

# DASIQOX

Nexwagwez?an

“There for us”

WINTER 2020/21 NEWSLETTER

*Xeni Gwet'in youth Erica and Lucy Saunders on Teztan Biny - October 2018*

*photo by Alejandro Frid*

## Dasiqox Tribal Park is now *Dasiqox-Nexwagwez?an*

*By Russell Myers Ross*

Since the inception in 2014, Xeni Gwet'in and Yunesit'in have used the term “Tribal Park” to describe the area that encompasses Dasiqox-Nexwagwez?an. The original intention of this was to share, in solidarity, the experience that other Indigenous communities were going through to protect an area. At that time, we shared a connection with the Nuuchal-nuth, both in receiving the totem pole from Master Carver, Tim Paul, but also in sharing from the Tribal Park experience by the Tla-o-qui-aht. As we understood from the Tla-o-qui-aht experience to protect Clayoquot Sound, the term Tribal Park was coined to provide an alternative but ensure that the Nuuchal-nuth were part of the governance of their own homelands.

At the time, just after the Tsilhqot'in Supreme Court of Canada decision, there was an appetite for creating alternatives that respected Indigenous Title and frameworks for consent. The intention was to create political space in sharing something different, an alternative, a reconciliatory pathway to reconstruct the relationship with the Crown. Additionally, it was to create a legal space since Indigenous laws are considered sui generis in nature, and while we did not fit any designated models of Canadian jurisdiction nor parks that aligned to our values, we wanted to create space within our own imagination to create our own. In those beginning days, we conceptually wanted something that was ‘Tsilhqot'in made’ and so we created two names; Dasiqox Tribal Park would be the public expression and Nexwagwez?an would be the Tsilhqot'in word to describe a space that was literally “there for us” and one in which our Tsilhqot'in speakers would understand.

As part of the ongoing public engagement with our communities and local interests, the term “tribal” and “park” had connotations that people could not fully conceptualize. Having witnessed and read it reflected in the 2018-2019 Public Engagement Summary Report, it was considered ‘confusing’. The word “tribal” was misunderstood because it is not clear what our values are and how Indigenous laws and management would apply (yet). The word “park” often has the connotation that nothing can be done and that human activity is not allowed. It was difficult for some people not to view it as a contradiction, although it was our intention to portray our active participation on the land as what could be described as a ‘conservation economy’: we use the land, but always ensure there is enough for regrowth. However, in the end, it was tabled that the term “Tribal Park” would be removed.

*In the place of Dasiqox Tribal Park, we will now be referencing it as Dasiqox Nexwagwez?an as it reflects the place and that it is “there for us”.*

Thanks for picking up the Dasiqox Winter 2020/21 newsletter — it was put together to share stories related to the area and the community vision, as well as reflections and information about the Dasiqox initiative. Sechanalyagh to everyone who took the time to share something — we hope you enjoy!





***Yunesit'in Government***



**TSILHQOT'IN  
PEOPLE OF XENI**

***Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government***



Hello everyone! New Yunesitin councillor Merle Quilt here and I will be representing Yunesit'in on the Dasiqox Steering Committee. It's been quite the learning curve so far in my role with Dasiqox but a great opportunity to be a part of something great in the making for our people for years to come.

I've always heard great things about the work being done through out the years and to be seeing the work going forward looks like a lot of positive things going forward for both Yunesitin and Xeni as I am both from communities through my grandparents .

From here I am looking forward to what the new year will bring to the table with this great team working on this together. I hope you all have a happy new year and let's hope this COVID will soon be over with so we can meet up for some more brainstorming ideas.

Sechanalyagh,  
Councillor Merle Quilt



As we continue our work at the Dasiqox team I think it's helpful to reflect upon what Dasiqox means to us as Tsilhqot'in people.

Our land dictates how we move as people, how we govern ourselves, how we create our laws, so our land plays a big role in our identity, being able to hunt and to fish. And when you have access to landmass, you can teach your kids, you can teach your grandkids and future generations what is right and wrong. But if you don't have landmass, if it's been logged, it's been misused, I guess, then we don't have the capability to govern ourselves.

The cornerstone of Dasiqox-Nexwagwez'an is self-governance; a return to the management and governance of the land in this area that reflects the values of our people, who live from the land. Together with the team we will keep this initiative moving forward in 2021.

Sechanalyagh,  
Nits'il'in (Chief) Jimmy Lulua



It was an honour to be hired on as Dasiqox Nexwagwez?an Team as Team Co-ordinator – Community Outreach on October 15, 2019. I've been privileged to do this kind of work for many years, 22 years as Chief, six years as Councilor, three months Political Advisor, and one-year Lands Tenure Consultant for Xeni Gwet'in and two years as TNG Tsilhqot'in Lands & Stewardship Director.

With Xeni Leadership we connected with law firms and anthropologists, creating the August 23, 1989 Nemiah Valley Aboriginal Wilderness Nendush Jid Nen Gwezit'in Destl'es Declaration at direction of our people. This became the direction for all leadership to protect headwaters of the Tsilhqot'in Territory through lobbying, direct action, and court action.

From filing of Xeni Trapline Case, Chilko Study Team, Henry's Crossing Road Block, Brittany Forest Management & Strategic Operation Plan, establishing of Ts'il'os Park, filing of Xeni Gwet'in Tsilhqot'in William Aboriginal Title & Rights Case & Five Year Trial, Federal Panel Hearing on Teztan Biny Fish Lake in 2011 & 2013, to BC Court Of Appeal and to the Supreme Court of Canada Appeal winning the first ever Aboriginal Title to 1,750 square kilometres of Tsilhqot'in Lands on June 26, 2014.

Along with then Yunesit'in Chief Russell Myers Ross as Xeni Gwet'in Councilor then Chief with our Council and People started looking at Protection for Dasiqox Biny and Area in 2012. David Williams, President of Friends Of Nemah Valley started working with us and found funding through Wilburforce to get us started.

As Xeni Gwet'in Chief on October 4, 2014 with Xeni Council and the Yunesit'in Leadership with the support of Tsilhqot'in Nation we announced Dasiqox Nexwagwez?an (It's there for us) to protect the Tsilhqot'in Head Watershed. I'm looking forward to working with all you Xeni Gwet'in & Yunesit'in leaders, team, elders, youth and members.

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Working with and for Dasiqox Nexwagwez?an has always been great because there was always mutual respect, dedicated leadership, skilled and thoughtful support staff, and a good feeling working together for the right reasons. Although my role has changed, I feel grateful for the opportunity to continue the work that I started and continue helping in a support role to Xeni and Yunesit'in.

My contract from now until March 2021 is focused on preparing an orientation binder, providing governance support, assisting Roger William on Traditional Law documentation, Jonaki Bhattacharyya on the Management Plan and Caitlin Thompson on proposals and the Communications Plan. Between Yunesit'in and Dasiqox, I am also supporting the Indigenous Fire Management program, Guardianship program, and Housing and Land-based projects that may apply. Carried on from my previous work, I am also assisting the Wildfire Prototype House as developed by John Bass and a small 'research & development' team at UBC; the design work is mostly complete and hopeful that it can move forward in the spring of 2021.

In addition, there is still ongoing partnerships being developed between other First Nations willing to share knowledge, collaboration on Indigenous Protected Conservation Areas and Guardianship, and trying to sort out questions on how to do public engagement in midst of the pandemic. I also engaged in a 'UBC Studio' course for grad students where we shared and presented the story of Dasiqox Nexwagwez?an and, in turn, they have produced conceptually designed projects back to the community; these creative projects will be left for the community and Dasiqox team to utilize. In leaving a final word, I just want to acknowledge you have a small but dedicated team, that is leading the way and I hope you feel pride in the work we do, which has always been to create a self-determining alternative, based on Tsilhqot'in values, to the colonial structures that have been imposed on us.



**Roger William - Dasiqox Community Coordinator**



**Russell Myers Ross - Dasiqox consultant, governance**





# Dasiqox Nexwagez?an Initiative 2020 Team Updates

BY JONAKI BHATTACHARYYA

Phew! What a year! Out of respect for everyone’s safety, many of us stopped all travel when COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. Staying away was (and remains) the best way I can honour our relationships. But I sure do miss being in Yunesit’in and Xeni in person!

The Dasiqox team adapted quickly to COVID-19. For now, we meet virtually and on the phone. We have grown as a team, and are working in exciting new ways together. Russ Myers Ross and Roger William Thompson both work in part time staff roles for Dasiqox. We welcomed Caitlin Thompson as our new Team Coordinator. Plus, Trina Setah and Michelle Myers also help guide Dasiqox in their roles as Nenqay Managers.

I work on the management planning and stewardship for Dasiqox. Yet my role might be better described as “helping with whatever needs doing”! Over the years, that has included community engagement, facilitating meetings, communications, fundraising, support to negotiations, research, and more. This year, much of my work was helping to bridge the transitions between Coordinators and through the Yunesit’in election. Here are some of the things that we worked on:

- Input and feedback on the draft Dasiqox Management Strategy from the core team. (Once this is re-designed, it will be shared more broadly for feedback);
- Re-designed the management planning process to work with nenqay managers and deal with COVID-19 and updated the Operational Priorities for Dasiqox,;
- Provided orientation and support to our new Coordinator (welcome Caitlin!); and to Yunesit’in Guardian Bonnie Myers on recording, and info management for the knowledge Elders share;
- Maintained and renewed relationships with core funders who support Dasiqox;
- Integrated Dasiqox with related work that Xeni Gwet’in and Yunesit’in are doing, such as Chilko watershed strategy, forest stewardship, nenqay planning, grizzly bear research, etc.;
- Guided academic research, providing support to doctoral researchers Justine Townsend (University of Guelph) and Anthony Persaud (UBC).

In 2021, I am looking forward to working with Roger and Russ to express the knowledge shared by Elders about Tsilhqot’in laws and protocols, in the management plan. I will continue to update and refine the Management Strategy, while working with nenqay managers to put it into action. Jenna Dunsby and I will be helping the Nenqay Departments develop workplans.

What I love most of all is working on stewardship related to animals and habitat – so I am most looking forward to the work on the ground related to wildlife, horses, fire management and ecosystem restoration!

Most of all, I am looking forward to coming back to Dasiqox in person, walking on the land, breathing the air and drinking the water and visiting with old friends. The heart of Dasiqox’s success is the relationships that you have with nenqay.

**Jonaki Bhattacharya** has worked with Xeni Gwet’in and Yunesit’in since 2006, starting with PhD research on wild horses, Tsilhqot’in culture and ecosystems. She has worked for Dasiqox Tribal Park since 2014. Jonaki has Indian and English/Irish ancestry, and lives in Victoria.





Hello all! I was brought on as XGFNG Nenqay Manager on March 30, 2020. Over the past 9 months I have been focused on planning how to build the foundations of a XGFNG Nenqay department. I have been tasked with developing the Nenqay Use Plan for XGFNG, additionally I have been working with Trina Setah to create the Nenqay Department Strategic Management Plan which will roll out the tasks and information we need to developing successful Nenqay Departments in both communities.

I am set up at the old Tourism building in Xeni Gwet'in and will go through a process of renaming this building once I am able to host community sessions and invite people here! My goal for the first year is to create a Nenqay Use Plan that builds from all of the previous nenqay related studies and work done in Xeni Gwet'in. The Tsilhqot'in National Government is supporting all communities in the Nation to create a Nenqay Use Plan.

For the first 9 months I have focused on getting caught up with all of the studies that have been done to date. This includes finding all electronic and hard copy studies and listing them all on one list. Additionally, I have summarized some of the higher level and most recent documents to use bits and pieces of them in creating our Nenqay Use plan.

Looking into the new year, I am aiming to hire two additional people to assist with this work and with our Land Code development work. I hope I will be able to see faces in person in 2021, and am planning virtual engagement sessions for the first 3 months of 2021.



**Michelle Myers - Xeni Gwet'in Nenqay Manager**

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Hello everyone. I began my position as Yunesit'in Nenqay Manager in the fall of 2020, having recently returned home to Yunesit'in after several years of living in the lower mainland, where I worked as the Aboriginal Co-op Coordinator at Simon Fraser University.

In this role I am responsible for coordinating Nen planning in the community, working closely with the Tsilhqot'in National Government (TNG) to develop a Nation-level Nen Use Plan, and assisting the community and the Tsilhqot'in Nation to secure recognition and respect for its title, rights and jurisdiction throughout its Territory in central British Columbia.

My work will also support community implementation of the groundbreaking tripartite framework agreement (Gwets'en Nilt'i Pathway Agreement).

I will also be working closely with the Dasiqox-Nexwagwez'an team, attending meetings and assisting in coordinating actions that arise, and assisting with supporting the Guardianship program.

Right now we are undergoing a comprehensive strategic planning session with the Xeni Gwet'in Nenqay Department to outline a clear path forward for implementing the work of the Nenqay Departments; this will also serve us in articulating our roles within Dasiqox-Nexwagwez'an planning and implementation.

I am looking forward to working with everyone in 2021.



**Trina Setah - Yunesit'in Nenqay Manager**



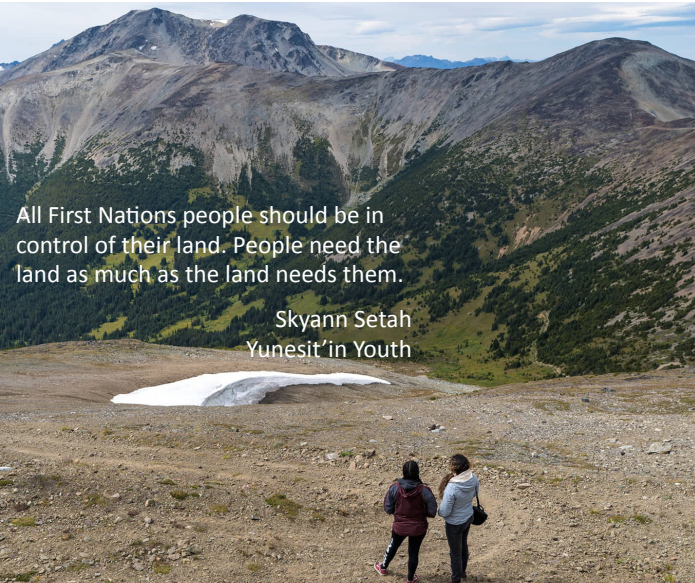
# Dasiqox Films Release 2020

In 2018/19 a group of Xeni Gwet'in and Yunesit'in youth including Joann Setah, Skyann Setah, and Veronica Meldrum joined forces with Keith Kopeke and filmmaker Jeremy Williams to showcase Dasiqox in a series of three short films: Sustainable Livelihoods, Cultural Revitalization, and Ecological Protection.

The films also feature Xeni Gwet'in Nits'il?in (Chief) Jimmy Lulua, Yunesit'in Nits'il?in (former Chief) Russell Ross, Gilbert Solomon, Michelle Myers, Ira Pierce, Dustin Elkins, Cameron Lulua, Whitney Williams-Quilt, David Setah, Cecil Grinder, Doreen Grinder, Betty Lulua, and Annie William.

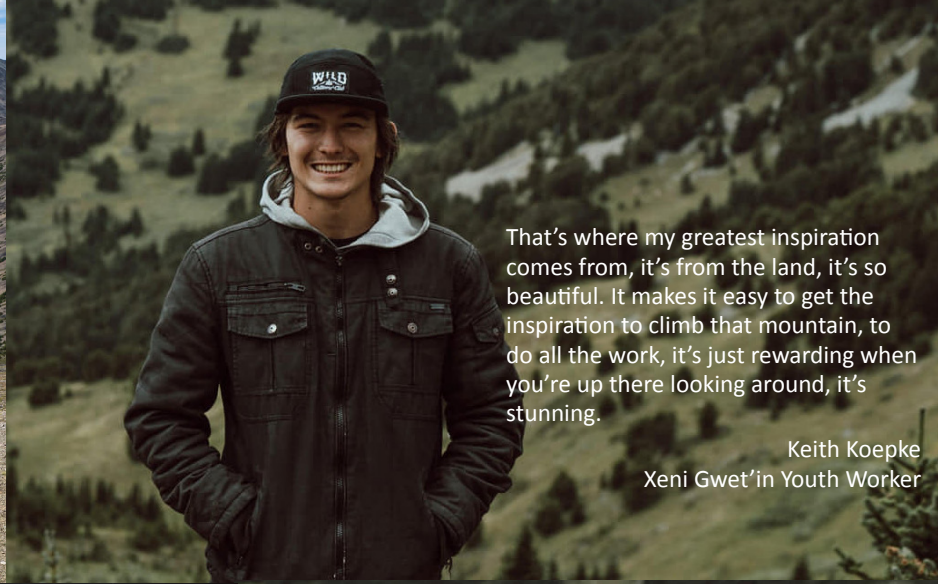
*"This is Tsilhqot'in land, this is our territory, we should be able to exercise what we think is of value to us and to protect what we need to for future generations," ~ Yunesit'in Nits'il'in, Russell Myers Ross*

*"Dasiqox Tribal Park is one of the most sacred places for our people, it's an alternate vision for our people to use it in a proper way," ~Xeni Gwet'in Nits'il'in, Jimmy Lulua*



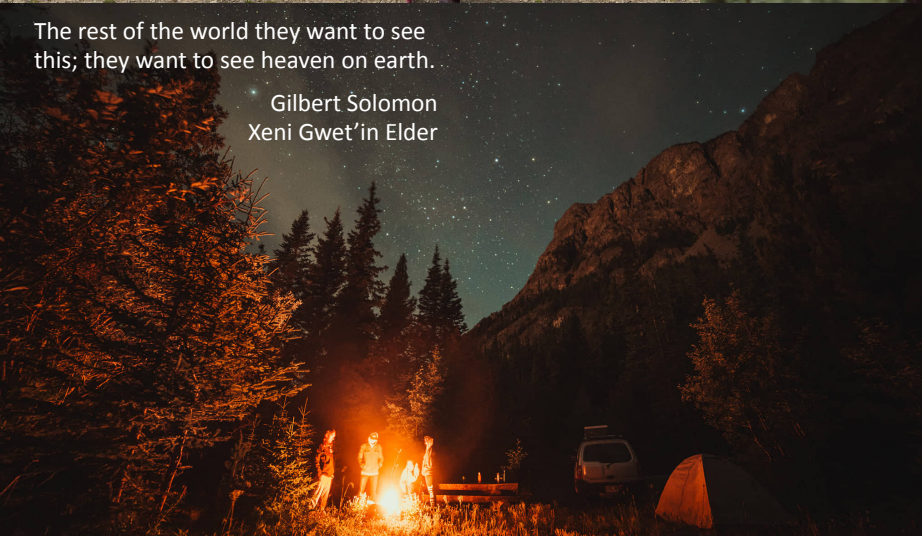
All First Nations people should be in control of their land. People need the land as much as the land needs them.

Skyann Setah  
Yunesit'in Youth



That's where my greatest inspiration comes from, it's from the land, it's so beautiful. It makes it easy to get the inspiration to climb that mountain, to do all the work, it's just rewarding when you're up there looking around, it's stunning.

Keith Kopeke  
Xeni Gwet'in Youth Worker



The rest of the world they want to see this; they want to see heaven on earth.

Gilbert Solomon  
Xeni Gwet'in Elder



It was a lot of fun and gave me a ton of knowledge on how to use a camera. I've only done photography throughout my life, so learning to video was a whole new thing for me. So I was glad to go and learn something new. Being in front of the camera was also new to me so it helped me learn to get out of my comfort zone.

Joann Setah  
Yunesit'in Youth



It's important to bring people out here, like youth and elders, if we have more gatherings we'll be learning while being on the land.

Veronica Meldrum  
Yunesit'in Youth



# Dechen Ts'edilhtan (Traditional Law) Project

In January 2020 Community Coordinator Roger William began documenting Tsilhqot'in Dechen Ts'edilhtan (Traditional Law). Leadership wanted elders to be video recorded, so Xeni Gwet'in Keith Koepke was hired for this portion of the work. The original plan was to interview 25 elders: 10 from Xeni Gwet'in, 10 from Yunesit'in and five from Tsilhqot'in. The interviews started January 28th and were all done in Tsilhqot'in language. Unfortunately, the interviews ended early on March 15th due to COVID-19. Nine Xeni Gwet'in, five Yunesit'in and two Tsilhqot'in elders were interviewed. Roger transcribed all 16 elders' interviews and completed the first draft of the booklet on August 11th. After edits and feedback from our team and leadership, a third draft was completed November 23rd. The booklet continues to be developed.

The Dechen Ts'edilhtan work has two main intentions. The first is to inform the management planning process of Dasiqox-Nexwagwez'an and the second is to produce a community booklet. The next steps are to review the initial work in regards to the management planning and proceed with more elder interviews (if allowable under COVID conditions), continue to work on the draft of the community booklet and to scope out the possibility of creating a short documentary with filmmakers Trevor Mack and Keith Koepke.

This important work will be continuing into January 2021, with the management planning piece is expected to be complete by March 2021. Timelines for the booklet have been adjusted and will continue to be flexible based on the needs of the project.



Xeni Gwet'in Elder  
Julianna Lulua



Xeni Gwet'in Elder  
Sonny Lulua



Tsil'edil Elder  
Herbert Jeff



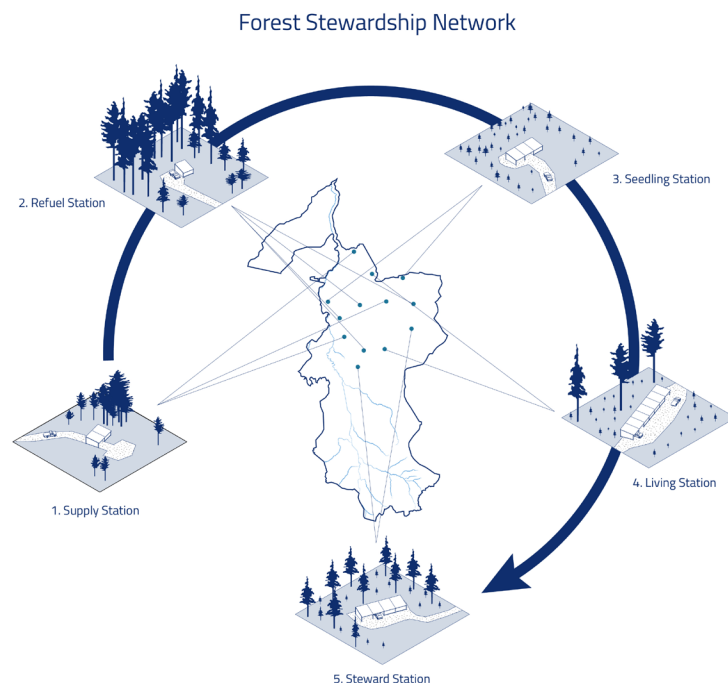
Xeni Gwet'in Elder  
Benny Willi



# Dasiqox partners with UBC School of Architecture

From September - December 2020 Dasiqox partnered with the UBC School of Architecture to challenge student's ideas of architecture and design. Over the course of the semester students took part in studio sessions with representatives from Dasiqox, Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in. The results of their work were captured in a series of drawings that will be developed into a booklet for the Dasiqox team, Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in. The drawings, designs and outlined plans were developed as a collaboration based on sharing our stories of history, community life and aspirations of self-determination through the Dasiqox initiative, joined with the student's interests and background expertise, touching on overarching themes such as water, landscape, ecology, culture, climate and habitat.

As UBC Associate Professor John Bass explains, "With its emphasis on the visual, the drawing has a distinct, often very efficient, way of communicating ideas, facts, stories, and other things. Drawings can describe ideas that are usually expressed in writing or numbers, sometimes in ways that make those ideas more accessible."



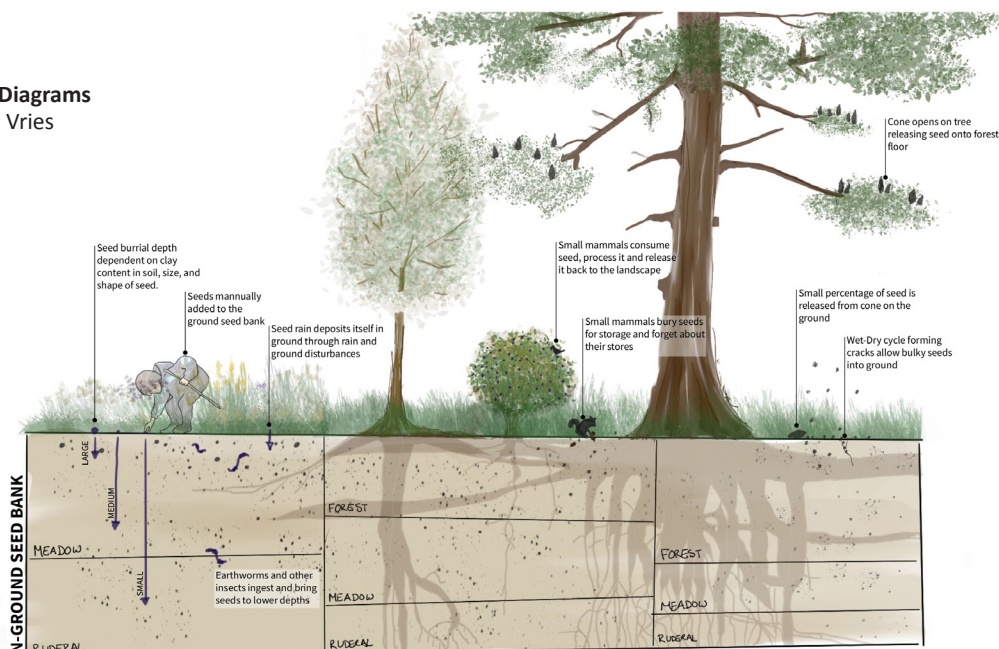
The forest steward network is a collection of modular forest management stations that are interspersed throughout the Dasiqox Tribal Park in response to some of the recommendations specified by Tsilhqot'in National Government in "The Fires Awakened Us" with specific considerations for the interests of the Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in. The stations are designed such that they can be fabricated using Yunesit'in's Leading Edge Mill and simply assembled on site. Each station would be built on disturbed clearcut sites that are connected to the existing forest service road network. The construction would be done incrementally depending on funding and to gauge the site's suitability in the long term. Solar panels and rainwater collection supply these off grid stations which can be used as deployment grounds for fire management, sustainable forestry, and habitat restoration, as well as cultural activities.

## Forest Stewardship Network

Kaia Nielsen-Roine

## Seed Bank Diagrams

Natasha De Vries



Wet seeds in planted seed bank consumed by wildlife and contributed to in ground seedbanks across Dasiqox



Wet and dry seeds are manually collected for propagation of local species and varieties, food security, diversity of parent species, reforestation, and educational purposes.

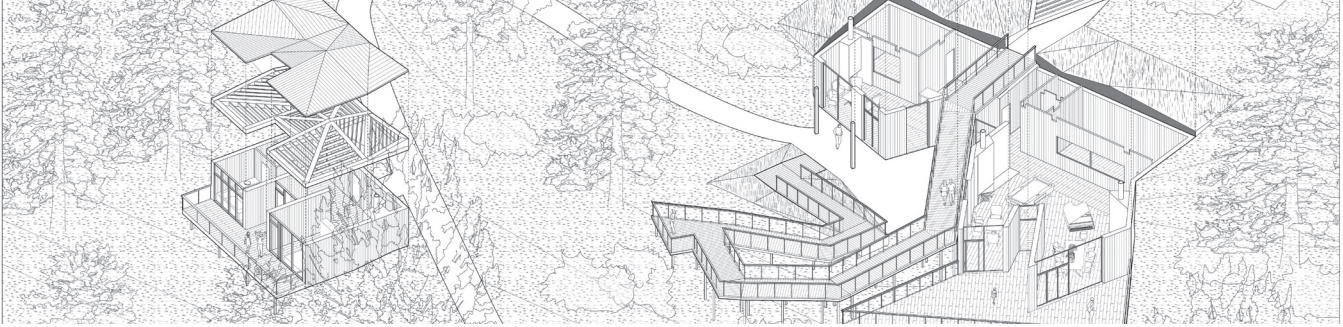


# Dasiqox partners with UBC School of Architecture

“We have had to preface that because these are grad students in Architecture and Landscape, their projects are designed to build something, and all have created something that could potentially turn into useful projects in the future,” explains Russell Myers-Ross. “What I thought is that even if they are not tangible, they have allowed us to stretch our imagination to visualize what can be possible, even if we re-order and reconsider these projects as a whole. But you will see that there are projects oriented towards fire management, eco-tourism, fisheries and water monitoring, guardianship program activities, training - components of things we already do or plan on doing. All of this makes it easier to make an effort towards conceptualizing how to develop our projects, programs and where to seek funding.”

## Yohetta Eco-Tourism

Xin Zhong



This proposal of further developing ecotourism is an extension of the existing Yohetta Lodge but targeting a different group of customers. A small-capacity hotel, with three cabins and one reception center, only accepts a maximum of 6 adults at a time and provides a boutique tourist experience.

## Capacity Building School

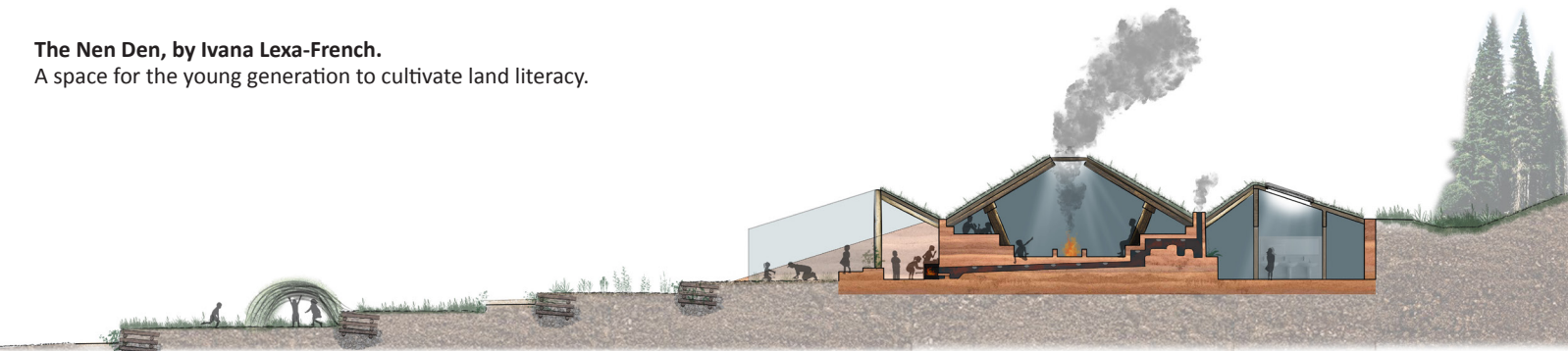
Sarah Pitoscia

The rhythms of a culture organized around the seasons can inform capacity building trade school. Skills are learned through direct hands-on learning of construction projects within Yunesit'in, Xeni Gwet'in and Dasiqox Tribal Park. These infrastructure projects inform and independent economy that accommodates seasonal activity.

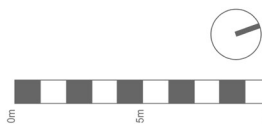


## The Nen Den, by Ivana Lexa-French.

A space for the young generation to cultivate land literacy.



Thank you so much for all the guidance, insight and knowledge you and your community have provided. My experience at UBC has offered a lot of valuable lessons, but this studio has been uniquely stirring. I've lived in Canada a little over a year, and my engagement with Tsilhqot'in culture has provided a much deeper sense of where I am, in large part thanks to the understanding and reciprocity you've facilitated. I'm thankful for this connection and happy that the work we've developed can extend beyond the end of the studio.





## Dasiqox Nexwagez?an Plans for 2021

BY CAITLIN THOMPSON & RUSSELL MYERS ROSS

I think everyone can agree that 2020 has been a challenging year! For the Dasiqox team it was a time of change and renewal, and we are looking forward to 2021 with some great new additions to the team and, most of all, to getting back into the communities once conditions allow. Looking forward into 2021 here are some of the things we are planning to focus on:

- Incorporating the important work of Dechen Ts'edilhtan into the management planning process;
- Integrating Dasiqox work into related initiatives within Xeni Gwet'in and Yunesit'iin and working more closely with the Nenqay Managers in each community;
- Updating the 2017 Communications Plan and creating a schedule for regular communications about Dasiqox both internally, in community, and to the larger audience
- Starting the work of redesigning the Dasiqox logo and related materials to reflect the name change to Dasiqox-Nexwagez?an
- Continue our fundraising efforts to support Dasiqox and related initiatives;
- Planning and supporting cultural events and getting back on the land (as conditions allow);
- Continuing to foster relationships with other Nations in regards to Indigenous Protected Conservation Areas and Guardianship
- Preparing orientation materials and providing support and direction on governance

**Caitlin Thompson** started working as the Team Coordinator for the Dasiqox in March 2020, drawing on her Bachelors degree in Communications, and her experience with project management, fundraising, and communications. She loves to get out on the land with her horses and currently lives in Bella Coola.



**Russell Myers-Ross** was the Chief of Yunesi'tin for 8 years and was instrumental in the establishment of Dasiqox. After stepping away from council duties in 2020 he joined the Dasiqox team to provide support in key areas such as governance, communications, and management planning.



## CALL FOR T̂SILHQOT'IN ARTISTS

*The XGFNG Nenqay Department will be producing plans, reports and materials. We want all of these documents to incorporate T̂silhqot'in art by including this in our reports, websites, and social media platforms.*

**Amount:** Please list the amount you request to receive for work on a single or series of graphic designs or drawings that can be used for the above-stated purposes with your submission.

**Type of Art:** graphic design, high-quality drawings, paintings

**Submissions:** Please submit a sample of what art you propose to Michelle Myers at the Nenqay Department by Feb 15, 2021 via email [mamyers@ualberta.ca](mailto:mamyers@ualberta.ca) or in person to the Band Office. Michelle will then reach out to successful submissions.

**DASIQOX**  
TRIBAL PARK

is now

***Dasiqox-Nexwagwez?an***  
***"there for us"***

We are in the process of updating our logo.

We are seeking a Tsilhqot'in artists to submit a sample for a new logo for:

**Dasiqox-Nexwagwez?an**  
**"there for us"**

Please email submissions to: [dasiqox@gmail.com](mailto:dasiqox@gmail.com)





Dasiqox-Nexwagez?an is a land, water and wildlife management area located in T̓silhqot̓'in territory, located about 125 kilometres southwest of Williams Lake, BC.

It is an expression of Indigenous governance initiated in 2014 by the Xeni Gwet'in and Yunešit'in Governments and supported by the T̓silhqot̓'in National Government. The area is different from a "traditional" park — it is a vision for this area that protects the land and revitalizes T̓silhqot̓'in culture, while also creating opportunities for sustainable economic development for the region.

For more information, or to submit an article for the next newsletter, contact: [dasiqox@gmail.com](mailto:dasiqox@gmail.com)



Yunešit'in Government  
(250) 394-4041



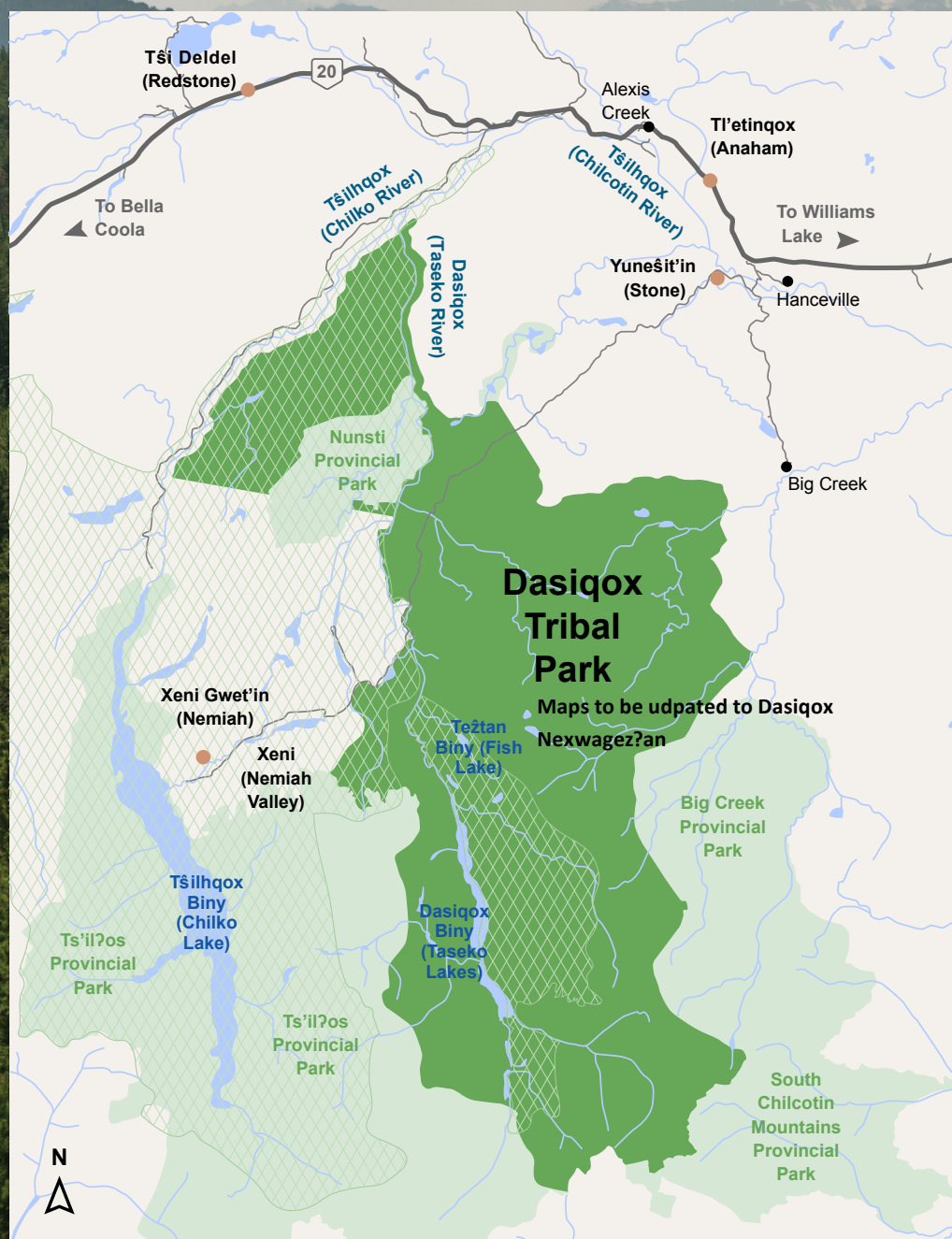
Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government  
(250) 394-7023

[Dasiqox.org](http://Dasiqox.org)

FB /Dasiqox-Nexwagez?an

@Dasiqox

Produced by Dasiqox Nexwagez?an Initiative,  
a project on the MakeWay Shared Platform



#### LEGEND

- Highways
- Main Roads
- Dasiqox Nexwagez?an
- T̓silhqot̓'in Communities
- BC Parks, Protected Areas & Conservancies
- T̓silhqot̓'in Proven & Declared Title & Rights Area

Note: This map is a graphic representation for general information only. It may not represent legal boundaries and should not be used for navigation.