to our next generation is so important is because we used these skills to catch animals to make our regalia for ceremonies, as well as for everyday clothing. We also had Elders expressing interest in giving furs away at Nation-to-Nation meetings or government-to-government meetings. We also had some traps set up on ʔaq̓am's reserve in various locations to help with ungulate calf/fawn survival, as it is a key wintering range for elk and deer.

We've also worked on other projects, such as studying high-elevation grasslands in the Elk Valley, accompanying the Ktunaxa Nation Council fisheries guardian on compliance monitoring, and monitoring archeological sites around the dams in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Who I am

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Qała hun ʔin | Who I am
Hu qakɬik Małtin | My name is Martina
Łak nupqu nana | or little bear
Hu nʔini Ktunaxa pałkiy | I am a Ktunaxa woman
Aki hun nini ƈuqusaka | also I am half-Ktunaxa, half-white
Hu qaki kaxi ʔakisq̓nuk | I come from ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation
Hu qawsakani okanaq̓an ʔamakʔis | I live in Syilx territory
Hu nʔini maʔnam | I am someone's mother
Hu nʔini tiɬtnam | I am someone's aunt
Hu nʔini swinnam | I am someone's daughter
Hu nʔini titiʔnam | I am someone's granddaughter
Hu qałwiʔni kuɬ ʔuni·łuʔkqa ka ʔa·kłukaqwum | I want to know my language

Hun ʔitakɬiʔni | I am growing

Growing up in ʔakisq̓nuk gave me the opportunity to be connected to my community and culture, which is a privilege that many Indigenous people do not have. I grew up attending community gatherings, and I was able to learn some Ktunaxa from my Elders. This connection to my community led me to be named Miss Junior ʔakisq̓nuk when I was 10 years old, a responsibility that has shaped who I am. Through my collective experiences I learned the value of community, extended family, and what it means to have a strong connection to a place and to the land and water in that place; there is something spiritual about knowing your ancestors are with you because they come from the very land you live on.

aki hun nini ƈuqusaka | also I am half-Ktunaxa

Since I was a child, I have been aware of my whiteness.
Consciously different from my cousins. Consciously different from my classmates.
Walking in two worlds. An outsider on both sides.
An educator since childhood: "Why do the Native kids get free stuff?"
And a safe person to be racist to: "You'll be doing drugs by grade eight."
Pride in my culture. Internalized shame.
Intergenerational love. Intergenerational pain.

 Photos: Blaine Burgoyne.

Hu kuktqaʔni | I am changed, I am different

Returning to school helped me understand myself better, and it opened my mind to knowledge that my spirit was craving. I began exploring my identity through the lens of academia. I gained confidence as a student with life experience in what I was learning, and I finally felt like I could make an impact. The little girl who didn't have words to explain why my relatives were suffering in so many ways now had not only the words, but also the voice. I went on to obtain my degree in social work. My passion is in community development, capacity building and systems change. I believe everything we do impacts everything around us. My dream is to support our ʔa·kłsmaq̓nik by bringing people together and creating safe spaces where we feel free to share openly, learn together and dream together. Our language is what will get us there.

Hu qałwiʔni kuł ʔuni·łuʔkqa ka ʔa·kłukaqwum | I want to know my language

I've come full circle, learning Ktunaxa.
I stopped learning for years, but it was always on my mind.
When I was in university
I took a class about language revitalization and technology.
Since then my life has changed.
I removed the excuse of being too far away to learn,
I began to post my learning publicly.
It has brought connections and opportunities I wouldn't have otherwise had,
I've met several other trailblazing learners,
And I've learned a lot about myself along the way.
What inspires me most to keep going is the world view
I know our language carries.
Language is what connects us to each other, and to the land.
It is the key to our well-being.
I envision a future of Ktunaxa
Where connection to each other
And to the land
Is what drives us.
A future where we embody
The world view
That lives
In our
Language.

Ċinmi·kpamik | To yearn for a certain place
Living away from ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa,
Away from ka titi, my grandma
Away from ʔałka ʔałiċkił, my brothers
Away from ka maʔ, my mom.
I have learned ka ʔa·kuk·pukam, my roots,
Run deeper than I thought.
Long lost dad, brothers, and a sister.
Often, I yearn for home.
For connection to place.
Nobody calls me nupqu nana anymore,
Though I wish they would.
I want my children to know
Their ʔa·kuḵ·pukam too.
Knowing who you are, is
An act of self-love.
An act of decolonization.
How can I make a difference?
How can I connect to the language?
If I am not connected to the land?
But, I know I am here for a reason.
I still have work to do.
And this is part of the work.

I am a Salmon Warrior
Swaq̓mu swims upstream
To journey home.
And so do I.
Ktunaxa, Syilx, Secwépemc,
Settler-European.
All parts of me.
Learning who I am,
On this journey home.
More than 80 years
Since swaq̓mu was home,
In the Upper-Columbia River.
More than 80 years,
The water remembered.
Reunited by blood.
This is how we fed our people.
My great, great, great grandmother,
Sophie Nicholas, "maʔ,"
And her daughter,
swinʔis, Alice White,
Mother of kławła, ka ʔaċmił.
When swaq̓mu didn't return,
They didn't know why.
Damned by colonization.
Dammed for 80 years,
And counting.

Hu saṅqaʔni
I am restless, anxious.
Tax qapsin? Why?
Change is near.
swaq̓mu doesn't rest long,
But, I'm a Little Bear.
Bears mean tradition.
Keeper of knowledge,
Keeper of language.
When she named me,
How did she know?
Maybe I am restless,
Because I'm becoming
Who I am
Supposed
To be.

Ka ʔa·kiłwiy
This is heart work,
And sometimes ka ʔa·kiłwiy hurts.
Shame spiralling,
ʔumi ʔumi ʔumi.
Hu sukiłq̓ukni – "My heart is lifted"
But not today.
ʔitkikłuk
Rest is required.
Because this is heart work.

 Photos: Blaine Burgoyne.

ʔa·kinmitqapƙanuqɬiɬmiyit [dawn, daybreak]

ʔa·kinmitqapƙanuqɬiɬmiyit is dawn. It is interruption. It is change.
I detect this shift, and panic settles in.
Do I leave the night behind?
I walk the thin line between darkness and the morning glow.
Am I ready for what awaits?
ʔa·kinmitqapƙanuqɬiɬmiyit is daybreak. It is transformation. It is inevitable.
The choice lies within me. The choice to rise with natanik, the sun,
or the choice to fall with the slumber of my old ways.
ʔaywumɬa qaykitwu. Twenty-nine. Is this my ʔa·kinmitqapƙanuqɬiɬmiyit?
How do I harness this light, when all I have known is darkness?
When I have been taught to be grateful, is it wrong that I long for something more?
I follow ʔa·qapak, the main trail,
But there's something in the way the ʔakikq̓anɕɬaʔin, forest, calls to me.
ʔa·kinmitqapƙanuqɬiɬmiyit is new. It is adventure. It is excitement.
ʔuknuxamiʔin. It is time to wake up.
Hu ɕukuʔni. I ignite.
ʔiktikminuqka, sunrise, is here, and together we light up the sky.

Ka titi

Generational healing is not linear.
Relationships don't heal if you sit idly by;
The biggest leaps come when you heal yourself first;
It takes time, awareness and work.
Relationships between mothers in my family have always been strained.
Hiding from great grandma as a child,
Running fast past her driveway,
Screening calls.
All signs of intergenerational pain.
A teaching passed down.
I watched my grandmother move through grief,
As she lost the love of her life.
Emotionally unavailable.
Struggling to get through each day,
As I struggled to get to school.
I wondered why she didn't show her love,
I wondered where my mom was,
I wondered.
And then I grieved too.
A life I would never live,
A family that ceased to exist.
A mother that would always be
Just a friend.
But as time goes on, and
I work towards healing myself,
Ka titi is healing too.
And every conversation ends with
I love you.

Aiyana Twigg

Linguist and Language Apprentice

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Aiyana Twigg, also known by her Ktunaxa name q̓uƛaƛnana, is reclaiming the Ktunaxa language and setting an example for Indigenous youth everywhere.

Aiyana is Ktunaxa on her mother's side and Blackfoot on her father's side. She is the daughter of Leanna Gravelle and Chris Twigg. Aiyana is a member of Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi 'it and grew up in ʔakink̓umłasnuqƛiʔit. Reflecting on who she is as a Ktunaxa and Blackfoot person, Aiyana shares, "My cultural identity is who I am and who I was taught to be—being holistic, seeing everything as equal, seeing all living things as equal. Understanding the world in that way, through our culture, our ceremony and our beliefs."

Growing up, Aiyana learned traditional practices such as tanning and smoking hides, and harvesting ʔa·kuq̓ƛiʔit and plants—learning traditional medicinal uses of all living things, as well as other cultural practices and ceremonies that Ktunaxa people have been practising for thousands of years. "I am most proud of my identity—being able to be who I am, being able to be Ktunaxa, being able to be Indigenous." She feels honoured to have had the opportunity to be immersed in culture growing up, noting that not all Ktunaxa have had this same experience.

"Our language is a part of our identity and who we are."

Aiyana did not always feel pride in her Indigenous heritage. It is a feeling that many Indigenous people can relate to—internalized shame and a sense of being voiceless—passed down intergenerationally, products of the Indian residential school system.

"There was a time in my life when I wasn't proud to be Indigenous. That was through school and a lot of racism and discrimination. I went to school in ʔa·knukiʼnis–Eureka, California, and was one of few Indigenous students in my school. At that point, I didn't want to be who I was. I would pretend that I wasn't Indigenous. It was really hard for me during that time. When I finally reconnected with my culture and my language, I felt a lot of pride in who I was. I think what I'm most proud of is to be who I am, and that includes speaking the language, practising our culture and just being who I am."

For Aiyana, language reclamation has been a necessary step towards understanding herself as a Ktunaxa person. "Our language is a part of our identity and who we are. For myself personally, I can't confidently say that I am Ktunaxa unless that encompasses my language," she shares. "When I started to reconnect with my identity, language was a huge part of that. It was a really big part for me to start understanding who we are as people; it really shaped my world view and understanding. If we didn't have the language, I couldn't confidently say that I fully understood myself.

"What brought me to that identity shift was this kind of crazy experience when I was out on the land going for a hike with my mom. I had this moment where I could feel the ancestors. It was like they were talking to me, telling me that's who I am, that was where I needed to be—on the land around our people. That experience shifted my perspective. After that, I started to slowly reconnect with the language and get interested in learning about it. When I started to learn about how our language was critically endangered and about the work that everybody was doing to preserve the language, it just shifted my perspective on how important it is to understand who we are, because there was a time when we weren't allowed to do that. Language is a huge part of who we are and how we understand our world. It is how we practise our culture. Language is in everything that we do and everything about who we are, and also vice versa."

q̓uƛaƛnana – Little chipmunk
ʔakink̓umłasnuqƛiʔit – Grasmere
ʔa·kuq̓ƛiʔit – Berry/berries

“Take the responsibility to learn from the Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We are the next future leaders, the next Chief and council, the next Elders. It is our responsibility to start learning, and not their responsibility to teach us. It is our responsibility to go to them, sit down with them, ask them to tell their stories and learn from them.”

AIYANA TWIGG

¢maḵqna – Believe strongly
kwiłqapk¢awas – Our Elders
¢inḵapałtiłam – Listen

Aiyana attributes much of her inspiration to her mom, Leanna Gravelle, and her grandmother, Roberta Gravelle. "Ever since I was young, they've always encouraged me to practise my culture and my language and to be proud of who I am. I really appreciate that because now that I'm older, I understand what they meant. My grandma works tirelessly on our culture and our language, and sharing the knowledge she has. I appreciate the work that they've both done for our people and our Ktunaxa communities. They are strong leaders, and strong women. I think that is so important, and I want to be a strong leader and strong woman as well."

It was a conversation with her mom that led Aiyana to pursue her post-secondary education. Leanna had just come back from the BC Breath of Life conference at the University of British Columbia in 2017. She shared her experience with Aiyana, and shared about the work Indigenous people from many different Nations are doing to revitalize their languages. "This lightbulb just went off in my head, and I thought, 'This is what I'm going to do.'" After that conversation, Aiyana decided to pursue a career in linguistics and to start learning the Ktunaxa language again.

In spring 2022, Aiyana graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Arts, and a double major in First Nations Endangered Languages and Anthropology. She graduated on the Dean's list, at the top of her class. Her focus now is Indigenous language revitalization, which is critical and integral for the resurgence and reclamation of Indigenous culture, traditions and practices. Notably, Aiyana was also a recipient of the 2022 Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Inclusion, Democracy and Reconciliation.

Since graduating, Aiyana has begun the Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP) offered by the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC). FPCC is a provincial Crown corporation that supports BC First Nations in the revitalization of their languages, arts, cultures and heritage. MAP supports people to become fluent speakers by bringing language into daily living, both at home and on the land. It is completed one-to-one with a fluent speaker.

"It's meant for people who have a job to still be able to do it. You get funding from FPCC and it is meant to be very casual. You can work on the program while grocery shopping, you can work on the program while making food, it's meant for you to be able to maintain your daily life while also bringing the language into your regular schedule. I would recommend it for anybody willing to take that next step."

Aiyana is working on MAP with Mary Mahseelah, a fluent speaker and Elder from Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi 'it. "We are almost at 200 hours of language learning, and I've noticed how much I've learned and how much my hearing skills have improved. At the beginning, I couldn't hear certain words and sounds, and now I'm starting to understand little conversations. I'm enjoying getting to sit with Mary and learn from her without feeling like there are really big expectations."

AIYANA'S TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED TO LEARN THE KTUNAXA LANGUAGE

firstvoices.com
Search: Ktunaxa

FirstVoices is a great resource to begin learning the language. I use this almost every single day!

aqamnikschool.com/online-resource-links-for-families

The ʔaq̓amnik' school website has some really helpful language resources. It has audio, as well as videos for words and grammar.

wiki.ubc.ca
Search: Ktunaxa
Online Resources

A comprehensive list of Ktunaxa/Ksaṅka resources that are easily accessible online. I created this during my undergrad, and there are lots of useful resources you can find on this page.

Kutenai Tales:
Franz Boas and
Alexander Chamberlain

This is an online, downloadable book by Franz Boas and Alexander Chamberlain from 1918, which documented Ktunaxa legends and stories. This is a great resource to look into the language.

Through it all, Aiyana has learned valuable lessons. "Take the responsibility to learn from the Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We are the next future leaders, the next Chief and council, the next Elders. It is our responsibility to start learning, and not their responsibility to teach us. It is our responsibility to go to them, sit down with them, ask them to tell their stories and learn from them."

Aiyana shares that it has been an overwhelming learning curve, learning through listening and speaking. Many Ktunaxa language learners, including herself, feel inclined to learn through reading and writing because that is how the mainstream school system has taught children to learn. "The purpose of the Mentor-Apprentice Program is to focus on hearing, listening and speaking. You're not really supposed to focus on writing or reading, which I personally find very hard, because that's what I learned to do, at least through school with reading and writing. When I started to teach myself the language in 2018, it was through reading and writing. When I started this program, it was overwhelming having to focus on what Mary was saying."

Aiyana's participation in MAP with FPCC has opened new, exciting opportunities for her, including the chance to attend UNESCO's International Decade of Indigenous Languages event that took place in Paris in December 2022. Indigenous people from around the world exchanged wisdom through song, art, stories, oral knowledge and languages, all in pursuit of preserving, reclaiming and revitalizing the world's Indigenous languages. This is just the beginning for Aiyana, and Ktunaxa ʔa·kłsmaq̓nik everywhere cannot wait to see how she changes the landscape for Ktunaxa language learning.

KTUNAXA LEARNING VOCABULARY

Qa·s ʔat k a·qakyam "apple"?
How do you say "apple" (in Ktunaxa)?

At k qakyamni "kanuhusnana"
It's called "kanuhusnana"

Hiʔ¢xan Ktunaxa
Speak Ktunaxa

Qapsin kiʔin na?
What is this called?

(Na?) (ʔini) k̓ituq̓tiłqamuł
(This?) (It's) a pen

ła qakin
Say it again

Hu qa ʔupxni
I don't know

Hun ʔupxni
I know

Qapsin kin ʔupxa nawsanmiyitki?
What did you learn today?

Youtube Search:
Q̓u¢aq̓ ¢ Ṫawaq̓ikxu
(Chipmunk and Grasshopper)

This is an animated Ktunaxa oral story I created.

"Try to reach out to the community and see if there are any language classes offered online that you can join. There are quite a few people that are doing language classes. If you are interested in learning more, you can reach out to someone and ask. People are always willing to share their knowledge, especially if it's to help out our own people."


KTUNAXA
NATION

Now, I Am Home

Mara Nelson

I sat at my kitchen table with a borrowed laptop from my son. An untouched notebook with three pens ¢ all the excitement ¢ elation one can contain. October of 2020, during a global pandemic, almost 300 kilometres away from the nearest face on the Zoom screen, I was about to become closer to my family's ancestral home than I ever have been. I had no idea at that time how rapidly or how immeasurably these Zoom sessions were going to change my life. There was no preparation or conjured imagination of all that was about to become by learning the beautiful language isolate that is the Ktunaxa language, ka ʔa·kłukaqwała.

"I have always searched for words. Ponderous words that fill the wonder between knowing ¢ possible."

I have always searched for words. Ponderous words that fill the wonder between knowing ¢ possible. Diligent words that fill the gap between time ¢ place ¢ reflective words that made me feel strength ¢ security. When I lacked words is when I got into situations where I felt *less than* ¢ put myself into places where I shouldn't have been. I knew my course was off ¢ my tenue was not bright or as flourishing as it could have been. This feeling of discourse came from a place of lost. Not whole. In my mid-forties I amended certain parts in my life that I knew were not helping ¢ searched out opportunities that would make my days brighter. The most far-reaching step came when I signed up for a college course, offering Ktunaxa language. Within minutes of filling out my form ¢ sending my hopes along with it, I came across a post on social media, asking Ktunaxanintik if they were interested in joining a language group that had been running for a few months. With hurried exuberance, I reached out ¢ my attendance was accepted. Suddenly, I was in a room with 20 other Ktunaxanintik, sharing sounds, stories, laughter ¢ love of something that was almost purloined in my eyes.

¢ – And
Ktunaxanintik – Ktunaxa People
Ka ʔa·kłukaqwała – The Ktunaxa language

With a contented spirit ¢ much good humour, I have been given many new words to fill in many blanks. Words that can be broken into English, but sound best when they are constructed with heart, grace ¢ a *pop* for good measure. Words like the verb ʔakʾłanaqapqa: to be different than before, for there to have been a change. In learning my language I am able to tell a different story than I had before. I am able to tell a story of a woman who is stronger in herself, sure of her path. I now share basic Ktunaxa, spoken ¢ written, weekly with educators from all across the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa People. I visit schools ¢ work with elementary students, sharing my language. I am now a woman who is focused in desire ¢ commitment. Five nights a week on Zoom, I teach with vulnerability as my impact. I am becoming who I am meant to be as I found home with a family I never knew I needed.

With perplexity ¢ gratification, I will continue to pull pieces of words ¢ sounds of old ¢ construct them on my pages anew. I will make memories ¢ tell stories with our sounds. I will continue to sit at my table with a newer laptop ¢ the same cherished people—my language family. As we continue relaying to the Elders that work with us, they have our assurance that we will forever spread our sounds, words ¢ stories, with grace ¢ admiration all over this beautiful home that Nałmuq̓¢in named for us—our ancestral home on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Now, I am home.

Samantha Sutherland

Freelance Dancer

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Samantha (Sam) Sutherland never thought she would hear the Ktunaxa language coming out of speakers at a show of the National Ballet of Canada in Toronto—but in August 2022 there she was, listening to her native tongue on the other side of the country in front of an audience who had likely never experienced hearing it.

Sam Sutherland is a young Ktunaxa woman. She is the daughter of Cindy Sutherland (née Pierre), who is ʔaq̓amnikʼ, and Greg Sutherland, who is of British and Scottish roots. Growing up in Vancouver, away from ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, Sam has sometimes felt disconnected from Ktunaxa people and culture, although ʔaq̓am has always felt like home to her.

"I always felt a bit disconnected from getting to know people, but I have always had the land as a strong reconnecting point, and I am really excited when I get to go back home and go for walks on my grandma's property or on trails," she says. "I am really proud that our people are very strong. We have gone through a lot and achieved a lot of really amazing things. As for myself, I am proud that I am learning my language and am able to understand bits and pieces and slowly getting stronger at Ktunaxa. I am proud of the people and proud of the community for how much they've protected our lands and culture to revive it and keep it going."

"I am really proud that our people are very strong. We have gone through a lot and achieved a lot of really amazing things."

Sam comes from a legacy of strong Ktunaxa people. Notably, her grandmother Sophie Pierre (née Eustace) is well known on both a local and national level in First Nations politics, economics and treaty negotiations. Her mother, Cindy Sutherland, is well respected in the Ktunaxa community for keeping the memory of Sam's great grandmother, Malyan Michel, alive through the Malyan Michel Bursary for post-secondary students. Sam's uncle, Joe Pierre, is the current Nasuʔkin (Chief) of ʔaq̓am and is a renowned storyteller among Ktunaxaniṅtik (Ktunaxa citizens), particularly for his telling of the ʔaq̓am version of the Ktunaxa creation story.

Like her uncle, Sam is also a storyteller. However, instead of using words, she tells stories through movement. Sam has been dancing since she was just a toddler. Her mom put her in ballet classes to let her run around and burn some energy. Since then, Sam went from being a recreational dancer, into a competitive sphere, and then onto a professional level. Sam attended the last three years of high school at the Arts Umbrella School of Dance in Vancouver, where she would attend academic classes in the morning and spend the afternoon training in ballet and other styles of dance, or working with a choreographer.

She went on to complete the two-year Arts Umbrella Dance Graduate Program, graduating in 2018. It was there she learned her foundation and technique, before moving on to do an internship with Ballet BC in Vancouver, followed by working with the trailblazing Indigenous contemporary dance company Red Sky Performance, located in Toronto.

"Coming out of the depths of COVID, I got a contract with a dance company called Red Sky Performance. They are based here in Toronto, so that's what made me move out east. I worked with them for a year, and have since moved on to doing my own choreography, doing solo works. I have been really lucky to be able to perform these solo works at different locations around Toronto. That brings us to the present day. I am teaching, I am choreographing and I am dancing in Toronto."

Reflecting on her journey so far, Sam shares that every stage of her dance career has had its struggles, although her current step is proving to be the most challenging so far. Sam is working for herself, as a freelance artist. Career life as a freelance dancer includes responding to emails

Ɂaq̓amnik – Person from Ɂaq̓am
Kaqwiɬƛ̓ɬ – Spinning top, or to make a dance
Ɂa·kɬaṁ – Head
Ɂa·kiy – Hand

and phone calls, planning classes she is teaching, applying for grants for projects she wants to bring to reality, and applying to festivals to have her works produced.

Amidst the challenges of navigating this new career, Sam is also navigating the representation of her Ktunaxa identity in the context of the white, Eurocentric culture that is so deeply ingrained in ballet.

During the interruption that came with COVID-19, Sam began taking Ktunaxa language lessons taught via the web by ʔakisq̓nuk Elder Alfred Joseph. "Earlier in the lessons, we got a worksheet that was the body parts vocabulary. This sparked an idea in my head: what if I made small movements or gestures to go along with the body parts? I would make a small head movement for ʔa·kłaƛ̓, and a small hand movement for ʔa·kiy. Making these little gestures was a way for me to remember these words. It was using dance as a connecting point and a learning tool. It became a bit of a homework assignment for me—'Let me make movements to words.'"

Since then, Sam has taken her passion for language and dance to create something uniquely her own. "In Alfred's class this time last year, my grandma Sophie Pierre and Elder Marie Nicholas came to our online meeting and they had a conversation in Ktunaxa for 40 minutes or so, as an exercise to see what we could pick out from their stories. We spent weeks going through the recording and eventually had a full transcription of what they were saying. Once we had this conversation with my grandma and Marie, I thought I could maybe take this process of bringing Ktunaxa words and translating them into movement. I could maybe try a whole sentence or try a whole story." In early 2022, Sam created a solo performance called Kaqwiłɬ¢I, meaning "spinning top" or "to make a dance."

"I would choreograph dance to go along with what they are saying as a way of translating or just telling their story, but through movements instead of through words. That is what got me going with this solo work," she shares. "I eventually built it into an eight-minute-long solo. I also play with speaking Ktunaxa while I dance, which is another great way for me to practise speaking and my pronunciation, but also another embodying learning tool because I'm speaking and moving and dancing all at the same time."

Since creating this solo work, Sam has had the opportunity to showcase it at several Toronto-based festivals. The experience of the performance was one Sam will always

remember. "I built this solo for a festival here in Toronto called the Paprika Festival. They have an Indigenous Arts program and that's where I got the space and the money to initially create it. That was the first place I presented it. I performed it at a show called Sharing the Stage, with the National Ballet of Canada. It's an outdoor show in the summer. They invite guest artists that work in Toronto to present alongside excerpts of Swan Lake and other works.

"There are also other people and other genres of dance performing alongside them. I performed as part of that, which was really crazy. I never thought I would hear Ktunaxa coming out of speakers at a National Ballet show—it was really cool. I also presented it at a show called Night Shift in Toronto and at a festival at Native Earth Performing Arts called Weesageechak Begins to Dance.

"I am really happy that dance has brought me to a lot of places and I am very thankful for Grandma and Alfred and Marie for the work that they did and for supporting me through all this. Without the work that they did and everything they taught me, I would not have had the opportunity that I've had."

"To people even younger than me, just keep listening. That's the best thing you can do. Not only as a Ktunaxa, but as a human in general. But especially as a Ktunaxa, if you want to learn language or culture or just Ktunaxa ways. Just listen and watch and observe—just take it in. Try to learn a little bit of Ktunaxa along the way."

SAMANTHA SUTHERLAND

The process of taking a story and translating it into movement was a nurturing experience for Sam, more so than simply creating a dance. She wants to continue with that process, even if it doesn't turn into a big piece or a show. As part of Sharing the Stage, she also did a public class, where she was teaching the audience to speak Ktunaxa words through movement. She dreams about performing it back in ʔaq̓am or other Ktunaxa communities. "I think it would be incredible. The audience would be so different. I'm used to performing this piece with an audience that I know doesn't understand what I'm saying. It would totally flip it on its head if the audience could understand a bit of what I said, or maybe all of it."

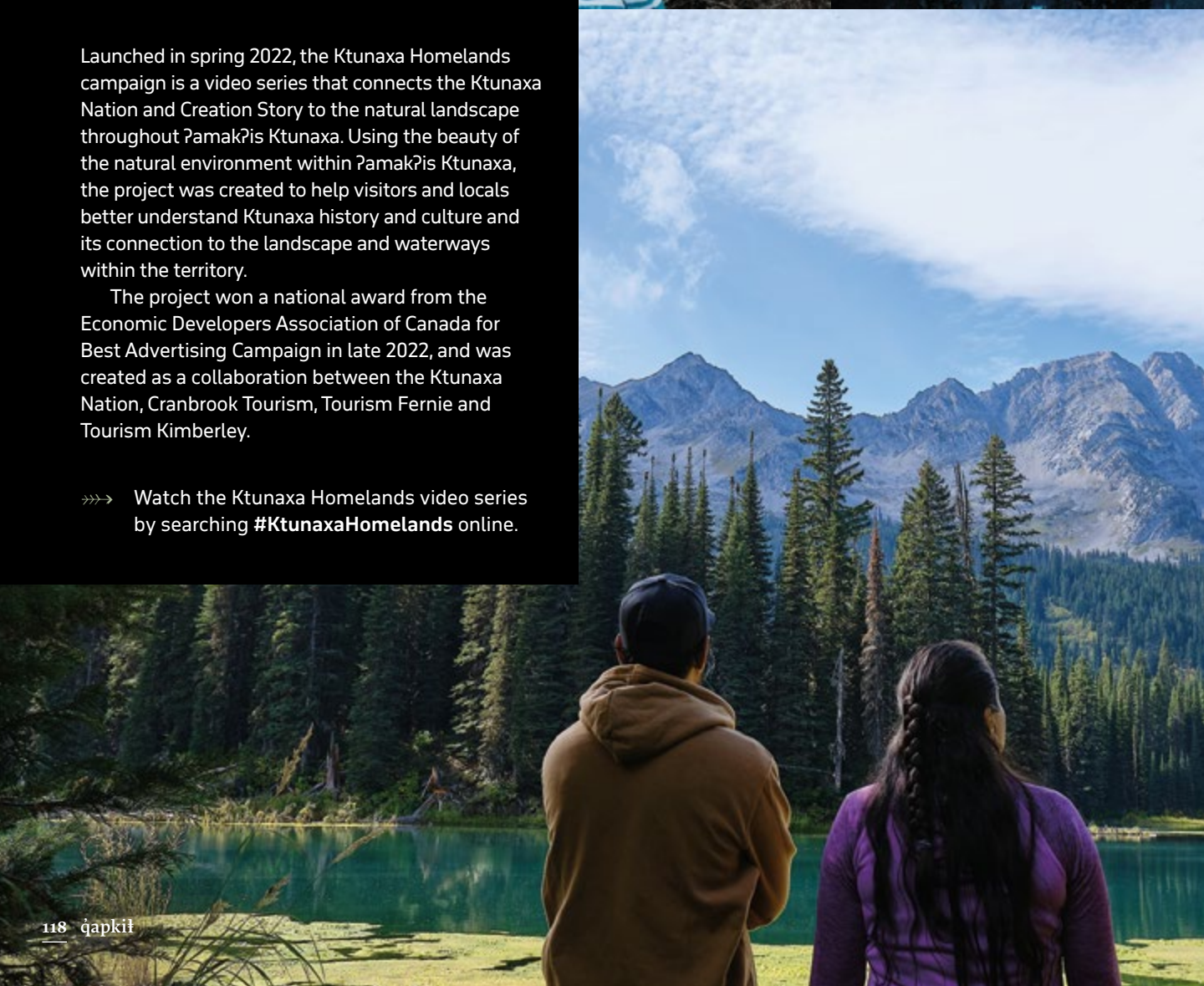
Learning her language has provided opportunities for connection with Sam's grandma Sophie Pierre, who has been a huge inspiration for her. "I have always been close with my grandma; if anything, the language gives us a reason to talk more. I'll reach out randomly to ask how to say something and maybe we'll end up talking about something else. She has accomplished so much in her life. She is definitely the strongest woman I know. She works so hard and continues to work so hard. I hope that I have a similar work ethic and as much self-confidence as she does. I hope that I grow into having that in my own life. She is so set in her values and is not afraid to fight for them. I think she has taught me how to stand up for myself."

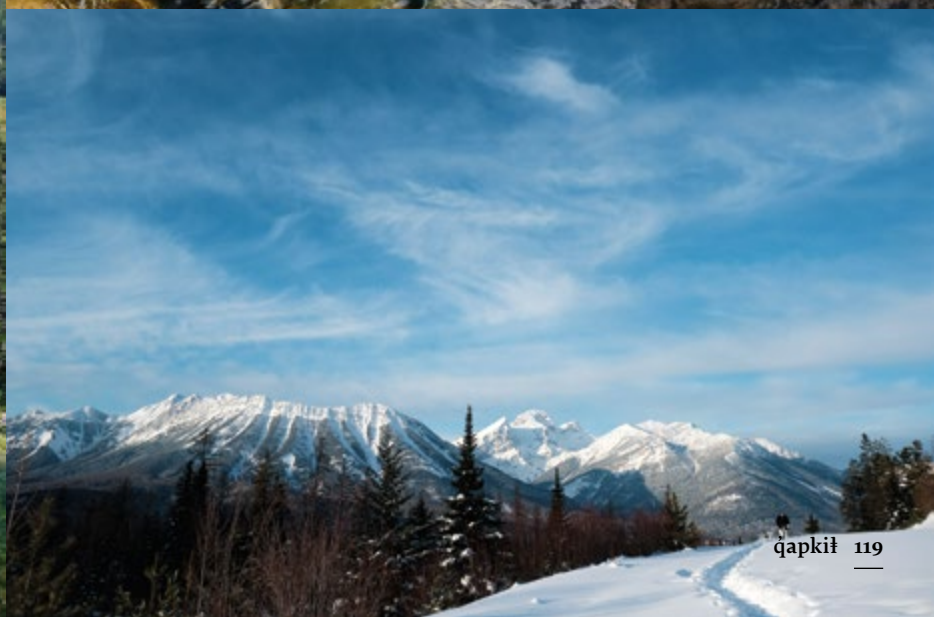
Ktunaxa Homelands

Launched in spring 2022, the Ktunaxa Homelands campaign is a video series that connects the Ktunaxa Nation and Creation Story to the natural landscape throughout ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Using the beauty of the natural environment within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, the project was created to help visitors and locals better understand Ktunaxa history and culture and its connection to the landscape and waterways within the territory.

The project won a national award from the Economic Developers Association of Canada for Best Advertising Campaign in late 2022, and was created as a collaboration between the Ktunaxa Nation, Cranbrook Tourism, Tourism Fernie and Tourism Kimberley.

→→→ Watch the Ktunaxa Homelands video series by searching **#KtunaxaHomelands** online.





Qat'muk and Kławła Tukłułak?is

We, the Ktunaxa, have lived in our homelands since time immemorial and have a deep spiritual connection to the animal world. Qat'muk is a very special place where Kławła Tukłułak?is – Grizzly Bear Spirit was born, goes to heal itself and returns to the spirit world. Kławła Tukłułak?is is an important source of guidance, strength, protection and spirituality for the Ktunaxa.

Qat'muk's importance for Kławła Tukłułak?is is inextricably interlinked with its importance for living grizzly bears, now and in the future. The Ktunaxa have a stewardship obligation and duty to Kławła Tukłułak?is and Qat'muk.

Qat'muk is located in the southeast corner of what is also called British Columbia, encompassing the Jumbo Valley/Toby Creek watershed area, approximately 55 kilometres west of Invermere. On January 18, 2020, the Ktunaxa announced that after decades of work, Qat'muk would be protected as a sacred natural space for future generations.

Guided by Ktunaxa stewardship and conservation, Qat'muk will be transformed into an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, protecting cultural values and biological diversity in this part of the central Purcell Mountains. The area will span about 70,000 hectares immediately north of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, encompassing Jumbo Valley and parts of adjacent watersheds.

→→→ **ktunaxa.org/qatmuk**

Kławła Tukłułak?is
Grizzly Bear Spirit

Qat'muk
Jumbo Valley/Toby Creek Watershed. Where Kławła Tukłułak?is was born, goes to heal itself and returns to the spirit world.

→→→ Watch "Qat'muk: Where the Grizzly Bears Go to Dance" at **vimeo.com/31890388**.

QAT'MUK DECLARATION

We, the Ktunaxa, have lived in our territory since time immemorial and have a deep spiritual connection to the animal world and, in particular, to the grizzly bear. Qat'muk is a very special place where Kławła Tukłułak?is, the Grizzly Bear Spirit, was born, goes to heal itself, and returns to the spirit world. The Grizzly Bear Spirit is an important source of guidance, strength, protection and spirituality for the Ktunaxa. Qat'muk's importance for the Grizzly Bear Spirit is inextricably interlinked with its importance for living grizzly bears now and in the future. The Ktunaxa have a stewardship obligation and duty to the Grizzly Bear Spirit and Qat'muk.

Given the importance of Qat'muk, the Ktunaxa Nation Council, on behalf of the Ktunaxa Nation:

Affirms that having been created in interdependence with the land, its living things, and the spirit world, the Ktunaxa possess and are entitled to enjoy our inherent and preexisting sovereignty over our land and our lives thereon;

Affirms that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples supports the Ktunaxa Nation's right to: (a) manifest, practice, develop and teach our spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies and to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to our religious and cultural sites [Article 12]; and (b) maintain and strengthen our distinctive spiritual relationship with our traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and other resources and to uphold our responsibilities to future generations in this regard [Article 25];

Emphasizes that the Ktunaxa have never consented to the developments and desecrations that have occurred within Qat'muk;

Asserts that we will not agree to any further development or sale of land associated with Qat'muk that would result in irreparable and irreversible harm to this sacred place and our spiritual connection with it;

Affirms that the Creator gave the Ktunaxa covenants, one of which is to protect, honour, and celebrate what the Creator has given us;

Reaffirms that our Law, ʔaknumuq̓tit̓it̓, requires the protection of our sacred places for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren;

Recognizes that the Ktunaxa language does not translate well into other languages and consequently our spiritual relationship with Qat'muk may not be fully understood by others;

Affirms that we are strong, as we have maintained our cultural connection to our land, language, and spirituality;

Reaffirms that we are of one heart and one mind to protect Qat'muk from desecration;

Insists that we will strengthen and revitalize the Ktunaxa Nation through our spiritual connection to Qat'muk;

Invites other governments, non-governmental organizations, business proponents, local communities, and others to support and respect our spiritual traditions and practices linked to Qat'muk, and to help protect it against desecration and destruction.

PROCLAMATION

The Ktunaxa Nation Council, on behalf of the Ktunaxa Nation, hereby proclaims, on this date:

That Qat'muk is the home of the Grizzly Bear Spirit and is the unique and proper place to celebrate and honour this spirit;

That Qat'muk includes the entirety of the Toby-Jumbo watershed and the uppermost parts of the South Fork Glacier Creek, Horsethief Creek and Farnham Creek watersheds;

That, to fully protect the most sacred core of the Qat'muk area, a refuge area consisting of the upper part of the Jumbo valley is hereby established;

That a buffer area consisting of the remainder of the Jumbo watershed is hereby established so that the Grizzly Bear Spirit, as well as grizzly bears, can thrive within and around Qat'muk;

That the Ktunaxa Nation will share Qat'muk with non-Ktunaxa when such use is respectful of Ktunaxa spiritual values and consistent with our *Qat'muk Stewardship Principles*; and

That the Ktunaxa Nation Council will prepare a management plan for the refuge and buffer areas based on the *Qat'muk Stewardship Principles* and in consultation with other governments and stakeholders.

Kathryn Teneese, Ktunaxa Nation Council Chair *on behalf of the Ktunaxa Nation Executive Council, November 15, 2010.*

Many, many years ago, boastful Squirrel considered himself to be as strong and powerful as Grizzly, who is the greatest of all animals. To prove himself, Squirrel set out to close the Ktunaxa district of ʔamakʔis Qukin (Raven's Land, commonly referred to as the Elk Valley), and declared that no living creature should enter for as long as he remained alive. Squirrel guarded the western entrance of the valley from Sheep Mountain (Mount Broadwood, near Elko), while his wife watched the eastern entrance near Crowsnest Mountain, with the help of Raven.

Bighorn Ram, who lived in a cave on Mount Broadwood, helped Squirrel, and whenever another creature tried to enter the valley, Ram killed it by pushing rocks down the mountainside onto them. If any tried to enter from the east, past Squirrel's wife and Raven, they became entangled in the dense underbrush and timber, where they starved to death.

After many years, Yau-Ke'Kam, a youth of Olympian stature, decided to put an end to Squirrel's foolish pride and tyranny. He tricked Ram and killed Squirrel, and then forced his way through to the other entrance of the valley. Squirrel's wife and Raven, not expecting an attack from that direction, were easily overcome. As they died, Yau-Ke'Kam decreed that, henceforth, any others who reached too far in greed would meet some disastrous end.

CHIEF AMBROSE GRAVELLE (CHIEF RED EAGLE), 1964
Backtracking with Fernie and District Historical Society – 1977

Restoring ʔamakʔis Qukin (Raven's Land)

The health of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa is directly related to the health of the Ktunaxa Nation and its citizens who rely on the ʔamak ¢ wuʔu (land and water) to sustain themselves physically, culturally, socially and economically. Ktunaxa stewardship laws emphasize the interconnectedness of ʔa·kxaṁis ḳapi qapsin (all living things), and the need to care for ʔamak (the land) and wuʔu (water) to support all forms of life and both tangible and intangible cultural resources.

This concept is often summarized by a Ktunaxa law that describes our relationship with and responsibility to the land: Yaqaƚ Hankatiƚiƚki na ʔamak (our people care for the land; the land cares for our people). ʔaknumuɂtiƚiƚ (Ktunaxa law) includes the concept of "only taking what you need."

This concept, as well as other components of ʔaknumuɂtiƚiƚ (Ktunaxa law), is applicable to everyone who seeks to live in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. It is the Ktunaxa's duty to uphold our responsibilities as Indigenous title-holders and caretakers of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

ʔamakʔis Qukin (the Elk Valley) is located within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and is known to the Ktunaxa as Raven's Land. ʔamakʔis Qukin contains important archeological sites, historic travel corridors, harvesting locations and other areas of cultural significance to the Ktunaxa. This portion of Ktunaxa territory also contains deposits of qukin nuʔkiyʔis, also known to the Ktunaxa as Raven's Rock, or coal. Through history, Ktunaxa have utilized qukin nuʔkiyʔis to transport fire from site to site while travelling throughout their traditional territory. Since the arrival of newcomers to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, qukin nuʔkiyʔis has been sought after, staked, claimed, taken and traded.

Since the early 1970s, industrial-scale coal mining exploration and "valley fill" extraction has been taking place here. The removal of entire mountains to access qukin nuʔkiyʔis means that tremendous volumes of blasted bedrock are left behind—often dumped into adjacent valleys. Selenium is an essential micronutrient for ʔa·kxaṁ is ġapi qapsin (all livings things), including humans—but at elevated levels can be toxic. It is naturally found within rock formations in the Elk Valley and is released and "washed out" from the leftover blasted bedrock into the environment through the exposure of the "waste rock" to air, rain and snow.

By the mid-1990s, the Province of British Columbia and mining companies in the Elk Valley were aware of the increasing presence of selenium in the Elk River and its contribution to reproductive failure in egg-laying animals like fish, birds and amphibians.

Despite this recognition, in the early 2000s the rate of mining in the Elk Valley doubled compared to previous decades. By the end of 2022, the volume of waste rock that had been deposited into ʔamakʔis Qukin was estimated at more than 7.5 billion bank cubic metres. Water quality data shows elevated selenium from coal mine operations are seen throughout the Elk Valley watershed, downstream to Koocanusa Reservoir near Yaġit ʔa·knuqƚi 'it, through Montana and Idaho in the United States, and even at yaqan nuʔkiy in Creston, more than 300 kilometres downstream.

The issue of determining and enforcing an acceptable level of selenium—one that protects aquatic and human health—in ʔamakʔis Qukin and downstream across the

border throughout ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa remains an ongoing moral, legal, political, environmental and human health issue between the Ktunaxa, mining companies and provincial, state and federal governments on both sides of the border.

WHY IS TOO MUCH SELENIUM HARMFUL?

For egg-laying creatures such as fish, birds and amphibians, selenium accumulates in the tissues of the animals, mostly through diet. If the selenium is high enough, the eggs may fail to hatch, or may produce young with deformities and reduced rates of survival.

These effects are species-specific: some fish are able to reproduce with high levels of selenium in their bodies, such as suckers, and some experience reproductive failure at very low levels, such as the at-risk wiyaƚ (white sturgeon). Selenium also affects humans: symptoms of high selenium intake may include gastrointestinal disturbances, skin rashes, garlic breath, fatigue and irritability. Selenosis—the condition that results from chronic selenium intoxication—may also include lethargy, dizziness, motor weakness and burning or prickling in the extremities.

KOOTENAY, KOOCANUSA AND ELK

The Ktunaxa Creation Story follows the waterways within our territory, highlighting the importance of the Columbia and Kootenay rivers, both being central to our world view. We were created in interdependence with ʔamak (the land) and wuʔu (the water), and were given covenants by the Creator to protect, honour and celebrate what the Creator has given us.

The Kootenay watershed sits entirely within the transboundary Ktunaxa Nation territory and its stewardship is the responsibility of Ktunaxa and Kootenai on both sides of the imposed border. The Kootenay River provides critical habitat for rare and threatened fish species, including endangered wiyaƚ (white sturgeon), ʔaq̓uƚam (burbot or ling cod), swaq̓mu (kokanee salmon), qustiť (westslope cutthroat trout) and tuhuƚ (bull trout). The watershed within ʔamakʔis Qukin also contains matit' (mountain whitefish, sometimes called grayling), qustit' (rainbow trout), ƚaqƚi (fresh water mussels), q̓uyu (pikeminnow or squawfish) and q̓umi (suckers).

Koocanusa Reservoir, located downstream of Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƚi 'it, is a man-made body of water created when the Columbia River was dammed by the building of Libby Dam in Montana in the 1960s. This resulted in the flooding of more than 40,000 acres of rich river bottomlands and the creation of an artificial lake environment. Concern for selenium in this lake-like environment has been raised by scientists, but determining an acceptable level in Koocanusa Reservoir has been an ongoing debate between the Ktunaxa and colonial governments for decades.

As a tributary of the Kootenay River, the Elk River—which contributes 26 per cent of the Kootenay's flow—is where more than 90 per cent of the selenium enters the waterway. As recently as April 2022, selenium concentrations were more than three times the United States Environmental Protection Agency's legal requirement at the international boundary and six times the average concentrations in the Kootenay River upstream of coal mining.

These levels far exceed the scientifically based standards required to protect aquatic life and perpetuate ongoing harm to our ʔamak ¢ wuʔu (land and water). They also infringe on the rights of all Ktunaxa to harvest fish from the Kootenay system.

AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

For decades, the Ktunaxa have been watching industry take more than what was needed from the land and seeing the disappearance of culturally significant sites and of sources of traditional foods and areas for practising and passing

While a decade ago, there may not have been sufficient data to take immediate action, that can no longer be used as an excuse for inaction.

on traditions and teachings. The pace of coal extraction and waste-rock dumping are viewed by many Ktunaxa as unsustainable and as causing irreversible effects to the health of the water, the land, the air, aquatic and terrestrial species and, of course, Ktunaxa citizens and communities.

In 1909, the Boundary Waters Treaty had created the International Joint Commission (IJC) to protect "waters flowing across the international boundary" and, among other things, address issues of transboundary water pollution. Today in the 21st century, the Ktunaxa are witnessing a violation of Article IV of the treaty, which states that "boundary waters and waters flowing across the international boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other."

The collective Ktunaxa governments on both sides of the border formally called for the IJC to investigate these impacts in 2012. The request was again made in 2021 and is supported by the United States government and all six sitting IJC commissioners, but has been dismissed by Canada. Recently, leaders in both the United States and Canada issued the joint statement intending to reach an "agreement in principle" by summer 2023 to reduce and mitigate the impacts of water pollution in the Elk-Kootenay watershed.

"Mining pollution across our homelands jeopardizes our culture, our food security and, most importantly, the health of ʔa·kxaʔ is q̓api qapsin (All Living Things) for which we are responsible," says Ktunaxa Nation Chair Kathryn Teneese. "Canada has failed to properly regulate pollution from coal mines for too long, and their proposed new Coal Mining Effluent Regulations are not enough to reverse the harm to our waters. We need more than a soft commitment to agree to a solution in principle. The Kootenay River deserves, and the Ktunaxa people expect, clear federal action from the Canada-United States bilateral negotiations."

The Ktunaxa believe the expertise and independence of the IJC make it well suited to helping Canada, the United States, the provincial and state governments and the transboundary Ktunaxa to better understand solutions for managing and reducing pollution throughout the watershed. While a decade ago, there may not have been sufficient data to take immediate action, that can no longer be used as an excuse for inaction.

The Ktunaxa cannot stand by and allow this to happen, and we must uphold our stewardship responsibilities to our lands, our people and future generations. Ktunaxa First Nations stand united with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in the Ktunaxa principle of reciprocal stewardship of ʔa·kxaʔ is q̓api qapsin and a one-river approach, irrespective of any imposed international boundary.

"While Canada and British Columbia stonewall efforts by First Nations, Tribes and the United States to address pollution, BC mining continues to leach toxic pollutants into our transboundary waters," said Vice-Chairman Gary Aitken Jr. from the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho in an interview after the bilateral announcement. "We are monitoring the death of our river systems, while those in power have corrupt relationships with the mining industry and refuse to stand up to pollution. It's like watching a loved one die, knowing that they could be saved."

Ktunaxa First Nations stand united with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in the Ktunaxa principle of reciprocal stewardship of ʔa·kxaʔ is q̓api qapsin and a one-river approach, irrespective of any imposed international boundary.

ʔaknumuɬtiɬiɬ (Ktunaxa law) includes the concept of "only taking what you need." This concept, as well as other components of ʔaknumuɬtiɬiɬ, is applicable to everyone who seeks to live in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Steps towards reconciling with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa can be achieved through the concept of "giving back to the land."

In the Elk Valley coal-mining context, "giving back" suggests a powerful drive towards the monitoring of ongoing and future impacts, the restoration of ecological and cultural relationships, and rigorous stewardship. The Ktunaxa call upon those harvesting coal from ʔamakʔis Qukin to heed the warning in the story of the Squirrel and Ram.

Blaine Burgoyne

Photographer, Wellness Support Worker

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Blaine Burgoyne is a skilled photographer, passionate about capturing the land through his lens. He was born and raised in his Indigenous territory and has a unique understanding and view of the beauty that surrounds us. "In my raw photography, I produce positive and warm emotions. When I am out in the environment, it is just me, my camera and the moment—pure."

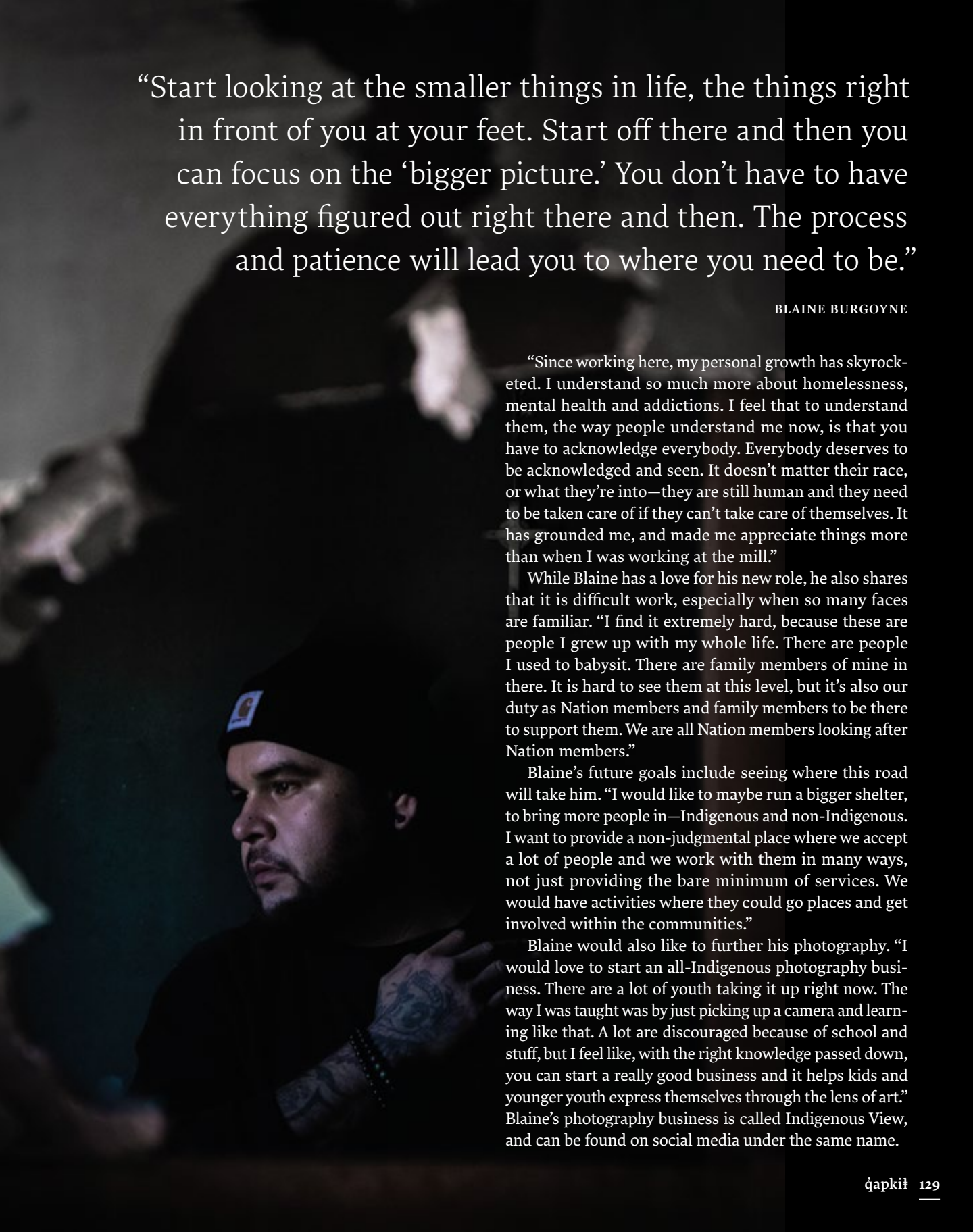
Blaine grew up in ʔaq̓am—his parents are Shelley Collinson and David Burgoyne, and his stepdad is Robert Collinson. "My life growing up as a kid was amazing. The community was really tight, everyone was looking after everyone, and everyone was always smiling. I was taught a lot by my uncles, aunties and parents. The family was there to support each other. Life was amazing living on the rez. When I was about 12 years old, we moved out to a farm. It was half an hour out of town, and very isolating. I learned to be in my own thoughts and it helped me understand who I was, but it was hard to figure out what I wanted to be. I feel living out there is why I graduated high school, because the only time I could hang out with friends was by going to school."

"Everybody deserves to be acknowledged and seen. It doesn't matter their race, or what they're into—they are still human and they need to be taken care of if they can't take care of themselves."

When Blaine graduated from high school, he got a job in Elko at the Canfor Mill. He reflects back on his twenties, sharing that it was a wild time. "I was always chasing society's standards of fitting in and being cool. I felt like I had to prove myself a lot, especially being Indigenous. It was two different worlds. Reserve living and town living. It was in my thirties when I started being the true me—finding myself and being different from the rest. A buddy of mine told me I was weird once, and I took offence to it. But he said, 'No, you're weird in the sense that you can do whatever you want, and you can pull it off.' I thought about what he said, and that's when I started to be comfortable with myself. I was always labelled as a wild party guy. People make assumptions about me based on the way I look, but then they find out that it is 100 per cent the opposite—the best way to show people who I am, and fight stereotypes, is through my art."

Blaine has been practising photography for about three and a half years. "How I got started, I bought a camera when I was bored. I had been taking pictures on my phone and I thought, what could I do if I had a professional camera? So I worked some overtime one day and bought one. It has taught me so much patience. You can take 5,000 photos in one day, and there may be that one perfect shot. My favourite things to shoot are flowers. Art is the only way I feel I can express myself. The younger generation seems to be more comfortable expressing themselves, but I need art to express the way I feel. I'm not so much into taking family photographs—I would rather express creativity. I shoot things the way I see them, and my final product still blows me away. It motivates me to keep pushing on, the way I want to."

Since entering the photography field and shifting into the arts, Blaine has also made moves towards working in the social sector, a shift that aligns with his philosophy as an artist. "I am a wellness support worker, now working at a complex care housing unit. It opened January 2023. We help our own Nation members, as well as other Indigenous people coping with addictions and mental illness. We take them off the street and bring them into this house where they stay the night, sleep and have their own individual rooms. It is a safe place for them to go rather than staying on the streets.



"Start looking at the smaller things in life, the things right in front of you at your feet. Start off there and then you can focus on the 'bigger picture.' You don't have to have everything figured out right there and then. The process and patience will lead you to where you need to be."

BLAINE BURGOYNE

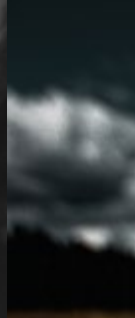
"Since working here, my personal growth has skyrocketed. I understand so much more about homelessness, mental health and addictions. I feel that to understand them, the way people understand me now, is that you have to acknowledge everybody. Everybody deserves to be acknowledged and seen. It doesn't matter their race, or what they're into—they are still human and they need to be taken care of if they can't take care of themselves. It has grounded me, and made me appreciate things more than when I was working at the mill."

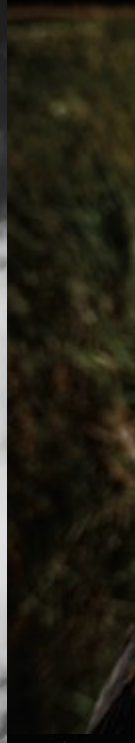
While Blaine has a love for his new role, he also shares that it is difficult work, especially when so many faces are familiar. "I find it extremely hard, because these are people I grew up with my whole life. There are people I used to babysit. There are family members of mine in there. It is hard to see them at this level, but it's also our duty as Nation members and family members to be there to support them. We are all Nation members looking after Nation members."

Blaine's future goals include seeing where this road will take him. "I would like to maybe run a bigger shelter, to bring more people in—Indigenous and non-Indigenous. I want to provide a non-judgmental place where we accept a lot of people and we work with them in many ways, not just providing the bare minimum of services. We would have activities where they could go places and get involved within the communities."

Blaine would also like to further his photography. "I would love to start an all-Indigenous photography business. There are a lot of youth taking it up right now. The way I was taught was by just picking up a camera and learning like that. A lot are discouraged because of school and stuff, but I feel like, with the right knowledge passed down, you can start a really good business and it helps kids and younger youth express themselves through the lens of art." Blaine's photography business is called Indigenous View, and can be found on social media under the same name.

 Photos: Blaine Burgoyne.





 Photos: Blaine Burgoyne.

Darcy Luke/Roshau

Artist and Creative Entrepreneur

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

Darcy's passion for art began at the young age of three. An artist of many mediums, she is mostly known in the Ktunaxa community for her mural work, paintings and beadwork—though she is also a sewer, digital creator and aspiring basket maker. "I have enjoyed art since I was really little. I started painting on rocks when I was three or four and I used to sell them in my campground—Big Pine, on Lake Koocanusa. I basically grew up there, it was like my second home."

Though she has lived in Cranbrook her whole life, Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƛi 'it is her Ktunaxa community, and it is where she calls home. "I've spent every spring and summer there since the time I was three months old until now. It is such a peaceful feeling out there, being surrounded by the huge pine trees and being at Koocanusa. Hearing the water flowing—I love it."

Darcy's dad is Bob Luke and her grandmother is Merle Gravelle, while her mom's lineage is from Hungary and the Czech Republic, where her great, great grandparents immigrated from.

"Beading is the one thing that brings me back all the time. It's like therapy to me...it's really peaceful and calming. For the most part, it makes me feel connected to my Ktunaxa identity. I hope that every Ktunaxa person can find meaning and connection to Ktunaxa identity in their life in some way, whether through language, art or being on the land."

"Art has taught me that I don't have to be perfect. No piece is ever perfect—there will always be some kind of mistake or wobbly line, and that is okay."

Darcy's digital creations have also helped her to connect with Ktunaxa identity and language. A few years ago, she applied for funds through the Ktunaxa Nation Citizen's Excellence Award, and purchased an iPad to begin creating digital media. She has since been involved with creating cultural resources, such as flash cards, colouring books, greeting cards, T-shirt designs and book illustrations.

"I use an Apple pen with my iPad, and I use an app called Procreate. It has supported my work with the Ktunaxa Nation Council in both the Education and Employment Sector and Traditional Knowledge and Language. I am proud of the fact I can use my art in a meaningful way—whether that is helping to create resources or doing my beadwork—knowing that it is being loved and enjoyed."

As a little girl painting rocks, Darcy shares that she had many people who were supportive of her, appreciating her art and encouraging her to keep at it. "We always lift people up in that way—I see so many Ktunaxa women being successful in their own way, and I know I can go to any one of them and they will be there to help build me up. We don't bring people down."

→→→ **cedarandpine.square.site**

DARCY'S TIPS FOR BEGINNER ARTISTS

"Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you want to learn how to do something, ask. There are many Nation members who are willing to help or point you in the right direction. If you are shy, there are also many online learning tools. As for making a living as an artist, you have to start somewhere—maybe start by selling a painting, or setting up a table at a local market. The more you show off your work and your skills, the more connections you will make."

Raven's Nest Resort

By Martina Escutin (Shovar)

It all started with a bannock truck on the side of the highway. Seven-year-old Faro Burgoyne and his mom decided to sell bannock as a fundraiser to go to the Calgary Stampede. They were successful, and discovered how popular a bannock business could be. This was the first taste of entrepreneurship for Faro and the beginning of an exciting adventure.

Faro's parents are David Burgoyne, an ʔakisq̓nuknik of the Ktunaxa Nation, and Hillary Vance of the Tahltan and Northern Tutchone Nations. Faro was born and raised on his family's property in the community of ʔakisq̓nuk, where he is a Band member and co-owner of the Raven's Nest Resort and Campground. He and his partner Emily Slobodzian built the resort from scratch with support from family and friends.

Reflecting on what he is most proud of as a Ktunaxa person, Faro shares about the time he spent growing up in the community, surrounded by Elders. "You can see it in their eyes, the trauma that they'd gone through—and the toughness associated with that, it runs in our blood and is passed down. I see a very tough-skinned, resilient Nation."

"A big part of it was networking, finding the people who knew how to find the support."

He has fond memories of the ʔakisq̓nuk Rediscovery Camp, where they would have visits from Elders and hear legends and words of wisdom. As a teen, Faro began exploring his independence and the various opportunities and channels there are in life. Looking back, he shares regrets that he drifted away from community. However, it brought him experiences like competitive snowboarding and travelling around North America.

Since he was a young teenager, Faro knew it was likely he would be a business owner. "I liked making my own money. I liked selling bannock. I sold firewood. If I could sell something, I'd be trying to sell it. I didn't not like working, but most times when I had a job I felt like I could be either doing the same thing or something better for myself."

Faro draws inspiration from people who are driven to follow their dreams. He admires people, usually artists, who "put everything they have into everything they're creating, and making it happen. That is very inspirational to me." One entrepreneur in particular Faro looks up to is Patrick Tolchard, a business owner in Radium Hot Springs who supported Faro and Emily with business start-up advice and mentoring. He owns Kootenay Collective, which offers central booking and advertising for different businesses in the Kootenays, mainly outdoor adventures, and is also co-owner of Valley Zipline.

Growing up on a beautiful property owned by his family, Faro knew that there would likely be an opportunity for a campground if he ever wanted to pursue it. It sat on his mind as a possibility since he was about 17.

They spent some time travelling around Guatemala and Columbia, and it was during this time away that they decided they would start building the campground business.

"During the start-up we had many friends and family who gave us an unreal amount of support and helped us build it. They were always there when we needed extra hands for everything. We built everything ourselves and we wouldn't have been able to do it just ourselves. Our personal community stepped up and stepped in."

The dream that was Raven's Nest Resort came to life in summer 2019. The campground features eight log cabins, 26 campsites and one tipi site. The cabins have all the amenities: running hot water, bathroom with shower, kitchenette, barbeque, picnic table, firepit and a gorgeous view of the wetlands. It's a very picturesque natural environment.

There is also an 18-hole disc golf course located on the property, playable by donation. The resort is open for event bookings, such as weddings and family reunions, and there are several other events that have returned yearly. Now, the Wicked Woods Festival is hosted on the property each year, although Faro and Emily don't personally run the event.

As a Ktunaxa person, Faro shares that starting a business wasn't easy. "Growing up, there was this big push for Indigenous people to be entrepreneurs, like there is unlimited support from the government, as if it's easy. It's not easy. The support has many stipulations. But it was there and we did get all the support that we qualified for.

Ƥakisq̓nuknik
Ktunaxa person from Ƥakisq̓nuk

A big part of it was networking, finding the people who knew how to find the support."

They learned quickly how to adapt and push through the challenges. "Every week there was a new hurdle that was maybe a make-or-break for our entire business and for our personal futures. Staying on track and, honestly, becoming obsessed with our project was a must and that's how we got through it."

Though becoming an entrepreneur wasn't easy, Faro sees a lot of potential through support systems that have been set up for Indigenous people. He encourages those who take this path to use those supports, to look at the opportunities that come along with being Indigenous today and to not see it as a burden. Through it all, Faro gained a work ethic he never knew he had. Faro attributes his resilience—which helped him overcome the challenges—to his identity as a Ktunaxa person. "There are so many people in our generation that I'm very proud of. If we can keep that momentum going, I think it's a super bright future."

→→→ **ravensnestresort.com**

FARO'S ADVICE FOR KTUNAXA LOOKING TO START A BUSINESS

"The best thing you can do right away is contact Janice Alpine at the Kootenay Aboriginal Business Development Agency (KABDA). Our experience with her was great. She listened to our idea and helped us get started with making a business plan, giving us pointers on how it should look and what it should include. She also connected us with potential lenders and more supports. Everything kind of snowballed from there. You can tell Janice is passionate about what she does. Overall, she is extremely present in the community (business and local), and is very aware of what's going on and what's to come."

RAVEN'S NEST RECOMMENDED ENTREPRENEURIAL RESOURCES FOR KTUNAXA

Kootenay Aboriginal Business Development Agency (KABDA)

Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce

Kootenay Rockies Tourism

Destination BC

Indigenous Tourism BC

Community Futures

All Nations Trust Company

Ktunaxa Nation Council Economic and Investment Sector

Carol Louie

Ktunaxa Artist

Where do you live?
Creston, BC (yaqan nuʔkiy – Lower Kootenay).

How did your journey with art begin in your life?
Well, I guess you can say my art began when I was a kid and was first handed a pencil and a blank paper or crayons. I enjoyed seeing colouring pages come to life and to fill a blank page.

What mediums have you worked with?
Digital, watercolour, oils, acrylic, charcoal, fabric, traditional hide, wood, clay and beading.

Tell us about a few art projects you are most proud of?
The murals I did at the Ktunaxa Nation Council office, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho building and the Creston Wildlife Centre, and a large bear painting with Qat'muk in the background. I also like the drum (painting) where inside the eagle feathers is each animal that represents the communities within Ktunaxa territory.

What are you working on at the moment?
I'm like seven paintings behind. I kind of work on two to three paintings at the same time to give my mind a break. The one that has the most progress is a 24 x 36-inch hummingbird painting.

Can you tell us about your creative process?
I'm a person who can't just paint, draw, sew or bead in an instant. I need to be in a zone mentally and spiritually to start and throughout the project. It's a process for me.

What does it mean to you to be a Ktunaxa artist and an artist in general?
I am one of many Ktunaxa artisans. I came from a family of knowledge holders—language, culture, traditions and storytellers. Being an observer, there is much pride in being who we are. To be referred to as an artist puts pressure on me (laughs out loud) since I'm self-taught.

What should people in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa know about Ktunaxa people?
Ktunaxa people are unique in their language, culture and traditions, yet similar in some ways to the culture and traditions of other First Nations. We are storytellers, talk in riddles and use legends for lessons in life. There is much to write on this, but I'm leaving it to this: we love to laugh, eat frybread and waɬkna (jerky).

How can people find out more about you or see your art?
I'm a private person. I don't share much about myself but I do share my knowledge when it comes to Ktunaxa culture, traditions and history. Legends Logos has a few copies of my art. I usually do commissioned work. I have some photos if anyone wanted to see those via email. Not often will I participate in an art show and display. I'm pretty busy.

→→→ Contact Carol Louie at **louiecarol@hotmail.com**.

Lucille Shovar

Grandmother, Great-grandmother

Interviewed by her granddaughter Martina Escutin (Shovar)

What is important to you about being a grandmother?
I wish I'd listened a lot more to my mom and grandparents and great-grandparents to keep the traditions and language happening. When they're young, a lot of people don't listen and don't realize what's important. That's why we lost a lot of the language and culture, because we didn't think to listen.

What was the influence of residential schools on your upbringing?
Growing up, in a way, at times I felt embarrassed to be Indigenous because, you know, there was a lot of racism. Plus, we were thrown in residential school, so you just didn't know what the hell was going on. I can't remember what I thought at the time—you kind of block off the memories.

There were some good memories, but not very much. I have memories of the crying hill, when you drive through Cherry Creek, because if you went that way it meant you didn't go to town to buy clothes or candies—you'd get to that one part on the hill and you'd start crying because it meant you were going back to the Mission School and you weren't headed into town to buy candies.

"The people that fought to be recognized as the First Peoples of this country—it makes me proud."

Has that feeling changed since then to now?
The people that fought to be recognized as the First Peoples of this country—it makes me proud. I just wish I could have more influence in the non-Indigenous community. It's hard to explain. Before, we had ratty clothes when we went to school, even when we left residential school and we just got thrown into the public school system. We were in residential school and then all of a sudden we got integrated into town. It was bad then—there were fights and stuff like that. The white kids, I guess we kind of shocked them, when they brought a whole busload of Indigenous kids into the school. It was hard. When we had to go to school here, there wasn't that much to eat in our house, and we didn't have much for clothes. At the Mission School, we all had to wear the same clothes as each other, but now we didn't have clothes and we had to find our own to go to school. They were kind of ratty and it was kind of embarrassing.

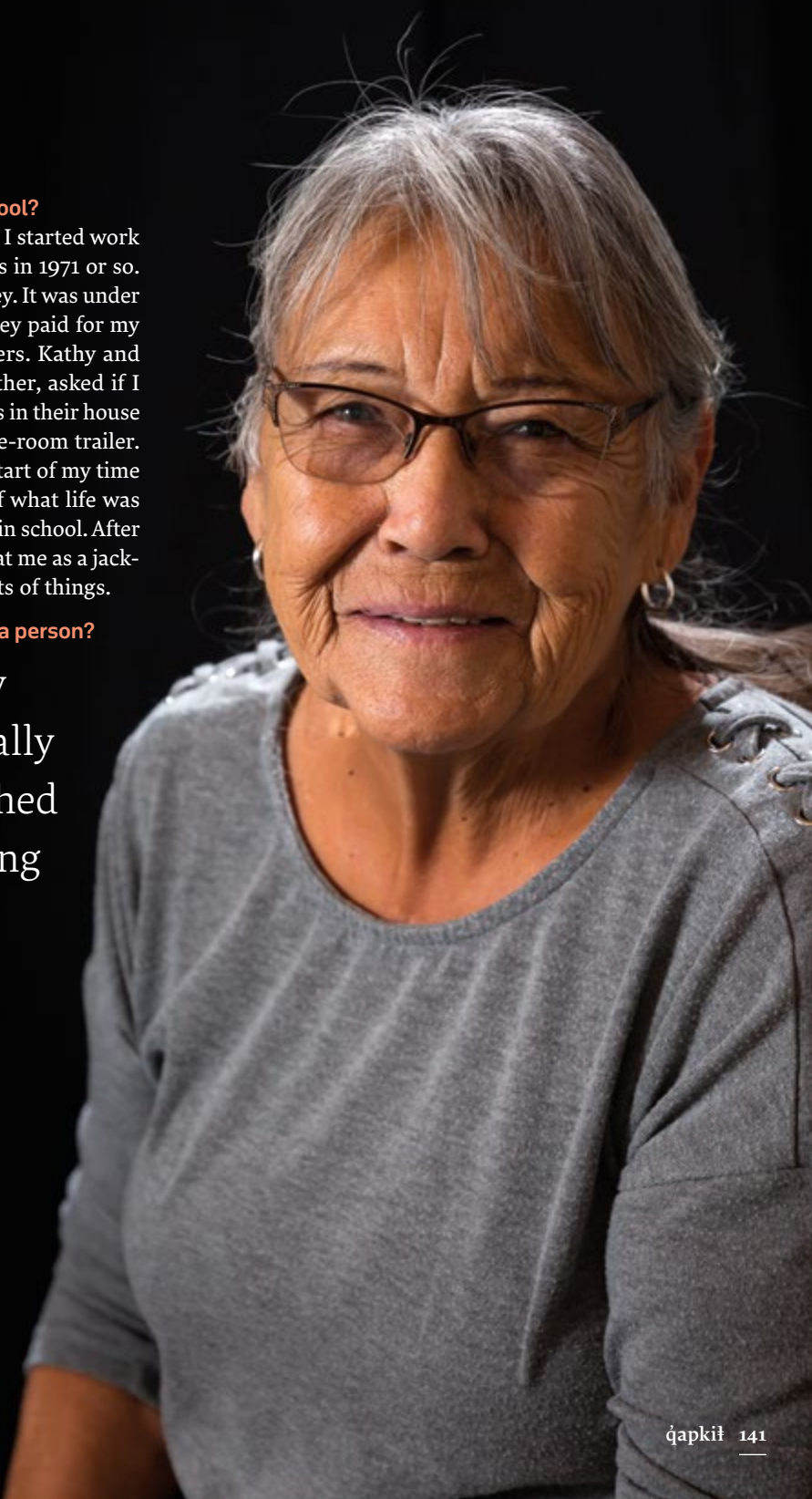
How many of the 12 kids in your family went to residential school?
There were five of us who went. I am the oldest, and then the four after me also went. The youngest of us five only went for a year. But some of the Nicholas family members started to partake in sports so they wouldn't have to go home. In reality, going home was difficult. I feel that is how some of the Nicholas family members got started in sports.

What do you feel is the responsibility of Ktunaxa grandmothers?
On New Years Day, we would all sit around and the adults would all bring food. They'd pass it around—I remember Japanese oranges were a hit at that time. I remember my great-grandma Sophie Nicholas would put me right beside her. I couldn't get up and run around. Kids nowadays get up and run around and don't listen to their parents. I was told to sit there and not move until they said I could. A lot of us kids were like that—we weren't allowed to run around. I think it was sort of like showing respect for the adults. That's something that is very prominent in my mind, is grandparents keeping their children close by, teaching discipline. My great-grandma Sophie—everyone called her "ma"—she couldn't speak English. She seemed like she was always left with all us kids. I don't remember my grandfather Dominic all that well.

What did you do after finishing high school?
I worked at the Band Office in ʔakisq̓nuk. I started work there when they first started Band Offices in 1971 or so. First I did training at City Hall in Kimberley. It was under a First Citizens fund. I went there and they paid for my tuition. When I was done, I had job offers. Kathy and Wilf Teneese, when they were still together, asked if I could come work at the Band Office. It was in their house to begin with. Then they bought the three-room trailer. That's where I started, and that was the start of my time at the Band Office. I don't recall much of what life was before the Band Office, because I was also in school. After I became the Band Manager, they looked at me as a jack-of-all-trades and I got called to do all sorts of things.

What are you most proud of as a Ktunaxa person?

I am most proud of my grandchildren. Especially you—you've accomplished a lot, and it is something I'm amazed by. I enjoy being a grandma.



A Bird's-eye View with SMOR Productions

Sonya Morigeau is a 32-year-old Ktunaxa woman from ʔaq̓am. She is the creator and owner of SMOR Productions, a unique aerial videography company operating throughout ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and beyond.

How long have you been interested in videography?
Since I was a teenager. I started going to festivals, and seeing the "after" movies that were created always inspired me to want to learn the art.

Can you tell us about your journey into aerial videography?
After the Indigenous Filmmaker Masterclass was brought to ʔaq̓am, I got to see first-hand the footage that could be captured using a drone. I worked on the "Mice Sisters Legend" with my partner in the course and it turned out better than expected. I knew from then on that I wanted to get certified so I could collect my own aerial footage for my projects. I took the drone operator course through College of the Rockies, which has also helped me fulfill my business goals.

What made you realize this was something you wanted to go "all in" on?
After working tirelessly at an office job for seven years, I realized that it wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. You should want to go to work and do something you love, so I quit and decided to pursue my career as an aerial technician.

What do you love about videography?
I love the different views you normally would never get to see, even in an airplane. I like to say it's an eagle-eye perspective!

What is your approach to learning?
You must be creative and have an eye for detail. When collecting aerial footage, you want to get the best angles possible from every direction, have a steady hand when moving the camera/gimbal and always be aware of your surroundings.

"SMOR Productions strives to provide an eagle-eye perspective for clients and their projects, specializing in aerial footage, videography, editing, mapping and more."

SONYA MORIGEAU

What is awesome about being a Ktunaxa woman capturing images and footage in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa?
The best aspect is that I am in a field of work that one could say is more male-dominated. I was the only woman in the drone operator course I participated in, but, being a strong Ktunaxa woman, I know I bring a lot to the table and only aim for success.

Do you participate in any traditional Ktunaxa activities?
I participate in traditional activities like tanning hides, picking berries, making moccasins, sewing traditional wear and beading. Camping and being on the land are my favourite activities.

What is your biggest lesson so far when it comes to starting a business?
My biggest lessons have been to stay motivated and remind myself why I am doing this. Starting a business isn't easy and you will have to spend your own money if you want to make it. Things don't happen overnight, and it's a lot of putting yourself out there, especially when networking.

Have you sought support from the Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC) Economic and Investment Sector and other business development organizations?
I have received assistance from Shane Stewart at the KNC Economic and Investment Sector. He has been a great help with everything for my business, like logo design, business supplies, website building and applying for and registering my business. I wouldn't know where to start, so it has been great working with him.

What would you say to a Ktunaxa entrepreneur about accessing support?
Don't wait and just do it. Asking for help is hard sometimes, but when you have an idea you want to pursue, go for it—they are there to help.

How do you see SMOR Productions in five years' time?
I see it being successful, with ongoing contracts and a handful of staff. I'll be super busy and flying the newest DJI Inspire! My main clients will be commercial companies, event producers and artists like choreographers and dancers.

What types of projects mean the most to you?
When I got to work with the late Herman Alpine on the "Mice Sisters Legend," it was very meaningful to me because it is something I can still watch to this day and hear his voice. I love doing documentary-style projects, but projects that allow me to direct, produce and edit are always so meaningful because I get to complete the project from start to finish.

What was the most fun aspect of creating your business brand?
The most fun aspect was thinking of a design and seeing it come to fruition.

What's next for you?
I've been studying for my Small Advanced RPAS (remotely piloted aircraft system) Licence and will be taking the test soon. I am excited to see where 2023 brings SMOR Productions. We are just getting started and are looking forward to working with different organizations.

→→→ **smorproductions.com**

ʔakuqłaʔntam

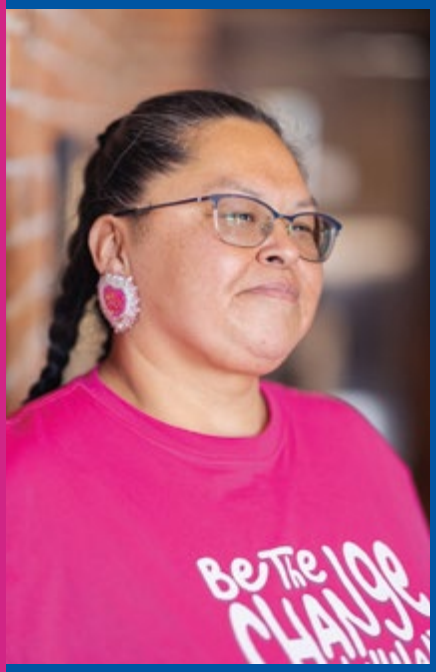
Photographed at St. Eugene Golf Resort and Casino.

“It makes me feel good wearing the things that I’ve made–with an Indigenous flair to it.”

JANICE ALPINE

Janice Alpine creates her own custom-designed clothing influenced by Indigenous art and design elements.

ʔakuqȼan̓tam – Clothing



Above (L-R): Bonny Henry and Martina Escutin (Shovar).
Below (L-R): Denise Birdstone. Jewellery by Caroline Basil of Line 49' Design.
Opposite: Bree Nicholas.

"I try to recreate some of the items that were worn back in the early days that I've seen in pictures in the 1800s and 1900s, but a lot of the pieces that men wore were ceremonial. I use a lot of gemstones that are made in Canada that have an Indigenous story with them."

CAROLINE BASIL

kupaʔtiɬ

Soapberry (Shepherdia Canadensis)

kupaʔtiɬ—also known as soapberry or foamberry—has been commonly harvested within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa for generations. High in vitamin C and iron, the berries are used in many culinary forms including as syrup or sauce, canned or jarred as juice, made into cakes or whipped into "Indian Ice Cream." When crushed or boiled, it creates a foam, used like soap.

Please consult an Elder, Knowledge Holder or informational resource to properly harvest, prepare and consume kupaʔtiɬ.

Clockwise from top: Dawn Scout, Ktunaxa foodie entrepreneur pictured in the St. Eugene kitchen.

Dishes from the St. Eugene restaurants. Pan-seared Arctic char with smoked milk, celeriac and fennel slaw, and fermented daikon. AAA Lower Kootenay Band ribeye with Three Sisters succotash, grilled hen of the woods mushroom, and River Stone meritage red wine demi-glace.


22-23
KOOTENAI
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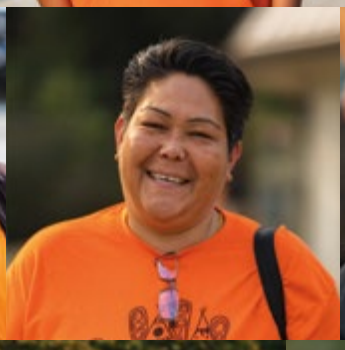


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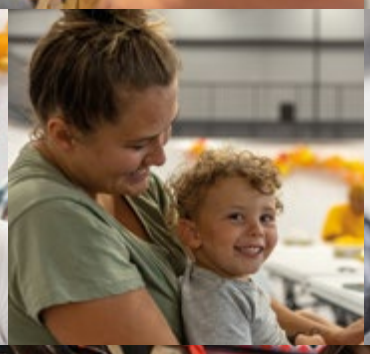


KTUNAXA READY

The Ktunaxa Ready website showcases and promotes Ktunaxa businesses, continuing the proud tradition of conducting business in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and beyond. Ktunaxa businesses operate in all market sectors and offer trusted resources, products and services. Ktunaxa citizens provide passion and skills in the form of services and products that support families and communities.

Initiated by the Ktunaxa Economic and Investment Sector, the Ktunaxa Ready Business Directory was developed in response to a need for a central resource with details on products and services available from Ktunaxa businesses. Launched in 2020, Ktunaxa Ready provides a trusted location to find and connect with Ktunaxa businesses.

The directory provides a place for Ktunaxa business contact details, websites and social media channels and a description of products and services with photographs, areas of operation, location maps and more. The directory is fully searchable and can be sorted by categories.

»»»» **ktunaxaready.com**

KTUNAXA READY BUSINESS DIRECTORY

1*ITA's Auto Detailing
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-919-1648

1*ITA's Auto Detailing takes pride in its business, detailing vehicles to the highest of standards. 1*ITA's provides detailing services to personal, fleet and company vehicles, operating year-round with all the commercial services of a professional auto detailer and the option to come to you.

Akinmi Resources
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-417-1454

Akinmi Resources is a forestry contracting company, offering brushing, spacing and firewood bucking. It conducts business in areas such as ecological restoration, wildfire interface work and vegetation maintenance.

ʔaq̓am Community Enterprises
7470 Mission Road
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-464-9704
investaqam.com

ʔaq̓am Community Enterprises generates revenue and creates economic opportunities through sound business practices and strategic relationships built upon a foundation of fairness and integrity. ʔaq̓am Community Enterprises are continuously identifying opportunities for business start-ups, acquisitions, partnerships and investments. Additionally, the community of ʔaq̓am has over 19,300 acres of pristine land for lease or rent.

ʔaq̓am Flagging & Safety
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-417-6862
aqamflagging.ca

ʔaq̓am Flagging & Safety (formerly D&B Flagging and Traffic Control Services) is 100 per cent owned by ʔaq̓am Community Enterprises and offers flagging and traffic control services for the East and West Kootenays, Shuswap, Columbia and Boundary areas, Southern and Central Alberta, and Trans-Canada Corridor.

ʔaq̓am Trading Gas Bar
7470 Mission Road
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
778-761-204
aqamtrading.com

ʔaq̓am Trading Gas Bar serves the whole community, including all First Nations communities, regional districts, tourists and visitors. It is pleased to be running for over 20 years, offering a range of local products, along with its gas services. Some local treasures you may find there include drums, smudge kits, feather fans, and medicine pouches from Mitch Helary as well as convenience goods and snacks. A great local business to support when you're passing through the area.

ʔaq̓amnik Daycare
7470 Mission Road
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-426-5717
aqam.net

The ʔaq̓amnik Daycare is a licensed centre that accommodates children eight to 36 months and three to five years. These are two separate programs located within the same building at ʔaq̓am. The ʔaq̓amnik Daycare provides quality care to children and their families, incorporating the Early Learning Frameworks' four foundations of learning: belonging, well-being, engagement and expression. The program is play-based and child-led, meaning that when the children show an interest in something, teachers provide more information and teach them through experiences.

Arrowhead Designs
ʔa·kisk̓aqɬiʔit / Cranbrook
250-464-9347
arrowheaddesigns.ca

Owned by established artist Sheri, Arrowhead Designs specializes in custom designs. Sheri offers a suite of specialties, including business promotional products, one-off printing and design, items for sports teams and weddings, and much more. Custom designs are available—if you can dream it, we can make it.

AshFirewear
ʔakisq̓nuk / Fairmont Hot Springs
306-480-5569
ashfirewear.com

AshFirewear specializes in design and manufacture of female firefighter clothing. The fabric has been specially weaved to fit NFPA standards, made out of 100 per cent all-natural fibres that are biodegradable. Made for the working woman, AshFirewear fire-resistant clothing, gear and daily wear are not just limited to her. Custom-fitted, custom-fabricated orders are available.

Ainsworth Hot Springs Resort
3609 Balfour-Kaslo-Galena Bay Highway, Ainsworth
1-800-668-1171
ainsworthhotsprings.com

Ainsworth Hot Springs Resort is located within the traditional homelands of the Ktunaxa People. Since time immemorial Ktunaxa have utilized this site nestled in the mountain side along the shores of Kootenay Lake as a place for healing. The hot springs were first visited by Ktunaxa who experienced the waters as a welcome respite after a long day of hunting, fishing, and gathering roots and berries in what is now known as the Kootenay region.

Ktunaxa embraced the nupika wuʔu–or spirit water–for their healing and rejuvenating powers. The resort has been welcoming guests since the 1930's, and today the property is owned by yaqan nuʔkiy—returning Ktunaxa to this significant land so that they may share their appreciation with others.

Ayes Ranch Campground
Kootenay Highway
Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqti ʻit / Grasmere
250-887-3203
koocanusacamping.com

Located on Lake Koocanusa and offering seasonal and overnight camping RV leased lots, Ayes Ranch offers two amazing things: the great sense of community among its seasonal long-term guests and the large size of its campsites.

Big Chief Bussing Inc.
ʔakisq̓nuk / Windermere
250-270-0272

Owned and operated by Jason Nicholas and Robert Martin, Big Chief Bussing Inc. is an Indigenous-owned transportation business. Transportation and busing of anything is available, including hot-shot services, moving staff and crews from laydown yards to job sites, and transporting people to events and concerts. If you need people or something transported, Big Chief Bussing can move it.

Big Springs Campground
Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqti ʻit / Grasmere
250-887-3203
koocanusacamping.com

Located in a secluded location on the shore of Lake Koocanusa, the campground offers 20 campsites with amazing views and access to the beach. The remote location and natural landscape of Big Springs Campground guarantees quality family time.

Cedar and Pine Design
250-464-5259
cedarandpine.square.site

Darcy Luke/Roshau is a self-taught artist in traditional art, from beading and sewing to murals. All the items she works on are hand-crafted. She hopes that people will appreciate traditional art more, including the Ktunaxa components that are reflected in the artwork, and understand the time and work that goes into creating each piece.

Chief Burger Catering
yaqan nuʔkiy / Creston
250-428-4794

Chief Burger Catering is a family-run business, mainly operated by Chad and Trina Luke. It provides catering services for groups of any size, from 50–400 people. With many years' experience providing great food through catering, it is committed to exceptional service. Popular menu items include the Chief Burger Meal, Indian tacos, roast dinners, Chilli-N-Fry bread, Stew-N-Fry bread and breakfast dishes.

Dorr Road Campground
Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqt̓i 'it / Grasmere
250-887-3203
koocanusacamping.com

Dorr Road Campground has extensive beautiful sandy beaches and shade trees. Sites are pet friendly and spacious enough to accommodate larger RVs. There is also a full-time, live-in camp host. Dorr Road is well worth the drive!

Eagle Bear Spirit
yaqan nuʔkiy / Creston
250-402-8241

This Ktunaxa drum group based out of yaqan nuʔkiy–Lower Kootenay near Creston, is great for opening ceremonies, welcomings or traditional/contemporary powwows. Book Eagle Bear Spirit for your event today.

Feathers Aligned
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-919-7502

Feathers Aligned offers spiritual wellness, reiki healing and intuitive card readings.

FlexiNET Broadband Inc.
220 Cranbrook Street North
ʔa·kisk̓aq‡iʔit / Cranbrook
250-489-3539
flexinet.ca

Founded in 2007 as a broadband network operator, FlexiNET Broadband has a primary focus to provide services to rural and under-served communities. FlexiNET's powerful broadband network extends from Golden to Roosville. The network is supported by 24/7 operations monitoring systems and, for quick responsiveness, operations teams are based locally. Additional services include wholesale internet bandwidth, ISPs, network engineering services and wireless and fibre-optic business network management throughout BC and Alberta.

Fry Bread For Fun$
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-421-9275

Fry Bread for Fun$ caters at local public, community and sporting events and business functions, specializing in any and all remote outdoor events. We have mobile cooking facilities, as well as a mobile hot dog and barbeque stand.

Grasmere General Store
3335 Highway 93
Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqt̓i 'it / Grasmere
250-887-3244

Ktunaxa member-owned and operated, this store offers fuel, groceries, snacks and a BC Liquor distribution outlet.

Indigenous View Photography – Blaine Burgoyne
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-426-9823

Specializing in canvas wall art and contract photography, Indigenous View Photography is the work of Blaine Burgoyne. He is a skilled photographer, passionate about capturing Indigenous land through his lens. Born and raised in the Kootenays, he has a unique connection, understanding and view of the beauty in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Ka·Kin Resource Corporation
5500 Village Loop Road
Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqt̓i 'it / Grasmere
250-887-3461
tobaccoplains.org

Ka·kin Resource Corporation, wholly owned by Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqt̓i 'it–Tobacco Plains Indian Band, performs a broad range of forestry operations across ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and beyond. Small in size and deep in experience, Ka·kin Resource Corporation is an ideal solution for developments that benefit from a nimble and cost-effective approach. Projects include border and right-of-way clearing, timber harvest, fuel reduction and management, road building and maintenance, and more.

Kettle River Contracting
201 – 127 Commercial Drive, Calgary
587-646-4751
kettlerivercontracting.com

Kettle River Contracting specializes in heavy civil construction, providing services to the resource development industry. Our goal for every project is the same: provide high-quality services on time, on budget and in a professional and ethical manner. Services include site development, grading, crushing, pit development, surface water management, earth dams and tailings, bridge installation, road and site maintenance, deep underground utilities, surveying, reclamation and more.

Ktunaxa Enterprises Ltd.
100 – 1629 Baker Street
ʔa·kisk̓aq‡iʔit / Cranbrook
250-420-2745
ktunaxaenterprises.ca

Ktunaxa Enterprises Ltd. manages sustainable and responsible businesses, and supports Ktunaxa communities in cultivating business and economic-development opportunities that lead to greater wealth, employment and capacity-building for Ktunaxa citizens and the Nation as a whole. Through the business units Nupqu, Kettle River Contracting and ʔamakʔis Transport, Ktunaxa Enterprises provides a broad range of professional services to the mining, infrastructure, construction, forestry, power, civil and public works sectors. Together with our partners, and backed by an experienced professional workforce, Ktunaxa Enterprises is able to support all aspects of land, resource, commercial and industrial development projects and initiatives occurring throughout Ktunaxa territory and beyond.

Ktunaxa Nation Dance Troupe
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-489-0876

The Ktunaxa Nation Dance Troupe has been taking the stage continuously since its inception in 1999. The dance troupe is more than just a dance company. While dance is an artistic interpretation that brings traditional beliefs into everyday contemporary living, it also showcases traditional Ktunaxa and other First Nations dance forms. The performances allow the dancers to demonstrate their ability to bring their traditional lifestyles forward into their daily activities. The dance troupe is available for Ktunaxa-themed theatric shows and events, Ktunaxa traditional protocols, workshops and more. Its experienced performers are professional dancers who compete all over North America.

Kootenai River Inn Casino & Spa
7169 Plaza Street, Bonners Ferry, Idaho
1-800-346-5668
kootenairiverinn.com

The Kootenai River Inn Casino & Spa is owned and operated by the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. Since the opening of the hotel, restaurant and recreation centre in 1986, the Kootenai River Inn has been a source of pride and economic resurgence for the Kootenai Tribe. Tribal roots have influenced and inspired the Kootenai River Inn since its beginning, starting with its location on Tribal lands overlooking the Kootenai River and Selkirk Cabinet mountain range.

A complete renovation in 2005 added a luxury spa and then in May 2013 the Tribe added the Kootenai Falls Lodge expansion. The economic success of the Kootenai River Inn Casino & Spa has created opportunities for cultural and community projects in the region and helped Tribal students pursue higher education and career goals.

Lakeshore Resort & Campground
3151 Highway 93
ʔakisq̓nuk / Windermere
250-342-6352

The Lakeshore Resort & Campground is the Columbia Valley's largest campground, located on the pristine shores of Lake Windermere. Ideally located a few short kilometres north of Fairmont Hot Springs and south of Windermere, the resort and campground is owned and operated by ʔakisq̓nuk. In operation for more than 30 years and with major upgrades under way, it is a strong component of the Columbia Valley's regional tourism economy. In 2015, the Lakeshore Resort & Campground received the Outstanding Achievement award for community-owned businesses from BC Aboriginal Business Awards.

Legend Logos
3560 Highway 21
yaqan nuʔkiy / Creston
250-428-2977
legendlogos.ca

Robert and Denice Louie have operated Legend Logos in yaqan nuʔkiy–Lower Kootenay for over 15 years. Specializing in commercial embroidery and garment printing, promotional marketing items and commercial signage, the Indigenous gift shop also includes the renowned yaqan nuʔkiy Heritage Centre. The yaqan nuʔkiy Heritage Centre hosts both heritage workshop events and Legend Lake Tours, with specific knowledge of the ancestral traditional teachings of the people that live at yaqan nuʔkiy–Lower Kootenay. Customized tours and experiences are available.

Lillian Rose Consulting & Design
ʔakisq̓nuk / Windermere
250-342-1635

ʔakisq̓nuk's Lillian Rose has extensive experience in Ktunaxa-specific knowledge, archeology, traditional-use sites and harvesting, and specializes in Ktunaxa basket-making. She also has a publishing and design background, supporting Ktunaxa storytelling and communications projects.

Little Badgers Early Learning Program
3050 Highway 95
ʔakisq̓nuk / Windermere
250-342-6331
littlebadgerearlylearning.com

Little Badgers and Baby Badgers offer a quality early-learning program, with a strong emphasis on kindergarten readiness, community, its surroundings and family. This is a gentle place where respect for oneself, respect for others and a respect for the environment is fostered.

Lower Kootenay Development Corporation
830 Simon Road
yaqan nuʔkiy / Creston
250-428-4428
lowerkootenay.com

Lower Kootenay Development Corporation's vision is to have a self-sufficient and sustainable local economy that meets all of the community's economic needs, is grounded in cultural values, and provides yaqan nuʔkiy and other local residents with ample business, economic and personal development opportunities.

Kwataqnuk Resort and Casino
Highway 93 East, Polson, Montana
1-800-882-6363
kwataqnuk.com

Kwataqnuk Resort and Casino is a one-of-a-kind property, owned by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation. Kwataqnuk is located on the shores of the pristine Flathead Lake, under the majestic Mission Mountains, and surrounded by the beautiful wilderness of Montana. Spectacular vistas, many amenities and over 100 remodeled rooms create a unique experience for locals and visitors alike.

Michele A Sam Consulting
250-919-9789
michelesam.com

Michele A Sam Consulting provides consulting, advice and facilitation services to organizations and individuals attempting to engage with Indigenous Peoples and impact their self-development. Areas of expertise include pre-engagement ethics, knowledge relationships and engagement, writing and review services–including proposals, framework development and reporting. Her services are tailored to specific opportunities and take a unique, place-based focus both in development of content and delivery.

Morning Star Tipi Co.
250-431-8573

Over the past 11 years, Morning Star Tipi Co. has made its custom Ktunaxa teepees by order and sold them overseas to places such as Germany, Japan, Australia and the rest of Canada, and to the local market in the Kootenay region. Morning Star Tipi Co. is the sole manufacture of authentic Ktunaxa teepees in the Kootenay region.

Morris Flowers & Garden Centre
1020 Canyon Street
yaqan nuʔkiy / Creston
250-428-2656
morrisflowersbc.com

Morris Flowers & Garden Centre is a full-service retail and wholesale garden centre in the Creston Valley. In over 30,000 square feet of greenhouse space, it grows bedding plants, annual and perennial flowers, and sells ornamental and fruit trees, nursery stock, foliage plants and landscaping tools and supplies. In-season fruits and vegetables are available, grown on location and at yaqan nuʔkiy Farms. Morris Flowers is the leading florist in Creston, offering professional flower arrangements and gifts for any occasion, with reliable same-day floral delivery throughout the area.

Nupqu Resource Limited Partnership
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
Castlegar / Fernie
250-489-5762
nupqu.com

Nupqu is a trusted advisor to its clients in the natural resource industries. From vegetation management and invasive plant control, to full-scale forestry development, wildfire mitigation, water science and fisheries, Nupqu has a skilled workforce of 70 personnel based in offices in Cranbrook and Fernie. Nupqu also provides first-aid medics and emergency transportation vehicles, as well as oversees construction-site safety, procurement and project management. Its services are further complemented by full-spectrum archaeology consulting, as well as through providing reclamation and remediation goods and services through its Native Plants division.

O'Neil Marketing & Consulting / Numa Communications Ltd.
designingnations.com

A citizen of the Ktunaxa Nation, Beverley O'Neil has worked for more than 25 years to build First Nations through community economic development. O'Neil Marketing & Consulting has successfully completed projects of national and international scope, helping to shape the future of many individuals, communities and Nations in economic development, tourism, community planning, agriculture, governance, capacity development, film production and more. Together, it works with First Nations, businesses, non-profits and governments to create long-term productive relationships that direct change today while designing Nations for tomorrow.

Pair of Aces Drywall
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
250-464-9049

Pair of Aces Drywall is a family-owned business, providing expert drywall services to the East Kootenay, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and neighbouring communities.

PJ Gilhuly
778-687-2216
pjgilhuly.ca

PJ Gilhuly is a self-taught Ktunaxa artist from ʔakisq̓nuk. Drawn to painting from an early age as an outlet to express herself, over the years PJ Gilhuly has found that her art has become more distinctive, unique and abstract. You can find her work on cards, canvases and murals.

ProActive Safety & First Aid
ʔa·kisǩaq‡iʔit / Cranbrook
250-581-6955
proactivesafetyfirst.com

ProActive Safety & First Aid is a proud Ktunaxa citizen-owned business committed to providing professional safety services. It provides safety consultants, safety coordinators, instructors, occupational-first-aid attendants and emergency medical responders who proactively promote positive safety culture through safety leadership, training and awareness. With 10 years of experience working in the mining, forestry and oil and gas industries, its team is here to assist you in promoting a safe and healthy workplace.

Ralph Gravelle Enterprises
Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqt̓i 'it / Grasmere
250-919-5432

Ralph Gravelle is a proficient logger with 45 years of experience working in the natural resources sector as a faller, bucker, heavy-equipment operator and guide outfitter. Ralph is a certified faller with the Province of BC and operates a firewood-processing business in Grasmere. Ralph provides prompt, efficient and reliable service on all projects, with safety being constantly monitored during all aspects of the project.

Raven's Nest Resort
3900 Highway 93
ʔakisq̓nuk / Fairmont Hot Springs
250-688-6378
ravensnestresort.com

Boasting impressive views of wetlands with the mighty Columbia River meandering through, Raven's Nest Resort has 45 spacious sites throughout the resort. Also home to a disc golf course and cabins, the resort has become a destination in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Rez Hounds Ventures Inc.
ʔaq̓am / Cranbrook
rezhounds.ca

Rez Hounds Ventures specializes in guided bear, cougar, bobcat and lynx hunts throughout BC using hounds, offering land-based learning and mentorship for youth and young adults interested in learning traditional trapping practices. Practical skills, employability skills and interpersonal relational development are embedded within program offerings.

Seven Feathers Contracting & Consulting
ʔakisq̓nuk / Windermere
250-342-1640

Seven Feather Contracting and Consulting is owned by Allan Nicholas, a member of the ʔakisq̓nuk First Nation. Allan prides himself on hard work, honesty and integrity. With over 30 years of experience as a business owner, Allan is not afraid to get behind a machine or pick up a tool to get the job done right. Seven Feathers specializes in commercial and residential projects, such as forestry fuel reduction, right-of-way clearing, road and forestry work, civil construction, consulting, snow clearing and more.

St. Eugene Resort
7777 Mission Road, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa / Cranbrook
1-866-292-2020
steugene.ca

St. Eugene Resort is located on the banks of St. Mary River in the community of ʔaq̓am. The former residential school began its transformation into a resort, golf course and casino in the late 1990s. The 18-hole championship golf course opened in 2000 and the Casino of the Rockies in 2002, with the resort's official opening taking place in 2003. The resort includes an interpretive centre, Ktunaxa cultural and educational programs, and St. Eugene Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training.

Skinkuȼ Treasures Gift Shop
180 – 1500 Cranbrook Street North
ʔa·kisk̓aq‡iʔit / Cranbrook
250-417-4001
skinkuctreasures.ca

Skinkuȼ Treasures Gift Shop is owned by the Ktunaxa Nation. The majority of its handmade products—such as jewellery, paintings and books—are created by local Ktunaxa Artists. All of the gifts and products in the store represent Indigenous designs and culture. We support many local and non-local Indigenous artists.

SMOR Productions
250-919-9498
smorproductions.com

SMOR Productions began as a dream and hobby after Sonya Morigeau participated in an elective drone operator course and the Indigenous Filmmaker Masterclass. Throughout the filmmaking course, Sonya saw first-hand what could be created with a laptop, video equipment and programs, and of course a drone. Your imagination and creativity can amount to an amazing finished product, from a point of view many people don't get to experience. SMOR Productions strives to provide an eagle-eye perspective for clients and their projects, specializing in aerial footage, videography, editing, mapping and more.

TMM Projects Inc.
Sparwood / Fernie
tmmprojects.com

TMM Projects Inc. is a locally owned and managed First Nations business located in Sparwood. TMM Projects specializes in mining, heavy civil construction, forestry, equipment rentals and fusion services. Its staff have many years of experience and vast knowledge in mining and project management, each carrying a variety of certifications for mining and civil projects. TMM Projects is committed to building strong, meaningful relationships with communities and industry to further build capacity within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa–Ktunaxa Territory. It delivers training and employment opportunities for Ktunaxa and First Nations people in a holistic, distinct manner, utilizing local resources and businesses affiliated with the company.

Tobacco Plains Duty Free
5601 Highway 93
Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqti ʻit / Grasmere
250-887-3203

Located on the north side of the Canada/United States border crossing at Roosville, Tobacco Plains Duty Free is your destination for gifts, liquor, fine chocolates, tobacco products and other items as you travel across the border.

Yaqa·an Nuʔkiy DENT LLP
830 Simon Road
yaqan nuʔkiy / Creston
250-428-4428

Yaqa·an Nuʔkiy Dent LLP (Lower Kootenay Development Corp & Jim Dent Construction) offer a wide variety of construction services to complete projects—from design through to commissioning—ensuring owner, client and stakeholder success. Services are carried out on time and on budget while maintaining the highest levels of safety, quality and integrity. Services include full-scope heavy civil, forestry and earthworks projects.

Weaving Today for Tomorrow

yaqan nuʔkiy's Robin Louie crafts a Ktunaxa-specific style of teepee made from ʔakiis hanq̓u–muskrat's arrow/cattail, or tanaɬ–bulrush. Not all Ktunaxa teepees were made out of this material, but Robin—together with Ktunaxa citizens—and other First Nations and non-Indigenous people are supporting the continuation of this historic practice handed down through generations of Ktunaxa.

ʔa·kitɬaʔnam
Any building or structure in which people live
ʔititɬa
To build a house

"The teepees made of these materials were not used all year. As semi-nomadic people, we used these basically as one would use tents today during the middle of spring until early fall, before we transitioned back to the much heavier teepees made of hide. The matting is lightweight and very easy to roll up for storage or transport, either on land or by yaqsuʔmiɬ (sturgeon-nose canoe). These projects are a major part of my healing process—the more I do, the better I understand myself and purpose."

ROBIN LOUIE