

# NEXWAGWEŽ?AN

COMMUNITY VISION AND  
MANAGEMENT GOALS FOR

**DASIQOX**  
TRIBAL PARK

## SUMMARY

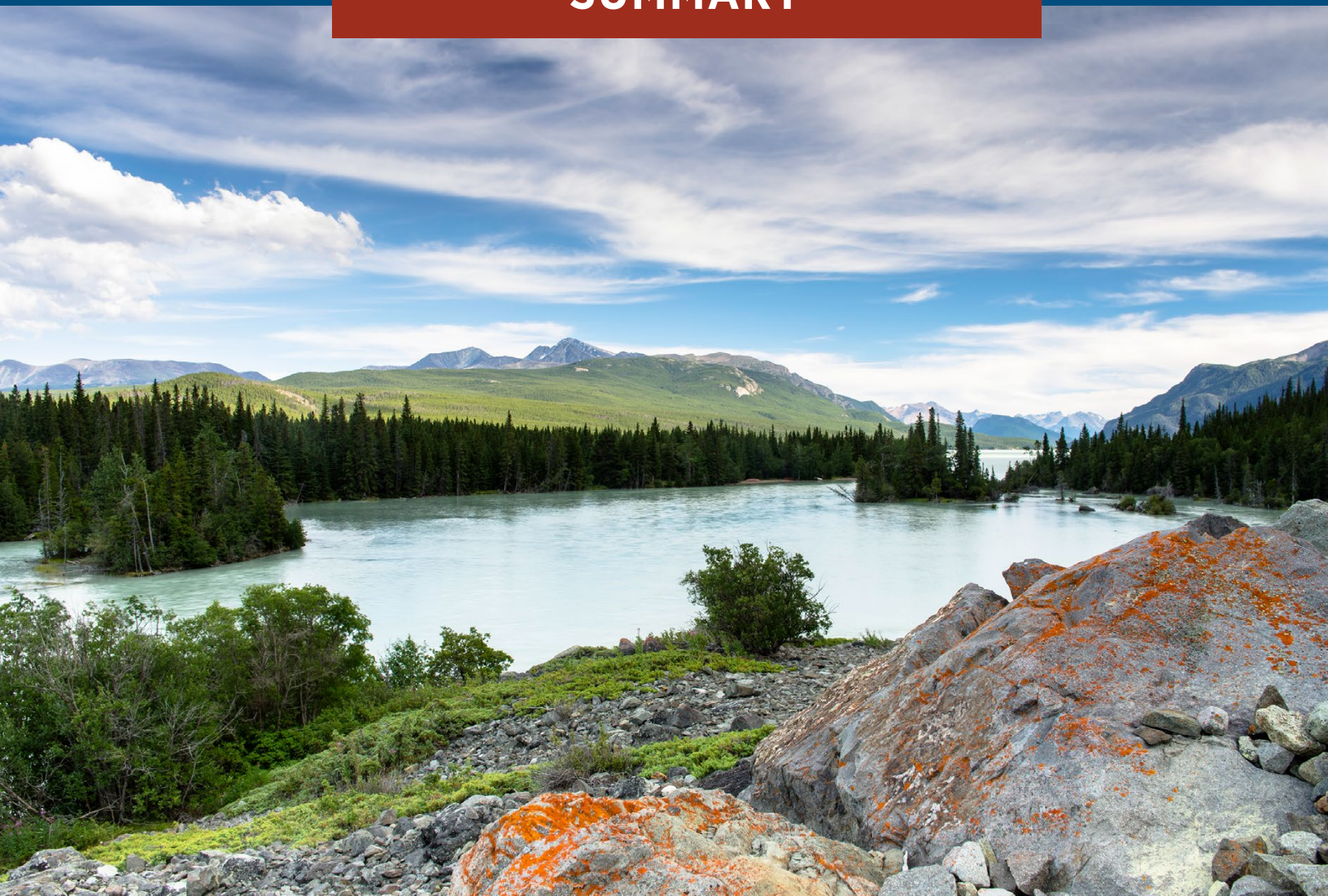






PHOTO DAWN HOOGEVEEN

## Nexwagweʔan Vision Statement

With the Dasiqox Tribal Park, the Tsilhqot'in people assert  
our responsibility and our right to protect this place

Where the waters, land, forests, animals, and people are full of life,  
thriving, healthy, and strong in our relationships with each other.

We are part of the land; the land is part of us. We take care of  
each other. Our spirits are joined with this place, through time.

The Dasiqox Tribal Park is the heart of a strong Tsilhqot'in culture. It is  
a place where we hunt, fish, learn, teach, and share while spending time  
out on the land respectfully, a place where we feel happy and healthy.

It is there for us; it is there for future generations.

**Nexwagweʔan.**

April 2018

Prepared by Jonaki Bhattacharyya,  
The Firelight Group, and Dasiqox Tribal  
Park staff, in partnership with Yunesit'in  
Government and Xeni Gwet'in First Nation.

Cover photo by Steve Monk, [stevemonk.ca](http://stevemonk.ca)

Graphic design by Hands On Publications



This booklet is a summary of  
Nexwagweʔan: *Community Vision and  
Management Goals for Dasiqox Tribal  
Park*. To request a copy of the full 90-  
page report, contact [info@dasiqox.org](mailto:info@dasiqox.org).





**“Don’t use too much; always leave something for the future. That’s what [my mother] always taught me, and I just went by that all my life. So right now we’re talking about Dasiqox Tribal Park, and whatever you do there, you always keep sustainability on the mind, and respect for the land.” (XG24 2016)**

**NEXWAGWEZ?AN – DASIQOX TRIBAL PARK** is a spectacular area covering over 300,000 hectares (3,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of Tsilhqot’in territory in southern interior British Columbia. It is an Indigenous-led protected area. The lands and waters of this region are breathtaking, including clean rivers and lakes, snowy mountain peaks, wide open valleys, and forests rich with life.

The Yunesit’in and Xeni Gwet’in First Nations choose to protect our shared caretaker area just as we have for generations: a place where Tsilhqot’in people and the animals that live here can thrive together, now and into the future.

Nexwagwez?an is our Tsilhqot’in name for the Dasiqox Tribal Park. Nexwagwez?an translates to [it is] “there for us” in English. It refers to the place, and to our declaration of how we, and future generations, will live with the land. It is about self-determination – a new name for a very old relationship.

By establishing Nexwagwez?an, we are working to care for and connect three interrelated elements:

- Ecological health;
- Cultural revitalization; and
- Sustainable livelihoods for our people.

Establishing Nexwagwez?an means we assert our rights and responsibilities to manage our lands, waters, and wildlife. We have the agency to decide how we will live on our territory. This means we are always striving to conduct ourselves with respect and honour for Tsilhqot’in traditional laws, and the principles behind Nexwagwez?an. Asserting our rights, title, and caretaker role is one way that we are healing and repairing the damage that was done to us as people, and our lands, over a century of mismanagement by other governments. In so doing, we aim to create opportunities that benefit Tsilhqot’in people, in the short and long term.

**THIS SHORT BOOKLET** summarizes the core message of the Community Vision and Management Goals report. The full 90 page report brings forward Yunesit’in and Xeni Gwet’in community members’

voices to inform the goals, management, and implementation strategies for the Dasiqox Tribal Park. The report is a living document, meaning that it will be regularly revisited and updated as part of enacting Tsilhqot’in title and rights in Nexwagwez?an.





# Dasiqox Tribal Park Map

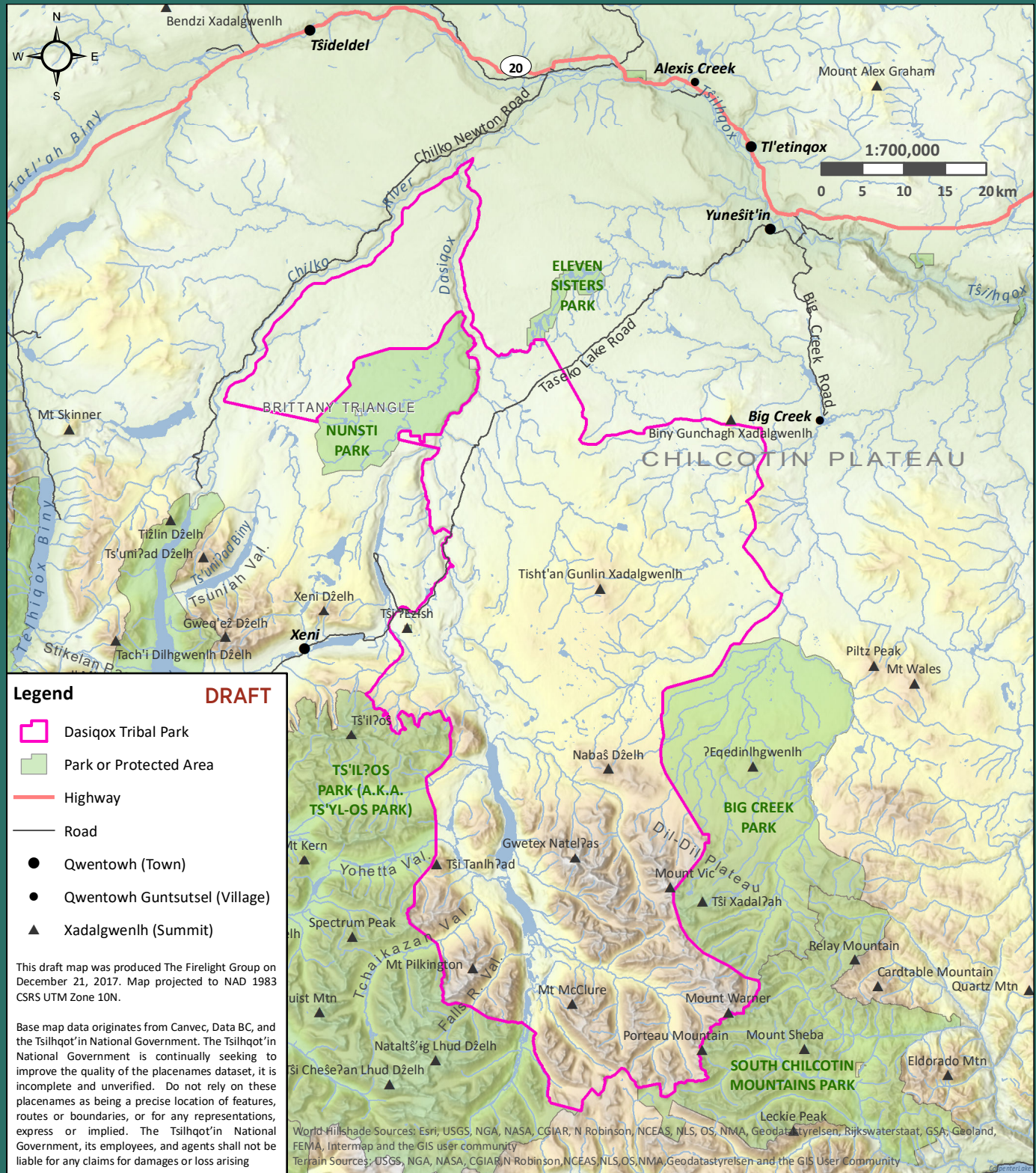
*DTP outlined in purple*

Note: The boundaries and edge regions of the Dasiqox Tribal Park are likely to be refined to a finer scale, and confirmed, following a review by the governance team in 2017–2018.

Source: Tsilhqot'in National Government, 2016

The DTP, approximately 3,000 square km, includes spectacular and immeasurably important wilderness, wildlife habitat, lands and waters that our people have known, lived with, and protected for generations.

The DTP joins up a number of existing large parks and protected areas, protecting connectivity across a large area at the heart of Xeni Gwet'in and Yunesit'in Caretaker Areas.



# Principles: Fundamentals of Nexwagweʔan

## PRINCIPLE 1: **EVERYTHING IS INTERCONNECTED.**

Tsilhqot'in people protect the Dasiqox Tribal Park so that it will remain wild and pristine. We ensure that the land, animals, and people are strong and healthy together, because we are part of each other. The Dasiqox Tribal Park is an expression of all our voices, a place connecting us through time.

## PRINCIPLE 2: **WATER IS LIFE.**

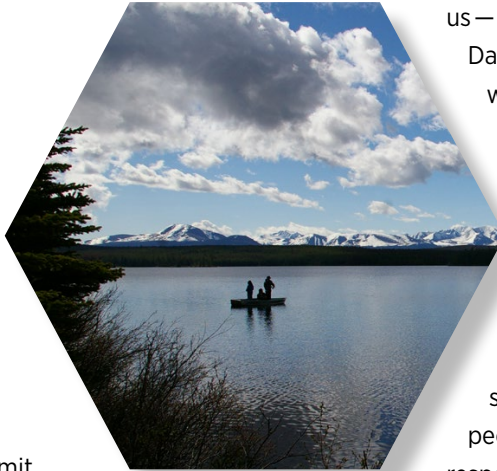
Tsilhqot'in are the river people. All use of the land will keep the waters of the Dasiqox Tribal Park clean and flowing, and the ground nourished with water. Our water is pure, and supports all the life that we know and love in our territory.

**PRINCIPLE 3: RESPECT.** We commit to maintaining our traditional practice of taking only what we need. We will behave respectfully towards water, mountains, all aspects of the land, and the plants, animals, and the people that dwell here. Being respectful includes asking consent before using or impacting the communities and lands of the Dasiqox Tribal Park, and honouring the answer. We expect that all visitors, settlers, and guests to our territory will conduct themselves with the same ethic.

## PRINCIPLE 4: **HEALING, HEALTH, AND**

**WELL-BEING.** As Tsilhqot'in people, our health and well-being cannot be separated from that of the land, water, and air. We eat from the land; the water and air give us life. Our medicine comes from the land. The Dasiqox Tribal Park protects space for all of us to heal from hurts, restoring the land and ourselves to find strength and to thrive. We feel excited to go to those special places in the tribal park where we feel most happy and spend time having fun!

PHOTO JONAKI BHATTACHARYYA



**Tsilhqot'in people are the caretakers of our lands. It is our responsibility and our right to steward how the land is used by local people and by visitors. We exercise this responsibility as guardians and monitors, and as we practice our traditional ways of knowing and being on the land.**

**PRINCIPLE 5: HONOURING SPIRIT.** As Tsilhqot'in, we protect the spirit of the land that is part of our own spirits. Nexwagweʔan is a place where we can be quiet, listening to the voices of nature and the animals and plants that live there. We recognize the power of the spirits that are the landscape around us — mountains, waters, and all parts of the Dasiqox Tribal Park. It holds places where we can connect with our ancestors in the places that they travelled, and share with future generations.

## PRINCIPLE 6: **CARETAKING.**

Tsilhqot'in people are the caretakers of our lands. It is our responsibility and our right to steward how the land is used by local people and by visitors. We exercise this responsibility as guardians and monitors, and as we practice our traditional ways of knowing and being on the land.

## PRINCIPLE 7: **THRIVING CULTURE.**

Dasiqox Tribal Park is a place for Tsilhqot'in people, our culture, and our language to thrive. In the places our people have known and spent time for many generations, we speak our own language, and connect with families and friends while practicing traditional ways of life. We share the stories that connect us to those places and to each other. In those places, we learn and grow strong in who we are as Tsilhqot'in people.

**PRINCIPLE 8: SHARING KNOWLEDGE.** It is out on the land where we learn, teach, and share Tsilhqot'in knowledge through the past, present, and future. We learn from each other, and from the land, the animals. The Dasiqox Tribal Park is our space to spend family time together on the land. It is where we hunt, fish, and create opportunities for youth and children to learn, to experience happiness and freedom, to know who they are.





PHOTO SADIE PARR

**We are blessed with clean rivers, lakes and springs because our ancestors protected this land for us and our descendants. We need to practice again giving thanks to our clean waters daily and having tremendous appreciation for the water.**  
(YFN38 3 Jan 2017)

## ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

Our people, land, water, plants, and animals are interdependent, with all these aspects contributing to the special importance of Dasiqox Tribal Park ecosystems as a whole.

### Water

- Land is managed in a way that protects and maintains water quality and quantity in the DTP for future generations.
  - Achieving this goal will require a combination of protection/conservation, prohibition of specific activities, and sound management of permitted land uses.
  - Over time, there is confidence in drinking water from the land.
- Tsilhqot'in knowledge, cultural practices, and stewardship related to water and waterways is maintained and revitalized.
- Over time, there is strong evidence of important water stewardship and practices on the land.





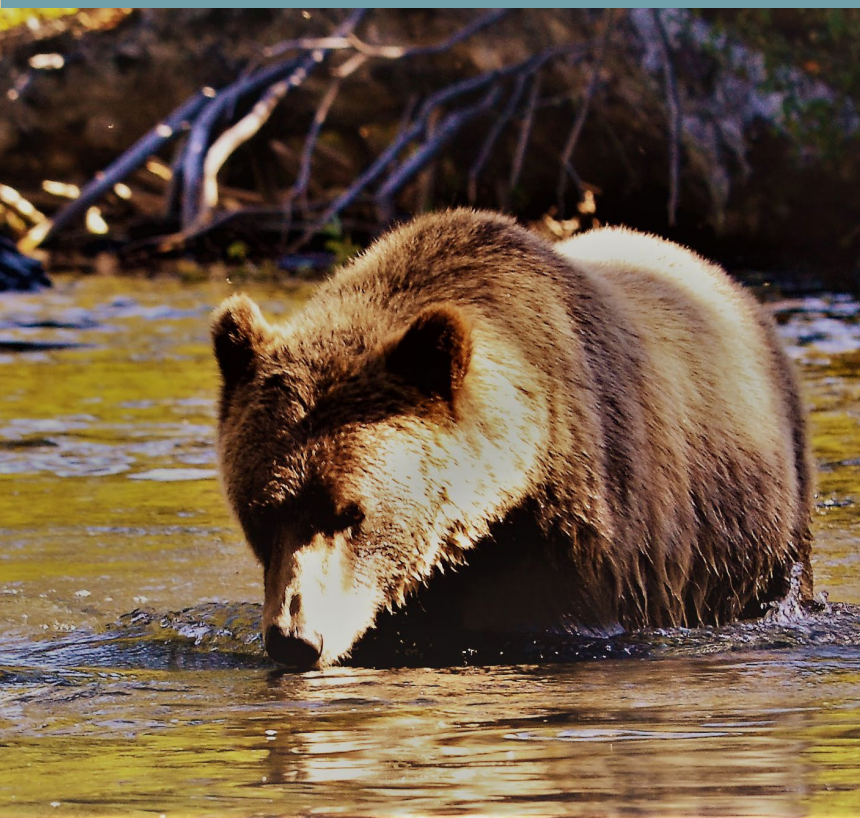


PHOTO SADIE PARR



PHOTO STEVE MONK

## Forests and Vegetation

- Forests in DTP are managed by Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in for long term ecosystem sustainability and to ensure that forests are healthy for future generations.
- Culturally-important, sensitive, and rare ecosystems (including forests) and plants are protected.
- Land use is managed to protect the integrity of sensitive and important ecosystems including meadows, old growth spruce forests, and wetlands among others.
- Lost and degraded ecosystems and associated habitat are restored.

## Wildlife and Habitat

- Adequate high quality habitat is available in DTP for maintaining all species, including culturally-important animals like bears, moose, deer, and furbearers like fisher.
- Protect and/or manage land use in all ecosystems to maintain good habitat for fish and wildlife, and plant species (especially important in culturally-important, sensitive and rare ecosystems, e.g. spruce forests, meadows, wetlands).
- Lost or degraded habitat across DTP is restored.







PHOTO STEVE MONK



PHOTO JONAKI BHATTACHARYYA

***It's the healing,  
the whole, the spirit,  
and your body and  
everything. It's just that,  
and you feel so relaxed  
and free.  
(YFN 37 2016)***



PHOTO JONAKI BHATTACHARYYA

## CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Our Tsilhqot'in culture and identity is deeply rooted in the land. We are establishing Nexwagwez'an so that all Tsilhqot'in people have places to spend time out on the land, renewing their strength and culture.

### Hunting, Fishing, Harvesting Plants and Animals

- Harvesting plants and animals in DTP follows culturally appropriate methods including following Tsilhqot'in laws.
- Hunting pressure is reduced to restore sustainable local populations of preferred wild food animals, moose in particular, in preferred harvesting areas.
- Tsilhqot'in traditional laws are implemented and communicated to land users (local and non-local).
- Important seasonal habitats and preferred harvesting areas for sensitive species like moose (wintering areas) are protected with restricted access.
- Recreational areas are clearly marked and hunters or recreationists use designated areas only.





PHOTO OLIVIA HINK (YUNESIT'IN)

### Cultural Continuity and Language

- Bring place-based learning back; this was how people learned about plants and animals, harvesting practices and areas. There are still language teachers practicing in YFN and XGFN communities. Maintain DTP for place-based language teachings (on the land the language is grounded in).
- DTP is a place where Tsilhqot'in communities cultivate an ongoing culture of teaching and learning from each other and from the land, while out on the land, and in home communities.
- Tsilhqot'in knowledge, cultural practices, and stewardship related to water, wildlife, plants, and forest ecosystems are revitalized and maintained.
- DTP has programming to support community members for the ongoing sharing of Tsilhqot'in culture, language, stories, and ways of knowing between generations.

### Health and Well-being and Time on the Land

- Cultural practices and ceremonies for healing are revitalized with an emphasis on bringing community together to share experiences and knowledge on the land.
- Revitalize traditional forms of Tsilhqot'in healing.
- DTP has programs to support community members to get out on the land.



PHOTO LARISSA MYERS





PHOTO JEREMY WILLIAMS

### SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Tsilhqot'in people have a long history of living with the land, using it to thrive. While ways of life are changing, we place a high priority on building a sustainable local economy based in healthy relationships with lands and resources.

#### Sustainable Livelihoods

- Capacity is built for a sustainable local economy.
- Cultural and ecological tourism, outdoor recreation opportunities are built and include other entrepreneurial ventures.
- Create opportunities for value-added economic initiatives for forestry.
- Capacity is built for long term employment for community conservation officers and guardian monitors.

### Cumulative Effects and Managing Impacts

- Land use and impacts are effectively understood, assessed, and managed for cumulative effects by Tsilhqot'in governments in concert with provincial and federal agencies.
- Nexwagweʔan is not subject to industrial-scale resource use or extraction.
- Guardian monitoring in the DTP prioritizes health of the system as a whole.
- Restoration planning and cumulative effects assessment inform what activities are implemented in the DTP.

PHOTO JEREMY WILLIAMS







PHOTO JEREMY WILLIAMS

The vision, principles, and goals for Nexwagwez?an are the outcome of three years of conversations, meetings, and gatherings among Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in community members, including focus group and interview research with 63 individuals from the two communities, and perspectives shared by many more people at community gatherings.

The principles and goals named by community members will help tribal park leaders make decisions to realize the vision for Nexwagwez?an. Management and operational priorities in the report represent years of hard work by members and leadership, with support from the Tsilhqot'in National Government.

Conversations about the tribal park are ongoing and will be expanding to seek input from other members and communities.

**For more information contact:**

Dasiqox Tribal Park Coordinator  
[info@dasiqox.org](mailto:info@dasiqox.org)

Yunesit'in Government  
(250) 394-4041

Xeni Gwet'in First Nation Government  
(250) 394-7023

**[www.dasiqox.org](http://www.dasiqox.org)**



