



GITKSAN LAX'YIP MANAGEMENT OFFICE NEWSLETTER February 2026

GLMO'S ALL WATERSHEDS MEETING

AN ALL WATERSHEDS MEETING WAS HELD ON DECEMBER 11, 2025 AT GITANMAAX HALL. THERE WERE PRESENTATIONS ON: LAND GUARDIANS, SSAF, HEREDITARY CHIEFS PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT, GLMO INITIATIVES AND THE HISTORIC DELGAMUUKW DECISION

MONTHLY WATERSHED MEETINGS SCHEDULE

**VEST & CEDAR HAT
MAKING**

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All Watersheds Meeting

Gitxsan Lax'yip Management Office (GLMO) recently held an All Watersheds Meeting, bringing together community members, partners, and staff to share updates and highlight key initiatives underway. The meeting served as an important forum for information sharing, collaboration, and reflection on both current work and historic milestones.

Presentations included updates on GLMO's Land Guardians program, showcasing the ongoing on-the-ground stewardship, monitoring, and protection work being carried out throughout the Lax'yip. Attendees also heard about the Hereditary Chiefs Photography Project, which preserves and honors the leadership, history, and cultural continuity of Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs through visual storytelling.

Additional updates were provided on current and upcoming GLMO initiatives, outlining efforts to strengthen land management, capacity building, and partnerships. GLMO also shared information on its participation with Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum (SSAF), highlighting collaborative work that supports watershed health and long-term stewardship goals.

The meeting also recognized the historic significance of the Delgamuukw decision, reflecting on its lasting impact on the recognition of Aboriginal title and the ongoing work of Gitxsan leadership to assert and protect rights and responsibilities within the Lax'yip. The All Watersheds Meeting was held on the 28th anniversary of the Delgamuukw Decision.

The All Watersheds Meeting reinforced GLMO's commitment to transparency, collaboration, and unified stewardship across all watersheds, while honoring the history that continues to guide its work today.



Gyetym Galdo'o and Wilps Nikateen doing the welcome.

Land Guardians Update

The Gitxsan Laxyip Management Office (GLMO) Land Guardians continue to play a vital role as the eyes and ears on the Lax'yip, maintaining a strong boots-on-the-ground presence across Gitxsan territory. Their work blends cultural responsibility with hands-on land stewardship, including wildlife and habitat monitoring, cedar strategy, amphibian protection, wildfire readiness, and increased patrols during the Limited Entry Hunting (LEH) season.

This season, Guardians focused on wildlife and habitat checks, including goshawk monitoring, riparian assessments, and supporting local beaver trapping. Significant efforts were also dedicated to water and amphibian protection. Creek walks and specialized training with BC Parks supported data collection on the annual baby toad (toadlet) migration at Ross Lake. This information will guide the placement and evaluation of new culverts to provide safer under-road crossings for amphibians.

During the Limited Entry Hunting (LEH) season, the Guardians also worked closely with Conservation Officers to coordinate LEH patrol priorities and information-sharing during the September to November hunting window.

Using a new ArcGIS FieldMaps app on iPads, they recorded hunting activity, wildlife sightings, and kill sites. These findings are helping GLMO identify heavily used areas that may limit Gitxsan harvest opportunities and will inform future hunting regulation discussions, education efforts, and management decisions. Ongoing training remains a key part of the Guardians' work, ensuring they are prepared to respond when community members need assistance and to protect both people and the land. The Land Guardians will continue to be a strong presence on the Lax'yip.



The Guardians taking Swift Water Training.



Land Guardians (Left to right): Jesse Olson, Scott Muldon and Tyson Daniels



Land Guardians presentation on what they've been working on and what's coming up.



The Guardians come across a lot of wildlife on the Laxyip.

All Watersheds Meeting con't



Hereditary Chiefs Photography Project

Nathan Combs did a short presentation on this photography project that he would like to do with the support of the Chiefs and GLMO. The Hereditary Chiefs Photography Project is a cultural preservation initiative dedicated to documenting Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs and Matriarchs through professional photography. This project aims to honor Gitxsan hereditary governance while creating a lasting visual record that preserves history, strengthens cultural identity, and educates future generations.

At the heart of the project is the creation of high-quality portraits that reflect the leadership, responsibility, and cultural significance carried by Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs and Matriarchs. These images will form a permanent archive, ensuring that the stories and faces of Gitxsan leadership are preserved for generations to come.

This initiative plays a vital role in preserving and honoring Gitxsan hereditary governance systems. By capturing these portraits, the project supports cultural education in schools, reinforces identity among Gitxsan youth, and provides accessible visual resources for learning and reflection. The photographs will also be used to produce a portrait exhibit and a hardcover book that showcases Gitxsan leadership and governance in a respectful and meaningful way. All photography is carried out in full respect of Gitxsan laws and protocols. Participation occurs only with the blessings of the Hereditary Chiefs, and a clear, respectful consent process is followed throughout the project. Cultural integrity and care remain central to every stage of the work.

The project will produce 50 or more professional portraits of Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs and Matriarchs. Ideally, cultural photography exhibits will be established in each Gitxsan community, creating opportunities for public engagement and education. A hardcover book featuring the portraits will be developed, alongside a digital archive to ensure long-term access and preservation. The project is designed to be ongoing, allowing for updates and continued documentation over time.

The Hereditary Chiefs Photography Project honors Gitxsan tradition, leadership, and governance through respectful cultural documentation. By creating a permanent visual legacy, the project ensures that future generations can learn from, connect with, and carry forward Gitxsan history with pride and understanding.



All Watersheds Meeting con't

SSAF Update Shared at GLMO All Watersheds Meeting

An update was provided on the work of the Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum (SSAF) and its collaboration with Gitxsan Lax'yip Management Office (GLMO). The presentation highlighted SSAF's role, current projects, and upcoming priorities that support stewardship and informed decision-making across the region.

SSAF is an apolitical, consensus-based co-management body that provides technical support, data, and decision-support tools to First Nations and the Province of British Columbia. While SSAF does not make land or resource decisions, its work supports decision-makers through trusted data, analysis, and collaborative planning processes rooted in reconciliation

Several major projects were highlighted, including Forest Landscape Planning (FLP) work in the Lakes Resiliency Project area, which is nearing completion, and the Bulkley-Morice FLP, which is just beginning. SSAF has played a lead role in wildlife and aquatic working groups and has contributed data to inform current condition reports and forestry objectives. SSAF has also completed a biophysical cumulative effects assessment for the North Coast Transmission Line, providing risk-based mitigation recommendations

The presentation emphasized SSAF's data initiatives, including the SkWERM wildlife habitat model, which reflects current habitat conditions and has been validated through three years of fieldwork. Cultural indicators work was also highlighted, with SSAF Nations developing a survey-based program to track trends in Indigenous values through present-day practices. GLMO is leading SSAF in data collection for this initiative, with all data remaining Nation-owned and controlled. In addition, SSAF has completed a Moose Habitat cumulative effects assessment, now available to Nations for planning and decision support.

Indigenous Guardian projects are another key area of work. These include cultural trail identification and



Sean Mitchell, SSAF along with Max Stevens, GLMO.

restoration planning, as well as a multi-year Moose Health program aimed at better understanding factors affecting moose populations across the SSAF study area.

Looking ahead, SSAF outlined several upcoming initiatives, including a cumulative effects assessment for the PRGT pipeline, exploration of how SSAF data can support mining decisions, and further development of restoration tools and processes. Archaeology assessment training for Guardians is also planned for the spring, enabling Guardians to collect archaeological data in the field in a way that supports protection under the Heritage Conservation Act.

The update underscored the importance of collaboration, trusted data, and Indigenous leadership in stewarding lands and waters across Gitxsan Lax'yip, and highlighted GLMO's ongoing role in advancing this shared work.

All Watersheds Meeting con't

GLMO Initiatives: Past, Present and Future

The Gitxsan Lax'yip Management Office (GLMO) continues to advance a wide range of stewardship initiatives that support Gitxsan authority, strengthen land governance, and ensure the Lax'yip is managed according to Gitxsan Ayookw for present and future generations. Guided by the GLMO Strategic Plan 2024–2029, these initiatives reflect GLMO's vision of a sovereign, inclusive, and sustainable Lax'yip for present and future generations, and its mission to support and empower our Huwilp to make informed decisions and exercise authority over the Lax'yip.

At the heart of this work is GLMO's Stewardship Framework, grounded in a Theory of Change that clearly identifies the challenges facing the Lax'yip, including unsustainable resource management, climate uncertainty, loss of biodiversity, and ongoing impacts of colonization, and maps a pathway toward long-term resilience, co-management, and cultural continuity.

Core Stewardship Programs and Strategic Initiatives

GLMO's stewardship work spans multiple interconnected program areas, supported by provincial funding, external partnerships, and Gitxsan driven priorities. Key initiatives currently underway or in development include:

Land Use Planning

GLMO is advancing Watershed Land Use Plans and supporting Forest Landscape Planning (FLP) processes to ensure Gitxsan values, laws, and priorities are embedded in land-use decisions. This work strengthens Gitxsan authority at planning tables while addressing cumulative effects, climate resilience, and sustainable harvest levels.

Forestry Negotiations and Resource Management

Through forestry negotiations with BC Timber Sales (BCTS) Licensees and District Skeena Stikine (DSS), GLMO continues to advocate for sustainable forest management, cedar retention, and old-growth protection. Old Growth Ground Truthing and the Cedar Retention Strategy are key components of this work, ensuring on-the-ground realities align with

policy commitments.

Land Guardians Program

The Land Guardians program remains a cornerstone of GLMO's stewardship efforts. Guardians provide boots-on-the-ground presence, monitoring, data collection, and community support across the Lax'yip. Their work strengthens enforcement, supports cultural and ecological assessments, and builds capacity for long-term Gitxsan-led stewardship.

Environmental and Wildlife Stewardship

GLMO is actively engaged in Wildlife Enhancement and Restoration, climate monitoring, and participation in the Ministers' Wildlife Advisory Council and First Nations Wildlife Forum. These efforts address declining wildlife populations, food security, and the need for culturally informed wildlife management.

Cultural and Ecological Assessments

Cultural, archaeological, and ecological assessments are a critical part of stewardship planning. GLMO is compiling baseline data, supporting fieldwork, and coordinating assessments to inform land-use decisions, conservation pathways, and long-term monitoring strategies.

Cultural Prescribed Burning and Environmental Stewardship

Cultural Prescribed Burning and the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) support ecosystem health while revitalizing Gitxsan land-based practices. These initiatives contribute to climate resilience, wildfire risk reduction, and cultural continuity.



All Watersheds Meeting con't

Referrals and Consultation (Gitxsan Connect)

Through referrals and consultation processes, GLMO supports informed decision-making by the Simgigyat and Huwilp, ensuring proponents and governments engage appropriately and respect Gitxsan governance and Ayookw.

Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and Community Connection

Central to GLMO's work is the knowledge held by Gitxsan Elders and Knowledge Keepers. GLMO prioritizes Elder engagement, land gathering, and knowledge transfer to youth, Guardians, and Wilp members. Planned initiatives such as the Gitxsan Land Gathering (2026) aim to reconnect community members to the Lax'yip through shared learning, cultural activities, and on-the-land experiences, fostering healing, pride, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Partnerships and Funding Support

GLMO's initiatives are supported through a combination of provincial funding and external partnerships, including SkeenaWild, Sitka Foundation, Indigenous Forestry Initiative (IFI), BC Parks Foundation, and the Real Estate Foundation / Watershed Security Fund. These partnerships support Land Use Planning, Guardians, stewardship coordination, assessments, land gathering, and community monitoring programs.

Looking Ahead

As GLMO continues to implement its Stewardship Framework, future work will focus on filling key gaps identified in the Strategic Plan, such as expanding baseline data, strengthening coordination across watershed tables, enhancing enforcement capacity, and ensuring long-term, sustainable funding. Through this integrated approach, GLMO is building the technical, cultural, and governance capacity needed to ensure the Lax'yip is managed according to Gitxsan Ayookw.

We feel these initiatives reflect a clear and unified commitment to: restoring balance, strengthening Gitxsan authority, and stewarding the Lax'yip for generations to come.



Co-Executive Directors Kevin Stevens & Tracey Woods

All Watersheds Meeting con't

Delgamuukw Decision - 28th Anniversary

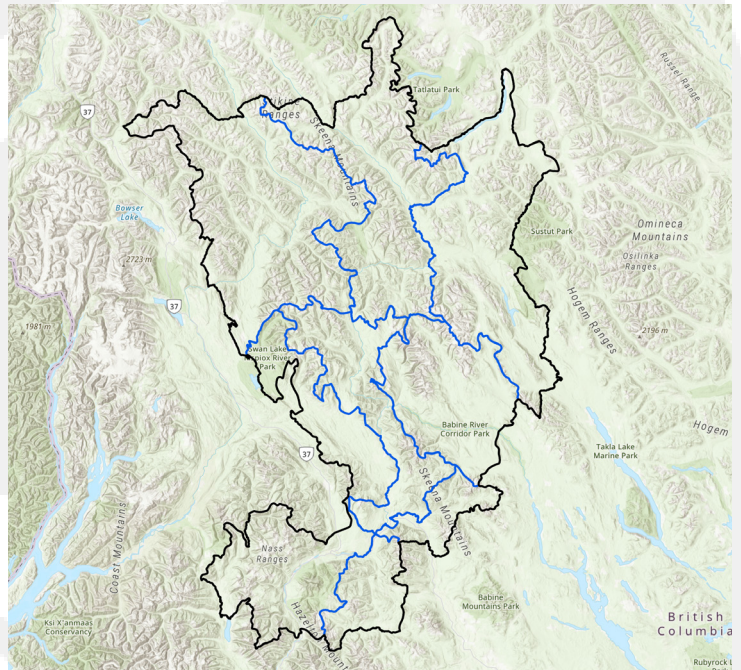
Ardythe Wilson and Barb Huson delivered a powerful presentation reflecting on the historic Delgamuukw Decision, marking 28 years since the Supreme Court of Canada recognized Aboriginal title in Gitxsan Lax'yip. Both women worked closely with the Simgigyat from the very beginning of the case through to its conclusion, offering firsthand insight into its history and significance.

Their presentation highlighted how Gitxsan Elders developed a long-term, 200-year strategic plan to assert and protect Gitxsan rights in response to government interference, particularly around logging and fishing. They spoke about how Gitxsan people organized through societies and training programs to manage lands and resources, grounded in consensus-based decision-making and respect for traditional knowledge.

Ardythe and Barb also discussed the legal strategies behind the case, including the development of court interpretation systems and the training of translators to clearly assert Gitxsan jurisdiction and ownership. These efforts ultimately contributed to a landmark Supreme Court decision affirming collective rights and economic interests tied to Gitxsan territory, despite significant challenges and financial barriers.

The presentation concluded with an overview of the decades-long journey toward implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Canada. Ardythe highlighted key milestones, including UNDRIP's adoption in 2007 and British Columbia's implementation legislation in 2019. Attendees were encouraged to learn more about UNDRIP and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 92 Calls to Action, and to continue upholding the vital role of elders, consensus, and Indigenous law in decision-making processes.

The conversation ended with a reminder about the significance of the 28th anniversary and the need for continued discussions, especially with the upcoming 30th anniversary. This is something GLMO would like to celebrate with a big gathering.



"The foundations of Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en societies are firmly entrenched in our own laws. But in the face of Provincial and Federal disrespect for these laws and the injustice this has brought, the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en have come to this court to secure those foundations in Canadian law, law which the Province and Federal Governments can be compelled to respect. Only then will the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en be able to negotiate a just resolution of their relationship with Canada. This case is therefore a search for legal pathways to justice."

- Delgamuukw, Ken Muldoe

Monthly Watershed Meetings Schedule



MONTHLY WATERSHED MEETINGS SCHEDULE

TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, THURSDAYS

BABINE WATERSHED	
FACILITATOR: Noel Argueta	
Tuesday, January 13, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, February 10, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, March 10, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, April 7, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, May 12, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, June 9, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, July 7, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, August 11, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, September 8, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, October 6, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Tuesday, November 17, 2026: 10am – 12pm	

KISPIOX WATERSHED	
FACILITATOR: Gabriel Hilbach	
Tuesday, January 13, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Tuesday, February 10, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	L
Tuesday, March 10, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	U
Tuesday, April 7, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	N
Tuesday, May 12, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	C
Tuesday, June 9, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	H
Tuesday, July 7, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Tuesday, August 11, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Tuesday, September 8, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Tuesday, October 6, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Tuesday, November 17, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	

SUSTUT WATERSHED	
FACILITATOR: Max Stevens	
Wednesday, January 14, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, February 11, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, March 11, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, April 8, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, May 13, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, June 10, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, July 8, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, August 12, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, September 9, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, October 7, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Wednesday, November 18, 2026: 10am – 12pm	

UPPER SKEENA WATERSHED	
FACILITATOR: Max Stevens	
Wednesday, January 14, 2025: 1pm – 3pm	
Wednesday, February 11, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	L
Wednesday, March 11, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	U
Wednesday, April 8, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	N
Wednesday, May 13, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	C
Wednesday, June 10, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	H
Wednesday, July 8, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Wednesday, August 12, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Wednesday, September 9, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Wednesday, October 7, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Wednesday, November 18, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	

MID SKEENA WATERSHED	
FACILITATOR: Rob Matthews	
Thursday, January 15, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, February 12, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, March 12, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, April 9, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, May 14, 2026: 10am – 12p8	
Thursday, June 11, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, July 9, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, August 13, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, September 10, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, October 8, 2026: 10am – 12pm	
Thursday, November 19, 2026: 10am – 12pm	

UPPER NASS WATERSHED	
FACILITATOR: Linda Matthews	
Thursday, January 15, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Thursday, February 12, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	L
Thursday, March 12, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	U
Thursday, April 9, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	N
Thursday, May 14, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	C
Thursday, June 11, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	H
Thursday, July 9, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Thursday, August 13, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Thursday, September 10, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Thursday, October 8, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	
Thursday, November 19, 2026: 1pm – 3pm	

Staff Spotlight



Rob Matthews

Hello my name is Rob Matthews

My Gitxsan name is Gyetm Gwiis Giigeenix (big man from the east). I'm from the house of Niis Noohl – Ray Jones, Wilp Sto'om Hloxs. Gisgaast.

I've worked for the Gitksan Watershed Authorities (GWA) for 3 years as a fisheries Technician, in those years I was able to get trained up in swift water rescue, some GIS Courses, Wilderness Advanced First aid, Advanced Drone training, plotting areas with LIDAR and Thermal cameras. I've also got a good look at some of the territories in the Kispiox Valley and getting helicoptered into remote areas hiking and counting salmon in salmon bearing creeks. I Also have my welding certificate and helped GWA build an Aluminum fish fence for one of their projects. I Took a 9-month welding course in Terrace at Northwest Community college and completed the course quite a few years back.

I Love to hunt. I am always out hunting or getting firewood for my parents and brothers' family, I manage to get one or two bull moose a year to help my family and friends. I'm starting to get into the teaching of what I've learned throughout the 25+ years of hunting. I have some nieces and nephews that want to learn how and now I have the time to teach them.

I hope to bring my skills onboard with the Gitxsan Laxyip Management Office to help out the best I can.



Cedar Hat & Vest Making

Staff from the Gitxsan Laxyip Management Office (GLMO) recently had the opportunity to participate in hands-on cultural workshops led by Val Morgan, focusing on the making of traditional Gitxsan regalia. The first workshop guided participants through the process of creating traditional vests, offering not only practical skills but also teachings around the cultural significance, design elements, and responsibilities connected to wearing and making regalia. Through this experience, staff were immersed in Gitxsan culture in a meaningful and respectful way, learning directly from a knowledge holder and engaging in the practice of intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Building on this experience, a second workshop was held on cedar hat making - an important cultural practice that reflects Gitxsan identity, artistry, and connection to the land. Cedar hats require patience, precision, and an understanding of cedar as a living resource, and participants learned the techniques and cultural teachings that accompany this traditional art form. Engaging in these workshops reinforced the importance of learning by doing, and of being present in cultural spaces where knowledge is shared through story, instruction, and lived experience. It was also a fun team building opportunity for all staff interact while making their cedar hats and vests.

“The greatest lesson is to be proud to be Gitxsan and learn our language. Our language is our identity. We need to teach our children and our grandchildren our language!”

- Sakum Higookw, Vernon Smith Sr.

Gitxsanimax Word/phrase of the Month

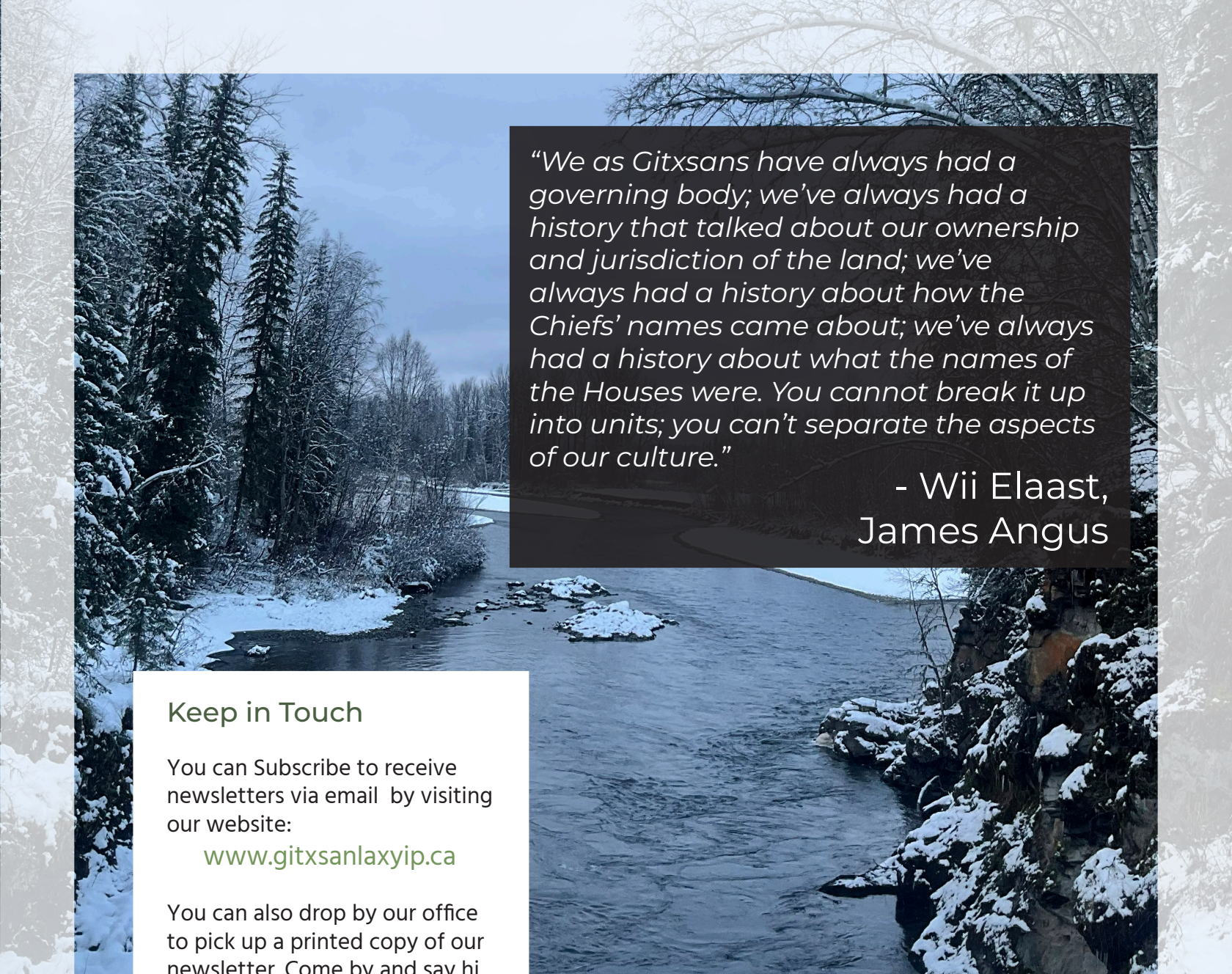
We understand and would like to acknowledge that there are different dialects and different ways to pronounce words. The word/phrase for this issue is:

Guxws ama ga’atxwin:
Take care (of yourself).

A cedar hat-making workshop was also organized specifically for the Simgiyat to participate in. While most of the Simgiyat were unable to attend directly, some sent a representative to take part on their behalf. This approach ensured that the knowledge shared during the workshop could still be carried back to their Huwilp.

Overall, these workshops highlighted the value of cultural immersion and the vital role that traditional knowledge transfer plays in strengthening Gitxsan identity, leadership, and stewardship across generations. This was also a great team building opportunity for the GLMO staff.





“We as Gitxsans have always had a governing body; we’ve always had a history that talked about our ownership and jurisdiction of the land; we’ve always had a history about how the Chiefs’ names came about; we’ve always had a history about what the names of the Houses were. You cannot break it up into units; you can’t separate the aspects of our culture.”

*- Wii Elaast,
James Angus*

Keep in Touch

You can Subscribe to receive newsletters via email by visiting our website:

www.gitxsanlaxyip.ca

You can also drop by our office to pick up a printed copy of our newsletter. Come by and say hi.

We will be putting out a newsletter to keep the Gitxsan updated on what we are working on.

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