

Aboriginal Rights and Title:

Membership:

A great deal of work has gone into sorting through all files with applications or requests that had not been completed. Membership services are available by appointment during the pandemic.

Sasquatch Park:

We are exploring a strong role in managing Sasquatch Park. The first step was a cultural heritage assessment, to look into archived documents and interviews for the evidence of use over time. It should be noted that much of the land and lakeshores within the park have yet to be assessed for archaeological evidence. The archaeological sites are heritage resources that need to be protected within the park, and future preservation and/or restoration can be leveraged to preserve Indigenous cultural heritage resources through the broader territory.

The major recommendations of the report are as follows:

1. Lets'emó:t (working together with one heart and one mind): Enhanced ongoing communication and cooperation between BC Parks and Xwélmexw communities, including co-management of Sasquatch Park with emphasis on Xwélmexw worldview
2. Interpretive signage and other outreach communication strategies that educate visitors about the tangible and intangible Indigenous cultural heritage resources as revealed through Sxwôxwiyám and Sqwélqwel
3. Protection of spiritual sites and medicinal plant gathering sites from park visitor recreational use
4. Archaeological assessment of Sasquatch Park
5. Professional development for BC Parks staff relating to the history and culture of the Xwélmexw people of the lower Fraser River watershed

Highway 7 and future negotiations

We are working on a **sound study** to better understand the noise levels from the highway and the railway. A sound barrier was recently suggested by community members responding to the community survey. The study will determine the existing and projected vehicle and railway noise levels that the nearby residences and businesses are exposed to and explore potential mitigation options.

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Aquatic Habitat Restoration project

We are working on various project ideas related to the Maria Slough and fish habitat, the following two being first on the list:

1. Maria Slough flow enhancement – improving spawning channels, replacing culverts replaced with small free standing bridges
2. Developing a certificate program in community fisheries through Seabird College, to build stewardship and employment capacity in fisheries, habitat, and monitoring.

Strength of Claim: Seabird would like to share the results and reports compiled thus far, through a series of stories that will be written and illustrated by the research team. It is important to include more than just Seabird in this distribution. We will be looking for summer student involvement again this year, to create some videos or short docs to tell the stories.

We are working towards having a wall mural / mixed installation in the new culture center build, depicting cultural and historical information from the Strength of Claim work – to make it accessible and displayed for future generations. Elders will be recorded as part of the display, for example, making their stories available for posterity without the written word.

Terrestrial Cumulative Effects Initiative: Gord Lyall, contractor and Keith Carlson protégé, has been invited to provide a demonstration of his data research tool that will be the result of this work. Cumulative effects are roughly defined as changes in the world around us that are caused by repeated human and natural activities over space and time. The Indigenous Centre for Cumulative Effects (ICCE) includes ‘cultural, social, and health impacts—in addition to the environmental effects—of activities and processes on our land, water and air.’ Seabird has received one year funding to develop a framework with which to evaluate cumulative effects and future projects.

The SIB tool is being built to use in conjunction with the Strength of Claim data, so that students / members can mine the data, for their school curriculum work or post-secondary work as well. We will include links to the original documents for posterity, and give them metadata labels indicating which analytics apply to each document. So for example the "Environmental Assessment... Erosion Protection" should get "fisheries", and "land use" labels, probably some more as we develop the categories;

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that way when we later want to call up material by category, that doc will appear when searching "fisheries", "land use" or when both are triggered (when both are triggered all those tagged with only "fisheries" or only "land use" would be ignored).