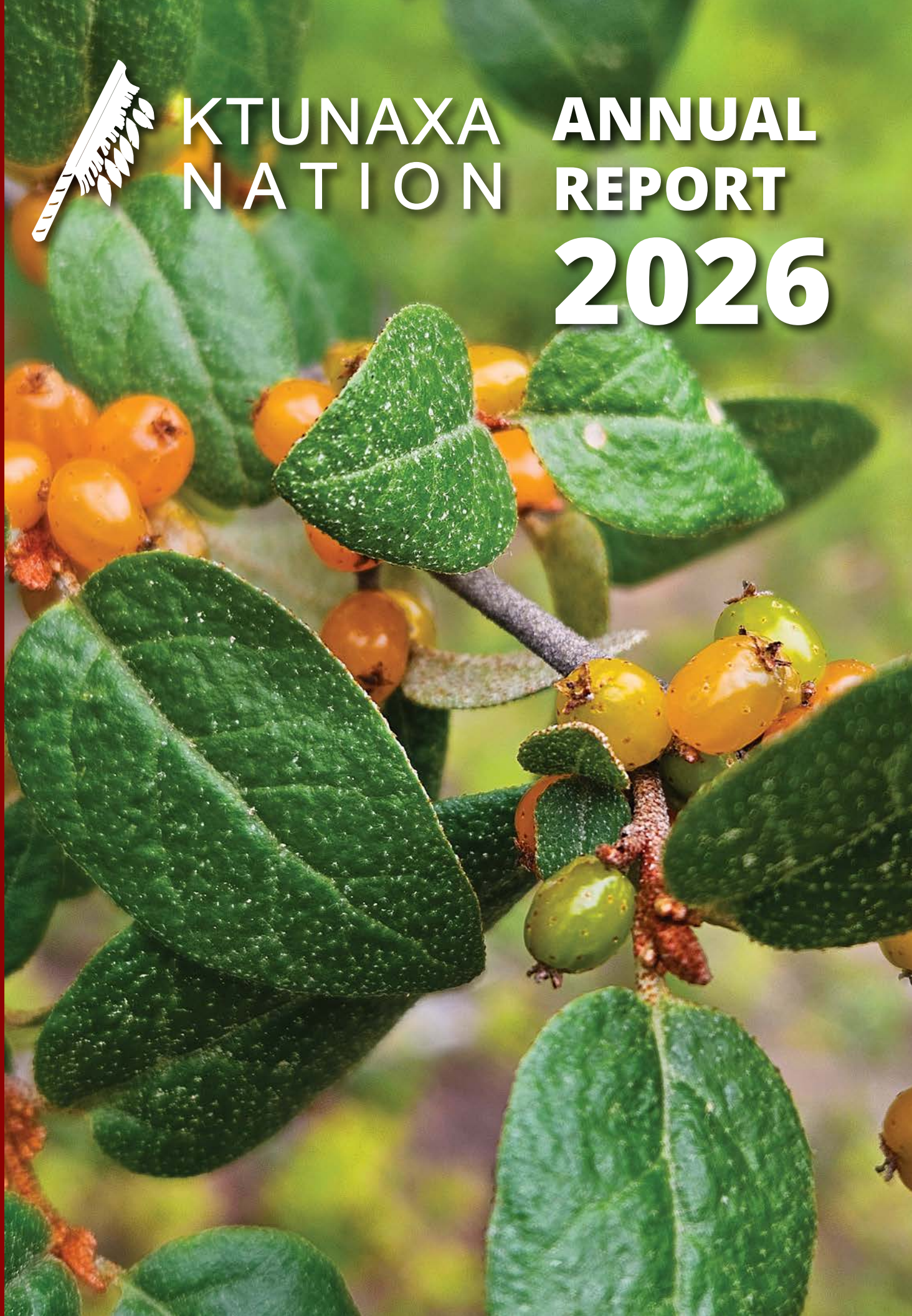




**KTUNAXA
NATION**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2026**



Ktunaxa Nation Vision Statement

Kçmakqa ksuktuła·k kukqani
ç kitqakił haqa ksi?ł çxa
?a·kłukqa?is ksukiłquka?mi·k
ki?in Ktunaxa na?s ?amak?is.
Qus pikaksç na?s çxał yaqanakił
haqa?ki. Kitqawiçmu kakiłwiçkił
?amak?is kisnikçik kçxał qa
kiłkkaxuxami·k kitqakił haqa
ç kis?in ?aknumuçtił?is.

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.



KTUNAXA
NATION

Ktunaxa Nation Council
Mission Statement

The Ktunaxa Nation Council upholds Ktunaxa values and offers programs, services and capacity support in alignment with the Vision, and in collaboration with each of the Ktunaxa First Nations, so that

qapi qapsin kin ?itkin hin ?isti Ktunaxa.
(Everything you do, you do for Ktunaxa.)

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Ktunaxa Nation Council Society Office Building

220 Cranbrook Street N
Cranbrook, B.C. V1C 3R2

Society Office

7825 Mission Road
Cranbrook, B.C. V1C 7E5

ktunaxa.org

Ktunaxa Nation Council Society

Members & Directors as of July, 2026



ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation

Chief and Council

Nasuʔkin Donald Sam
Councillor Janice Alpine
Councillor Faro Burgoyne
Councillor Darcy Fisher
Councillor Stephanie Sam



ʔAQʼAM

ʔaqam

Chief and Council

Nasuʔkin Cheryl Casimer
Councillor Jason Andrew
Councillor Julie Birdstone
Councillor Dallas Cardinal-Clement



YAQAN NUKIY

LOWER KOOTENAY BAND

yaqan nuʔkiy

Chief and Council

Nasuʔkin M. Jason Louie
Councillor Leona Basil
Councillor Robin Louie
Councillor Chad Luke
Councillor Cherie Luke



Yaqit ʔa·knuq̓ti'it

Yaqit ʔa·knuq̓ti'it First Nation

Chief and Council

Nasuʔkin Heidi Gravelle
Councillor Beckie Cayenne-Ban Quan
Councillor Avery Gravelle
Councillor Alicia Phillips
Councillor Kevin Phillips
Councillor Kyle Shottanana



KTUNAXA NATION

Ktunaxa Nation Council Society

Chair Kathryn Teneese

Message from the Nation Chair



Ki?suk kyukyit, ǰapiniskiǰ,

As Nation Chair, I am encouraged by the progress we have made together over the past year.

Through meaningful engagement with our communities, strategic planning, and the focus

on strong governance, we are placing even greater emphasis on collaboration and community-driven decision-making.

We have established a clear **mission** grounded in our shared vision, advanced important work on **governance**, rights and title, and the implementation of our updated **Ktunaxa Land Declaration**.

We're laying the foundation for stronger, Ktunaxa-centred measures of success through **census data**, **effective engagement** approaches and **strategic planning**.

We're investing in priorities to strengthen our Nation, including cultural, health, environmental, and governance initiatives.

The reports that follow will tell these stories in greater detail.

Looking ahead

The continued review of important agreements, the development of the **Ktunaxa Legacy Trust**, and our collective work toward greater self-determination and **recognition of Ktunaxa rights and title** will continue to reflect our shared commitment to protecting our lands, supporting our citizens, and ensuring a strong future for generations to come.

I hold deep respect for our Leadership and appreciate the dedication shown by our Nation's representatives, staff, and community members.

Each one of us has something to offer, something unique and important.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support and dedication.

Taxa,

**Kathryn Teneese
Chair,
Ktunaxa Nation Council**



From the CAO

2025 was a year of evaluation and change.

Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC) leadership held **strategic planning meetings** in April, 2025, which built on collaborative meetings the KNC team had with Ktunaxa community teams earlier that spring. The KNC shifted work to align more closely with the priorities identified by the collective.

With the return of Gwen Phillips as **Senior Governance Lead**, we have also begun to transition to a more disciplined and clearer approach to decision making, communications, governance work and how KNC operations can provide better supports, while continuing to deliver services and programs to Ktunaxa citizens.

Mission and people

The draft KNC **Mission Statement** shared at last year's AGA to obtain citizen feedback is also now in place.

Efforts continue to **meet with community CAOs** every month. The next phase in collaboration will be to meet regularly with governance leads as well, to ensure KNC is able to receive direction and plan and respond to it in a timely fashion that addresses gaps and focuses on priorities.

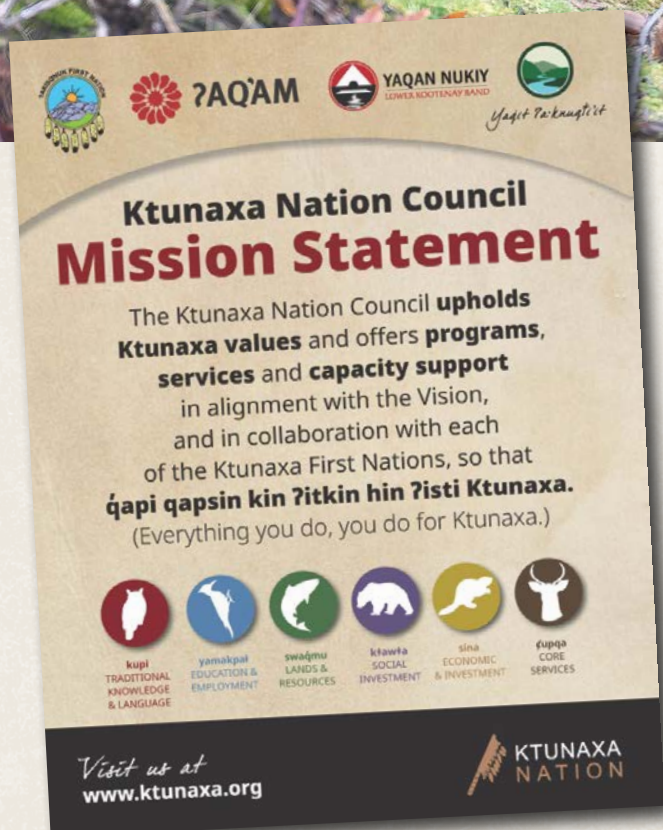
Ktunaxa census

The **Ktunaxa Census** wrapped up in early April and a findings report will be presented at this year's AGA.

This data will help us to better inform and evaluate the impacts of sector work.

The sector directors, finance and governance teams will continue to develop **Ktunaxa-centric outcome measures** to create evidence-based resourcing and return-on-investment measures tied to quality of life and citizen impact.

This work, which will also be informed by community governments, will help reframe KNC sector mandates.



Agreement reviews

Engagement and accountability continue with the IMBA (Impacts Management and Benefits Agreement) and IRSA (Internal Revenue Sharing Agreement) reviews.

The **IMBA review** has been supported by citizen engagement sessions to review the intent, impacts and opportunities, (both realized and missed), over the last 10 years.

To support this work, a **Ktunaxa Citizens' Advisory Task Force** was established and meets regularly to help inform and consider areas for improvement to the agreement prior to any IMBA renewal, or, as we are referring to it, "IMBA 2.0."

This will result in, at a minimum, more accountability measures and clearer communication of benefits and how these have helped, (and will continue to help), to mitigate mining impacts to the land, water and ecosystem.

Due to economic uncertainties, coal prices dropped throughout 2025 which significantly impacted mineral tax revenues and production-related payments flowing from Elk Valley Resources and the Province of B.C., meaning less own-source revenue (OSR) available to be shared amongst the Ktunaxa communities, KNC and the Legacy Trust.

Despite this, we were able to more than **triple the amount of implementation funds** to enhance supports to the Cultural, Environmental, Procurement and Employment working groups as well as our ʔa·knusti team.

Ktunaxa Legacy Trust

The **Ktunaxa Legacy Trust creation committee** has been active over the last year and into this year, so **keep an eye out for engagement sessions**.

Sessions will be scheduled this summer and into the fall to get your input on the type of trust to be established, how it should be governed, and a *Ktunaxa Nation Investment Policy Statement* to help ensure the funds are ethically invested and grow in perpetuity for Ktunaxa future generations.

Based on this input, on recent own-source-revenue (OSR) community meetings, and the IRSA review,

we know that any changes to the way OSR is shared requires ongoing community input, and will include modelling the impacts to citizens, families, communities, and the collective well into the future.

As this work happens, KNC is seeking to secure new revenue streams outside of the historical forestry, Columbia River Treaty, power, and mining sectors.

Strategic planning

Priorities were established in the areas of Governance, Self-Governance approaches, Processes and Resources, Rights, Title & Territory Encroachment, the Ktunaxa Economy, and Socio-Economic Services and Supports.

While these priorities were developed in 2025, they represent a three-to-five year plan to fully realize and then to see the impacts of the work.

In many of these areas, key projects include building more governance supports for collective interests tied to being more proactive on title and rights and encroachment matters.

In addition, work continues on the implementation of the updated **Ktunaxa Land Declaration** signed at last year's AGA.

Reflections and hopes

The KNC team is committed to working more closely with, and for, Ktunaxa communities and citizens.

It's clear KNC and the KFNs are pulling together in employing better data harvesting and management tools. This will result in stronger, more informed decision-making processes.

The KNC continues to measure and evaluate the success of these approaches and be willing to make the necessary changes so things work more efficiently and effectively.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the KNC staff and leadership for all they do, and for their agility and efforts toward helping realize the Nation Vision.

I trust leadership and staff will continue to find ways to support one another on the Ktunaxa path to success and prosperity.

Darrin Jamieson,
Chief Administration Officer

Social Investment

Strong, healthy

CITIZENS



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Ki?su?k Kyukyit!

This past year, the Ktunaxa Nation Council's Social Investment Sector continued to deliver integrated, culturally grounded health and wellness services for Ktunaxa citizens and all Indigenous people across ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Returning as director, I have focused on strengthening operations, building clear succession pathways, and positioning the sector for long-term sustainability and greater impact.

Significant progress has been made in developing policies, procedures, and ongoing staff training to ensure consistent, trauma-informed, and culturally safe care across all programs.

As **Clinical Director, Racheal Nicholas** is responsible for clinical oversight and regulatory compliance across the entire sector, while **Kimberly Joseph** has stepped into broader operational and leadership responsibilities as **Director Mentee**. This intentional succession planning protects Ktunaxa-led direction and builds team depth.

The sector continues to advocate vigorously with our health partners.

Key priorities include securing long-term sustainability for the **Ktunaxa Regional Health Centre** and supporting its transition into the First Nations Primary Care Initiative (FNPCI) model.

Ktunaxa representatives **Dallas Cardinal-Clement** and **Jared Basil**, together with Leadership, actively **participate at senior provincial tables** such as the Interior Region Nation Executive, the Partnership Accord Leadership Table and Partnership Accord Technical Table.

The **Ktunaxa-Interior Health Letter of Understanding** (LOU) table has been revived to address operational and policy issues directly, making other collaborative meetings more productive and effective.

Support has also been provided to Ktunaxa Leadership and the four Ktunaxa governments in advancing a **Nation Healing Strategy** and to investigate a possible **Nation Aging Strategy**.

The sector remains very committed to the **new treatment centre in yaqan nu?kiy** and is exploring pathways toward Nation-led detox and stabilization centres.

Working closely with Governance and Elders, the **Ktunaxa Practice Framework** is being updated for potential incorporation into Ktunaxa law, while options are being explored to develop it as a college program.

This initiative would ensure its sustainability and allow broader teaching across institutions throughout Ktunaxa territory; an idea that has received positive feedback from local and regional institutions.

Strong advocacy continues for Ktunaxa interests at all levels, including **better supports for incarcerated individuals** under the *Mental Health Act*, improved medication continuity, enhanced discharge planning, and successful community reintegration.

Grounded in the *Ktunaxa Practice Framework*, these efforts advance our mandate to build and sustain accessible, community-driven systems of care for strong healthy citizens.

We remain deeply grateful for the dedication of our staff, partners, and Leadership.

Debbie Whitehead,
Director,
Social Investment Sector



Outreach services

A culturally grounded continuum of care

Outreach services form a vital part of the sector's mobile and community-based response.

Outreach licensed practical nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, mental health clinicians, and support workers **deliver care directly** to vulnerable individuals where they live.

Services include: Wound care, access to and distribution of recovered food, immunizations, STI testing, harm-reduction supplies, basic nursing, medication support, and connections to primary care, wellness programs and specialized Mental Health and Substance Use teams within Interior Health that work collaboratively alongside KNC teams.

Aboriginal Care Navigators (ACN) provide dedicated support across the territory.

Delivered in partnership with Interior Health through the Primary Care Network, ACNs are based in key areas including ʔAkisq̓nuk, ʔaq̓am, and yaqan nuʔkiy with outreach to the Invermere, Creston, and Cranbrook clinics providing services on reserve when needed.

They help Ktunaxa and Indigenous clients navigate complex health systems, access primary care, coordinate appointments, and connect with culturally safe services.

Together, outreach teams and Aboriginal Care Navigators reduce barriers, prevent crises, and ensure no one is left behind, extending the "circle of care" beyond clinic walls in alignment with the *Ktunaxa Practice Framework*.

Complex care housing

The **Complex Care House** (CCH) serves as a vital first-stage stabilization home, offering low-barrier, relationship-based support for Ktunaxa citizens and other individuals navigating complex mental health, substance use, and housing challenges.

Under the clinical director's portfolio, the CCH provides a safe, trauma-informed environment where residents can focus on immediate stabilization, healing, and connection to culturally rooted wellness practices. We were successful in securing a grant from First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Council to renovate the basement. This upgrade will meaningfully increase capacity, create consistent and dedicated spaces for stabilization to enhance the overall quality and safety of care for the vulnerable Ktunaxa we serve.

Housing supports

Scotty's House operates as a second-stage home exclusively for Ktunaxa citizens and those with close kinship ties to Ktunaxa.

It offers a supportive transitional environment for individuals who have completed initial stabilization and are no longer actively in addiction. The program focuses on rebuilding life skills, strengthening community connections, and supporting long-term wellness and successful reintegration.

Currently, Scotty's also houses **five Ktunaxa seniors** due to limited availability of appropriate housing and support options that meet their current care needs within their home communities.



Photo courtesy Cranbrook Home Depot.
Orange Door Campaign cheque presentation, April 2025.

Operation Street Angel and ongoing supports in ʔa-kiskaqʔit

Operation Street Angel is a cornerstone of compassionate, low-barrier outreach in Cranbrook.

The **drop-in centre** delivers daily meals, showers, clothing, harm reduction supplies, advocacy, and direct connections to services for vulnerable and unhoused Indigenous people.

Generously supported by donations from individuals and community groups throughout the Kootenays and multiple fundraising initiatives to support operations, Street Angel provides a consistent, welcoming presence guided by the *Ktunaxa Cultural Practice Framework*.

This community-backed support helps prevent individuals from falling through gaps while linking them into the broader continuum of clinic, mental wellness, housing, and healing services.

On-the-land activities

On-the-land activities are integrated across all Social Investment Sector services and programs.

Clients and residents actively participate in on-the-land activities that **reconnect them with Ktunaxa teachings** and strengthen holistic wellness.

These include trapping, wood cutting, plant identification, walkabouts on the land, mentorship on the land, and other cultural practices guided by the *Ktunaxa Practice Framework*.

These land-based experiences support healing, build practical skills, and foster a deeper sense of identity and belonging for participants from all programs.



Ya·kit?awumutitānamki

(The place of medicine)

Past year at-a-glance

- 928 total individual clients served
- 240 Ktunaxa Nation members served
- 149 Ktunaxa members attached to a Family Nurse Practitioner
- 5,000+ Nurse Practitioner clinical encounters

Other service encounters

- 687 primary care & public health nursing
- 868 mental wellness & counselling
- 319 outreach & psychiatric nursing support

Key outcome

Ktunaxa members continue to experience some of the fastest access to internal medicine services in the East Kootenay region.

The Ktunaxa Nation Regional Health Centre

The Ktunaxa Nation Regional Health Centre (KRHC) continues to be a **central hub for integrated, culturally safe care.**

Over the past 12 months, the centre's clinic served 928 individual clients, including 240 Ktunaxa Nation members, with a strong focus on providing extra support for those with mental health, substance use, and complex care needs.

Of these, 149 Ktunaxa members were attached to a family nurse practitioner, supporting continuity of care, while others accessed nursing, allied health and outreach services.

Nurse practitioners provided over 5,000 clinical encounters, demonstrating the continued demand for accessible, community-based primary care.

Additional services include primary care and public health nursing (687 encounters), mental wellness and counselling (868 encounters), outreach and psychiatric nursing supports (319 encounters), and social work, physiotherapy, and specialist psychiatry and internal medicine services.

Ktunaxa members continue to have some of the fastest access to internal medicine services in the East Kootenay region through this model.

There is now an **Aboriginal Care Navigator (ACN)** based out of the centre, helping to support those facing barriers to accessing healthcare for clients of the KRHC, the Urgent and Primary Care Centre and other local primary care clinics.



Award-winning, integrated approach to care

The Ktunaxa Nation Regional Health Centre continues to **prioritize Ktunaxa citizens** while maintaining a family-centered and inclusive approach to care.

There is now a small **play space** in the lobby and a dedicated welcoming room for children's health visits.

Services extend beyond the clinic walls through hospital visits, outreach, harm reduction, and mobile supports, meeting individuals where they are and addressing barriers to access.

This integrated model reflects the strength of **Nation-led care** and continues to evolve to meet the needs of Ktunaxa communities. Staff strive to prioritize culturally safe and trauma-informed care, supported by continuous learning and training.

Ongoing work through local and regional Primary Care Network committees, including direct connection with the Ministry of Health, continues to strengthen attachment, team-based care, and coordinated service navigation.

In recognition of this work, Ya·kitʔawumuʔtiʔamnamki was awarded the **Primary Care Champion Award** through the Nurses and Nurse Practitioners Association of British Columbia for leadership, innovation, and impact in advancing equitable primary care for Indigenous populations.

Growing partnerships

The centre started a new partnership this year with **Interior Health Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU)** to have Opioid-Use-Disorder-certified nurses work with the clinic on the busy weekly OAT (Opioid Agonist Treatment) clinic day.

This helps to provide enhanced support and connections to clients who are seeking help with substance misuse.

"Upstream" health and wellness is supported in the centre through **health-promotion events**, wellness groups and immunization programming.

Community health nurses continue to support Ktunaxa First Nations health teams on an as-needed basis, with immunization clinics and on-reserve school hygiene supports.

Partnerships with College of the Rockies, Interior Health MHSU, Public Health, and the Primary Care Network continue to help the centre to grow and expand services for Nation members and all clinic clients.

Ktunaxa Practice Framework

The foundation of all our work.

The Ktunaxa Practice Framework is the guiding philosophy for everything we do in the sector. Developed through extensive engagement with Ktunaxa knowledge holders, Elders, and Leadership, it defines how we deliver services, ensuring they are person-centered, culturally safe, and rooted in Ktunaxa values, beliefs, and ways of knowing.

It answers three core questions:

1) Why do we do this work?

To support strong, healthy Ktunaxa citizens and communities in their ancestral homelands.

2) What do we do?

Provide holistic health, mental wellness, housing, and healing services.

3) How do we do it?

Through **seven practice approaches** that weave cultural integrity and community wisdom into every decision and interaction.

The practice approaches are:

- Relationship-Based
- Integrated/Collaborative
- Cultural & Traditional
- Experiential (Discovery)
- Strength-Based Wellness & Healing
- Understanding Impacts (Trauma-Informed)
- Increasing Safety (Harm Reduction)

This framework is foundational because it moves the Nation beyond generic service delivery. It ensures every policy, program, and staff interaction reflects Ktunaxa perspectives, promotes cultural safety for both providers and clients, and supports true Nation-led self-determination in health and wellness.

All our work is grounded in and measured against this framework.

Ktunaxa Cultural Framework Ambassador

Update from Jared Basil

This year the **Ktunaxa Nation Social Investment Sector Practice Framework** has evolved in various ways that benefit our organization.

In conjunction with training and education, the framework has also informed directors, policy makers, and community health staff on how best to utilize it to develop governance practices, workplans, and health-and-wellness plans.

The target audience throughout the year has taken an inward direction—the most potentially meaningful direction—as it has the ability to directly benefit Ktunaxa citizens and communities.

An abundance of opportunities have been spread out across Ktunaxa First Nation communities, Ktunaxa Nation Council staff, as well as Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services.



As this range of audience includes Ktunaxa citizens across all age demographics, the ability to provide culturally responsive services, grounded in Ktunaxa values—to any and all who access—remains the priority focus of framework implementation.

The framework is still being used to provide training and education to health partners such as Interior Health Authority, First Nations Health Authority, and other health service providers within ?amak?is Ktunaxa.

External audiences under the broad umbrella of health include physicians, nurses, and specialists, reaching numerous health regions and municipalities in the Kootenays.

The framework is regarded as a resource that has the ability to redefine cultural safety.

Overwhelmingly positive feedback allows the Social Investment Sector to know that the framework will impact and benefit future generations for years to come.

Nation Shared Services

Complex Care Housing

Complex Care Housing (CCH) continues to **operate at full capacity**, providing low-barrier, relationship-based support to individuals with complex mental health, substance use, and housing needs, with the majority of individuals served being Ktunaxa.

A **clinical director** was hired in December of 2025, and has focused on strengthening clinical program guidance, coordination of care, and system responsiveness across the continuum.

A key initiative has been the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and **clinical guidance** for Complex Care Housing, alongside the introduction of consistent **monthly staff training** to support safe, trauma-informed, and culturally grounded care.

Intake access and patient navigation

Further work has included **revising the central intake process**, implementing an after-hours and weekend on-call response, and supporting recruitment and onboarding into key vacant positions.

This included collaboration with Interior Health to on-board the **Indigenous Patient Navigator** role, strengthening continuity of care and navigation supports for Ktunaxa members across systems.

Transition planning: Reintegration

Work has also been focused on improved system coordination through a **pilot project with Okanagan Correctional Centre (OCC)**, RCMP, and Interior Health, focused on **strengthening transition planning and discharge supports** for Ktunaxa members returning to community from incarceration.

The work addresses critical gaps in continuity of mental-health care to help ensure individuals who require mandatory psychiatric treatment continue to receive appropriate mental-health interventions and medication support while incarcerated and through reintegration back into community.

Mental Health and Substance Use Action Table

A local Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU) action table has been re-established with ʔaąam and Interior Health to strengthen access, coordination, and escalation pathways for complex cases within East Kootenay Regional Hospital (EKRH). While ʔaąam is a consistent participant given its proximity to the hospital, the table is open to all Ktunaxa governments to support review / resolution of complex cases as needed.

LOU Table

This year, the **Letter of Understanding (LOU) Table** with Interior Health has also been re-established, in collaboration with health directors from all four Ktunaxa First Nations.

The agreement has been updated with the final version to be signed at this year's annual general assembly.

These agreements strengthen the partnership framework for service planning, cultural safety, and coordinated health initiatives, aligning with Interior Health's Indigenous Health and Wellness Strategy. The renewed LOU supports clearer pathways for collaboration, improved access to care, and shared accountability in addressing systemic barriers and advancing health outcomes for Ktunaxa communities.

Planning, engagement, funding alignment

Nation shared services also supported **system-level planning, engagement, and funding alignment**.

This includes securing funding and leading the planning and delivery of key regional gatherings such as the Healing Our Spirit HIV Summit.

These initiatives bring together community, leadership, and service providers to address systemic gaps, reduce stigma, and strengthen culturally grounded pathways to care for Ktunaxa communities.

Programmatic achievements & service-delivery highlights

Pillar 1 Ktunaxa Specific

The Social Investment Sector is deeply committed to standing with Ktunaxa citizens in times of crisis and **delivering immediate, compassionate, and culturally grounded support** whenever and wherever it is needed.

We prioritize Ktunaxa citizens with targeted wellness, capacity-building, and culturally grounded initiatives.

This year we have advanced wellness and strategies that integrate public health, mental health, and crisis supports with culturally rooted stabilization and housing care grounded in Ktunaxa tradition.

We are actively training Ktunaxa citizens with lived and living experiences to support vulnerable members and strengthen cultural safety across services.

Off-reserve citizens receive **dedicated continuity of care** through collaborative case coordination, while front-line teams in the four Ktunaxa communities can call on us for coordinated crisis response and operational support whenever needed.



Pillar 2 Shared Services

We deliver integrated clinical, mental health, housing, and harm-reduction services that are accessible to all Indigenous people in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

The Ktunaxa Regional Health Centre, outreach teams, Complex Care House, Scotty's House, and Operation Street Angel **work together as a seamless continuum.**

We sustain and enhance core programs while expanding public health and on-the-land wellness activities that connect clients and promote shared learning.

Urban and outreach supports provide **rapid, flexible response** and strong local partnerships so vulnerable citizens receive timely care wherever they are.

Pillar 3 Governance / Jurisdiction

We build Ktunaxa capacity, succession, sustainability, and **Nation-led governance in health.**

Structured mentorship supports smooth internal leadership transitions, with Racheal Nicholas now providing strong clinical direction and Kimberly Joseph growing into broader operational leadership.

We continue to strengthen evaluation frameworks and Ktunaxa-centric metrics. We actively support the Primary Care Network while advocating for Ktunaxa interests.

We're expanding sustainable training in the *Ktunaxa Practice Framework*, which includes exploring the options for a college program to ensure its long-term reach and impact.



Pillar 4

Community Citizen Engagement & Continuum of Wellness

We foster citizen voices, advance the **Nation Healing Strategy** (contracted to Urban Matters with ongoing sector support), support aging initiatives, and strengthen urban-rural connections across the four Ktunaxa First Nations.

Deep community engagement keeps **citizen and community perspectives at the centre of our work.**

We collaborate closely with the Ktunaxa First Nations on a **continuum of wellness** that links primary care, harm reduction, stabilization, treatment (including the new treatment centre in yaqan nuʔkiy), and post-treatment reintegration.

We are exploring opportunities for other communities to lead on **detox and/or stabilization services**, with

KNC providing coordination and capacity-building support.

This engagement is evidenced through the **key events and activities** with the Ktunaxa First Nation in the year.

These initiatives build connections, reduce stigma, and advance coordinated, culturally grounded care.

2025 events & activities

- Schizophrenia Info Session
- Ktunaxa Regional Health Centre Grand Opening
- Tuberculosis Info Training Workshop
- FNHA Health Assemblies (Two per year)
- Healing Our Spirit HIV Summit
- Cranbrook's Situation Table
- Red Dress Memorial Walk & Lunch
- Mental Health First-Aid Training
- RCMP Trafficking Workshop
- Ktunaxa Nation Health Fair
- Overdose Awareness Day
- World Homeless Day
- One Heart Method
- Pathways to Treatment Summit
- Social Framework Training

Looking forward

Qapi qapsin kin ʔitkin hin ʔisti Ktunaxa.

The sector will continue its actions, focusing on maintaining accountability and **deepening Nation-led services.**

We will continue to strengthen partnerships, secure sustainable funding for the health centre, expand outreach, and ensure Ktunaxa values guide every level of our work.

Thank you to our dedicated staff, to the health teams of the four Ktunaxa First Nations, to Leadership and Elders, and to all of our partners.

Your commitment embodies "Strong, Healthy Citizens."

Debbie Whitehead
Director

Kimberly Joseph
Director Mentee

Racheal Nicholas
Clinical Director



SPEAKING Ka·ḳukaqwaṭa



Traditional Knowledge and Language

The **Interim Language Revitalization Strategy** approved by Leadership in November of 2023 continues to guide the sector work, as does the collective work identified by the **Language & Culture Circle of Support** in February of 2024.

Pillar 1: Language Revitalization and Knowledge Transfer

Strategic Goals:

Revitalize our language through planning, teaching and learning.

Preserving and sharing our knowledge through gatherings and research.

Pillar 2: Band & Nation Synergy

Strategic Goal: We work together to support Ktunaxa language and culture.

Pillar 3: Institutional Capacity

Strategic Goal: Effective institutional capacity that sustains our revitalization efforts.

Pillar 4: Partnerships

Strategic Goal: Respectful and reliable partnerships to join us on our mission.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Our team gives huge 'thanks' to all those who continue to give so generously of their time and energy.

In particular, thank you to our Elders.

Our Elders are our greatest teachers, offering their time and knowledge with patience and generosity.

They are a constant reminder that, while our critically endangered language may be an *isolate*, our work to preserve it is *not done in isolation*.

Their voices shape the foundation of our efforts, ensuring that every word spoken in Ktunaxa and every story shared carries forward the knowledge of our ancestors.

Their teachings guide our team as we develop resources and initiatives intended to strengthen

our individual and collective identity and our connection to the land.

Beyond Ktunaxa ʔaqʔsmaknik, **we continue to educate** non-Ktunaxa individuals, businesses, and institutions on what true reconciliation means.

Reconciliation is not only words, but meaningful action.

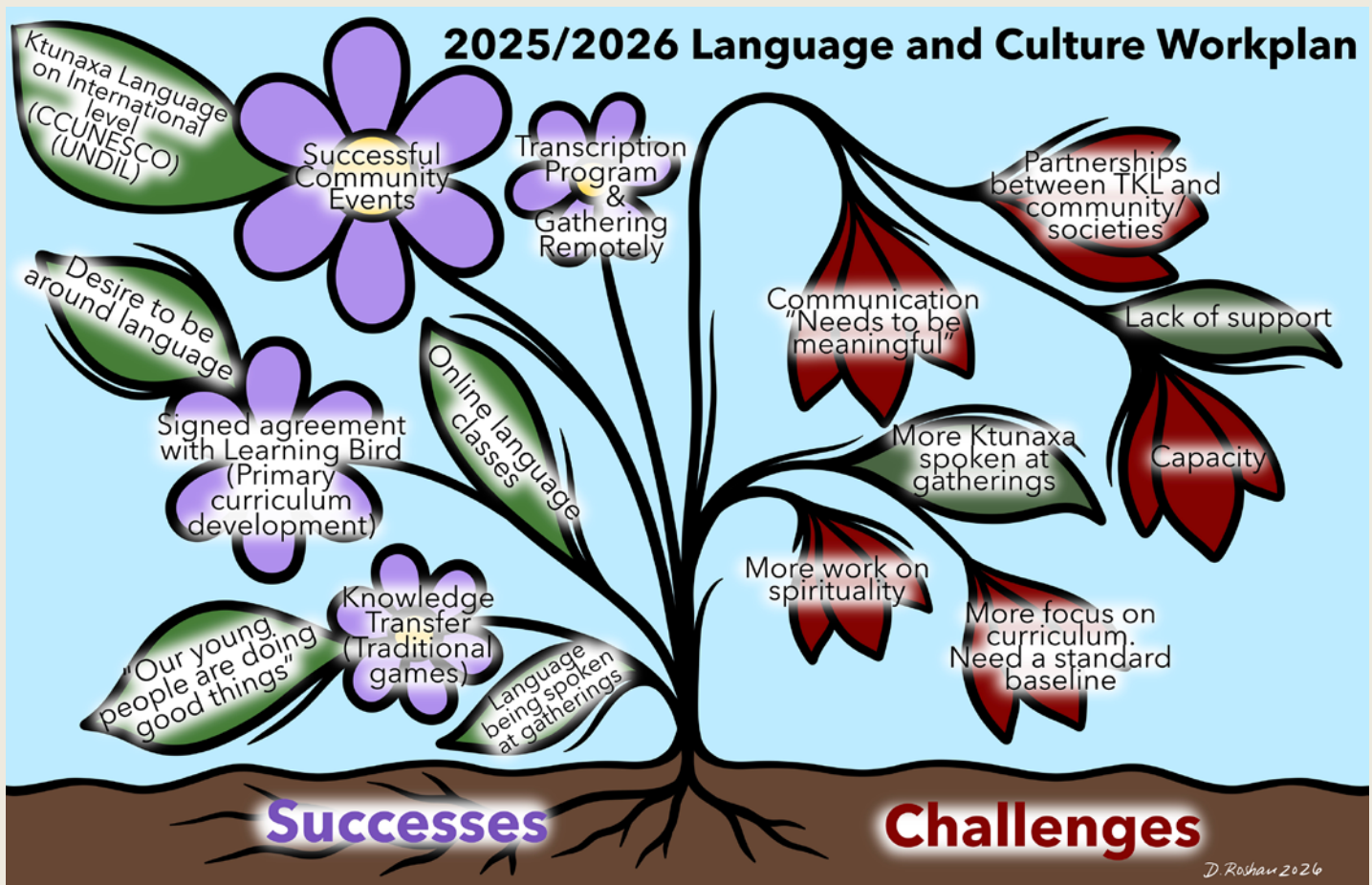
Our language requires urgent and collective efforts to thrive.

We invite others to learn, listen, and stand alongside us in honouring our ʔa-kʔukaqum.

Every small effort contributes to a greater movement of revitalization and resilience.

Together, through the voices of our Elders, the dedication of our staff, and the strength of our Ktunaxa ʔaqʔsmaknik, we continue to walk this path forward.

Vickie Thomas,
Director,
Traditional Knowledge
& Language Sector



Executive summary

Throughout 2025/2026, the Traditional Knowledge & Language Sector advanced major initiatives that strengthened Ktunaxa language revitalization, cultural stewardship, land based learning, and Nation-wide collaboration.

Guided by the **Traditional Knowledge and Language Advisory Committee (TKLAC)**, the sector collaborated with all six Ktunaxa communities on various programming, events, partnerships, and strategic planning.

This year's work reflects a shared commitment to continuity: One language, one people, connected through culture, land, and learning.



Traditional Knowledge and Language Advisory Committee

The Traditional Knowledge and Language Advisory Committee (TKLAC) continues to dedicate its time to **guiding traditional knowledge and language initiatives** within the Ktunaxa Nation.

Meeting monthly, the committee includes representatives from each of the Ktunaxa First Nations who are appointed by their band councils, and who review and approve language resources, oversee cultural projects, and provide input on all sector initiatives, such as signage projects, policy and program development.

Strengthening language revitalization

Language revitalization remained central to the sector's mission.

Here are some highlights:

- 1,300+ students and staff across ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa participated in **Ktunaxa language learning**.
- **Curriculum resources** expanded to support classrooms, at home learning, and community-based instruction.
- The **signage program** increased visibility of Ktunaxa language across provincial parks, healthcare facilities, and local businesses in ʔaknuʔuk (Golden), kyanuqʔiʔit (Invermere), Kukamaʔnam (Kimberley), ʔaqahak (Ferne), and ʔa-kiskaqʔiʔit (Cranbrook).
- The **transcription program** welcomed nine new Ktunaxa transcribers, transforming decades old recordings into accessible learning tools that connect past, present, and future learners.

The transcription program is a significant language revitalization initiative focused on approximately 150 Ktunaxa recordings from the California Language Archive. With funding from the New Relationship Trust and Columbia Basin Trust this past year, the program development was able to see some progress.

Future priorities

Future priorities include developing a seasonal **calendar**, **interactive classroom activities**, **at-home learning tools**, and **comprehensive lesson plans** in partnership with Ktunaxa First Nations.





Community engagement & Nation relationships

We continue to build relationships to support strong, healthy Ktunaxa communities.

We have seen meaningful progress in our **collaboration with Ktunaxa ʔaḱḱsmaknik** from Yaḱit ʔa-knuḱiʔit, yaḱan nukiḱ, ʔAkisḱnuk, ʔaḱam, as well as our sister communities south of the medicine line: ʔaḱanḱmi and Kupawiḱḱnuk.

Some highlights

ʔa-knusti stood with community members during the Creston protest against a residential school denier, demonstrating unity in purpose and honouring our ancestors.

The sector facilitated the annual **Language and Culture Circle of Support**, ensuring consistent engagement and collaboration on the goals of the 10-year work plan. (March, 2026).

Quarterly Kwitḱapkḱawas (Elders) Meetings continue to serve as gatherings for Ktunaxa Elders to share knowledge, provide cultural insights, and guide decision-making.

Held four times a year, rotating through each of the Ktunaxa First Nations, these meetings bring together Elders and community members to discuss language and cultural projects, share historical and genealogical knowledge, and participate in activities like storytelling and language translation.

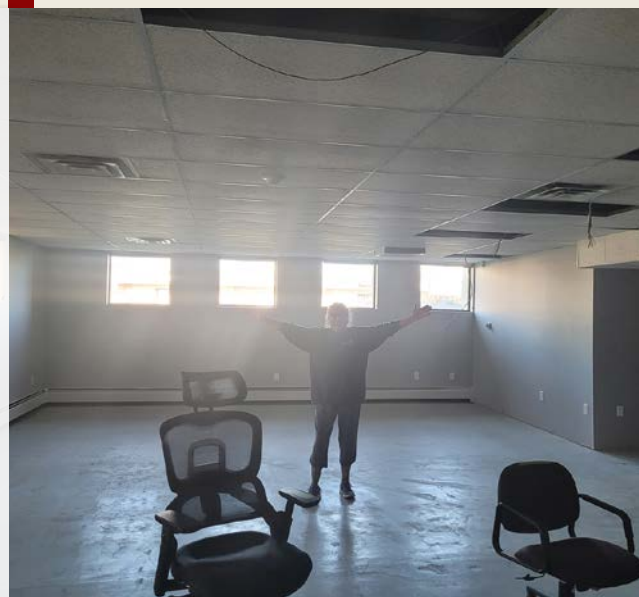


Archival stewardship

Renovations of the physical archives and repository space is underway. New flooring, new custom shelving, improved environmental controls for sensitive items (including things like VHS tapes, film, photos, and paper) and a **new digitization workspace** was created to support future preservation efforts.

The renovation of the archive space strengthens both preservation and future access for generations to come.

The coming year will focus on continuing to clarify access policies to ensure respectful and appropriate use of archival holdings. *Ktunaxa archivist Margaret Teneese is pictured here, preparing for the renovation process.*



Strategic partnerships & IMBA coordination

Internal coordination of Ktunaxa interests within the committees of **IMBA** (impact management and benefit agreement with Elk Valley Resources) continued to grow.

Work advanced on water-quality strategies, economic opportunities, and representation at external partnership tables.

Caiti Phillips joined as **Integration Coordinator**, strengthening alignment across inter-sector initiatives and focuses specifically on the Cultural Working Group (CWG) component of the IMBA.

Partnerships with Parks Canada, Interior Health, Elk Valley Resources, and others **focused on opportunities** for cultural interpretation and Ktunaxa language signage.



Ktunaxa Literacy Day, 2025

Culture Camp & community gatherings

The **Culture Camp at Grave Prairie** was a major highlight, bringing together 100+ participants from all six Ktunaxa communities. The entire camp was a success, supported by Ktunaxa businesses that enabled transportation, on-site medical support, and additional activities such as trail rides with Sam Metcalf's Guide Outfitting.

The **Tri-Nation Cultural Gathering** brought together the Ktunaxa, Syilx Okanagan and Secwépemc Nations, to strengthen our inter-Nation relationships, share cultural knowledge, and collaborate on bringing the salmon home. Ktunaxa hosted the third of three events at Blue Lake Camp on September 25 – 26, 2025.

Ktunaxa Literacy Day saw over 160 Ktunaxa ʔaq̓smaknik from all six communities. Feedback highlighted the desire for more frequent gatherings of Ktunaxa speakers and learners.

Leading up to the event, planning meetings with Ktunaxa First Nations' language and culture staff ensured the event was an inclusive effort, engaging diverse voices from across the Nation.



Elders Gathering, 2025

Literacy Day has successfully reinforced Nation-wide support for language learning and strengthened **intergenerational knowledge transmission**.

The event was hosted at St. Eugene Mission Resort.

Each year TKL strives to send 40 Ktunaxa elders to the **Provincial Elders gathering**. Attending this annual gathering ensures that Ktunaxa kwiṭqap̓k̓ʔawas can share wisdom, participate in cultural exchanges, and discuss Indigenous rights and governance issues with other Nations. The gathering strengthens inter-Nation relationships and promotes shared advocacy on issues affecting Indigenous communities across British Columbia.

Wing Dress workshops brought together more than 25 Ktunaxa paṭki from all six communities, revitalizing traditional dress-making and strengthening cultural identity. "We learned how to make our traditional wing dresses," said Mara Nelson. "These dresses carry history, pride, and teachings. They are ʔawumu and a reminder of who we are, helping to keep us strong in ourselves and in our identity."



ʔa·knusti

ʔa·knusti joined TKL team

The integration of the ʔa·knusti program brought **nine Ktunaxani̓ntik onto the TKL team** in November, 2025.

Overall, the program made **significant progress** in stewardship, cultural protection, and capacity building.

The ʔa·knusti team **showed strong commitment to land stewardship**, cultural protection, and community engagement across ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

The team supported **community events**, culture camps, and family-centered learning, strengthening connections to the land and reinforcing cultural identity.

ʔa·knusti contributed to a wide range of initiatives that supported **environmental monitoring, cultural revitalization, youth education**, and the **transfer of traditional knowledge**.

Through these combined efforts, the ʔa·knusti program continued to **uphold Ktunaxa values of responsibility, respect, and care for the land**. The ʔa·knusti team will build on this foundation and protect and strengthen ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa in the year ahead.

Traditional Foods Feast

The ʔa·knusti team hosted a **Traditional Foods Feast** at ʔaqam on March 21, 2026.

The gathering of nearly **60** Ktunaxa ʔaqʂmaknik was organized in response to a request from Alfred Joseph, a respected Elder from ʔAkisq̓nuk, and a long-time champion of Ktunaxa language and cultural revitalization.

Alfred guided the event from start to finish, working alongside the ʔa·knusti to share teachings from the Ktunaxa Creation Story that each of the tuq̓qamna (animals) gave something of themselves to the ʔaqʂmaknik (people), alongside a commitment to continue caring for them when those gifts are honoured through songs, offerings, and respectful practices.

The teachings offered **guidance on how food is harvested, prepared, and shared**, ensuring cultural protocols are remembered and lived through practice.

Story and photos: ktunaxa.org/resources/savoring-traditional-foods-with-language-on-the-tip-of-our-tongues/

Key accomplishments

Land-based protection activities included **trapline operations, ʔayut patrols** to prevent illegal harvesting of medicines, and **guardian watchman duties** across the territory.

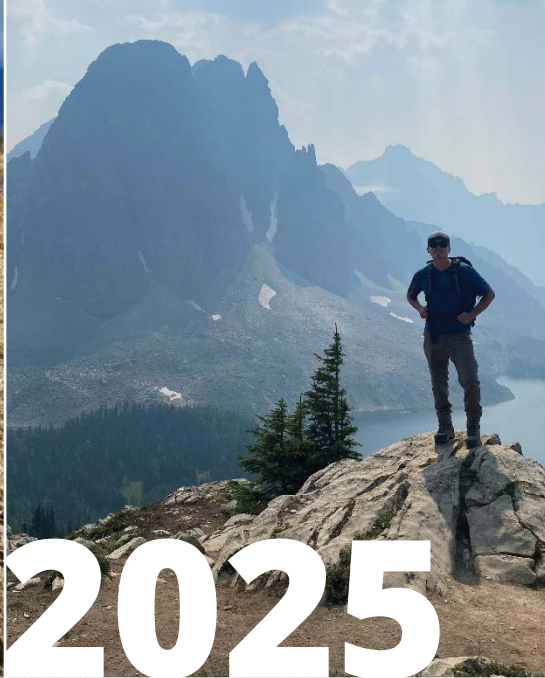
ʔa·knusti **horsemanship skills** advanced to support future backcountry trail mapping.

Monitoring efforts expanded throughout Qat'muk using trail cameras and traffic counters.

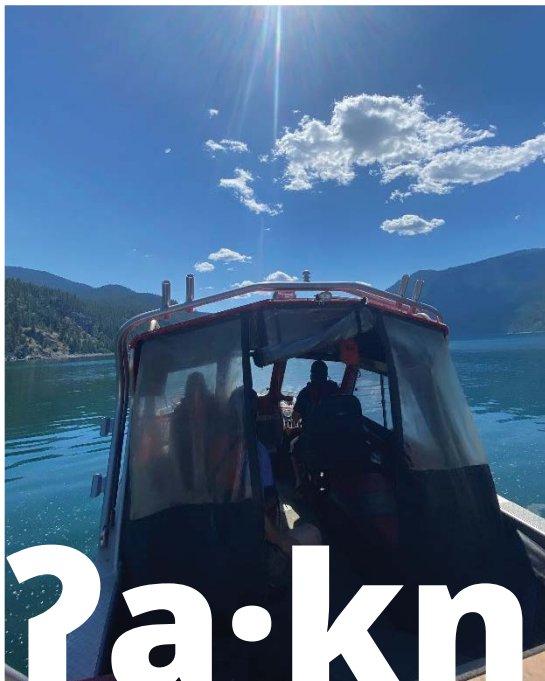
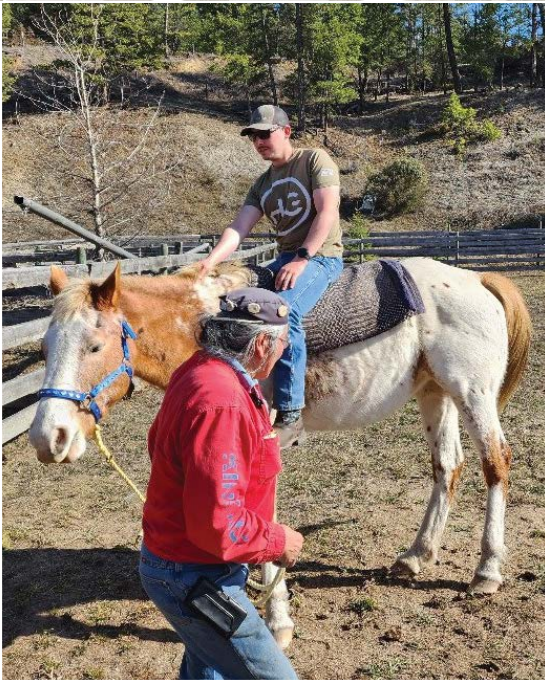
Environmental assessment capacity was strengthened.

Fisheries work such as the **Salmon Warriors** program, continued toward bringing salmon home.

Youth engagement included camps with hands-on trapping, hunting, animal processing, and land stewardship, to pass cultural knowledge to the next generation.



2025



Packnusti

Signage, place names & cultural interpretation

Visibility of Ktunaxa language and stories continued to grow.

We were able to take Elders from ʔAkisq̓nuk and Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓it on a **helicopter tour** to Akamina-Kishinena Provincial Park to check a sign with Ktunaxa content and to hear stories and build knowledge for future visits for Ktunaxa ʔaq̓smaknik.

The **place names map** expanded through community engagement at literacy events and open houses.

Signage projects

- FW Green Clinic Project, Cranbrook (language and Creation Story in the design)
- Parks Canada sign project
- Rogers Pass Interpretive Centre
- Marble Canyon
- Kootenay Pass / Yoho signage (interactive display, ongoing work)
- Wild Horse Canyon
- Milford Ridge project
- Interior Health signage (bringing language into their buildings)
- Columbia River Treaty “Uncovery Tour Project” (Waldo Cove Interpretive Building)
- Ktunaxa art in Elk Valley Resources facilities

Upcoming priorities include building **GIS foundations**, **creating story maps** for Elders and community members, expanding graphic-design capacity, and publishing a **place names map** for all Ktunaxa ʔaq̓smaknik.

Donor engagement & fund development

TKL strengthened its partnerships and donor engagement strategies.

Ktunaxa Nation Council Society launched a **staff giving program**, which provides the opportunity for KNC staff to support language and traditional knowledge initiatives.

The annual **golf tournament** continued to draw strong participation and build relationships with local organizations. New interest emerged from corporate and philanthropic networks, expanding opportunities for new values-aligned revenue streams to support the work of TKL.



Global recognition

The sector contributed to global Indigenous language revitalization efforts.

The name **Hakiʔkini kiʔkiwiya ka·kʔukawaʔaʔis** (“holding the spirit of our languages”) was brought forward to the UNESCO Working Group for Indigenous Language Revitalization.

This contribution highlights the universal value of Ktunaxa language work and its role in the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.



Looking ahead

As we move into the next year, the sector remains committed to:

- Strengthening Ktunaxa language revitalization.
- Deepening land-based learning and traditional knowledge transfer.
- Supporting Ktunaxa ʔaq̓smaknik and community-driven initiatives.
- Expanding partnerships that honour Ktunaxa knowledge and values.
- Building strong, accountable relationships across the Nation.

Lands & Resources



The Ktunaxa Nation Lands & Resources Sector empowers the Ktunaxa Nation to **exercise jurisdiction over ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa**, through stewardship of lands and resources for present and future generations.

The sector is guided by **ʔa-knumuʔtihi** and stewardship principles such as **yaqat hankatihi ki na ʔamak** (our people care for the land, the land cares for our people).

Our work is grounded in the principle of **qapi qapsin kin ʔitkin hin ʔisti Ktunaxa** (everything you do, you do for Ktunaxa).

We focus on the **stewardship and protection of ʔa-kxamis qapi qapsin** (all living things), emphasizing strong, clear relationships and communication between Ktunaxa First Nations and the Ktunaxa Nation Council.

Through operational excellence and community-driven priorities, the sector works to achieve strategic goals that reflect Ktunaxa values and uphold inherent rights and responsibilities.

The Lands & Resources Sector delivers its work across **key program areas** that support stewardship of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

KEY PROGRAM AREAS

**Natural Resources
Stewardship**

**Strategic
Initiatives & Planning**

**Aquatic
Stewardship**

**Mining
Oversight**

MANAGING OUR LANDS & RESOURCES

DIRECTORS' MESSAGES

Ki?su?k kyukyit ápiniskit,

My focus this year has been strengthening **collaboration** with Ktunaxa First Nations, so our work is guided by Ktunaxa priorities and supports informed decision-making across the Nation.

Our work is about more than consultation—it's about **building trust** through consistent communication, sharing information early, and creating space for Ktunaxa knowledge, laws, and community direction to shape how projects are designed and delivered.

The sector's work touches many areas, from planning and referrals to regulatory processes, all while ensuring stewardship of ?amak?is Ktunaxa remains **guided by ?aknumu?tiit** and ensuring the protection of ?a·kxamis ápi qapsin every day.

Looking ahead, our sector will continue to steward and serve the Nation, remaining **responsive to Leadership and communities**.

Strong collaboration between teams—within KNCS and with Ktunaxa First Nations partners—helps us share information early, coordinate timelines, and **deliver work that is aligned**, efficient, and grounded in Ktunaxa priorities.

A major milestone this year was the completion of the ***Lands and Resources Sector 2026-2027 Projects, Initiatives, Programs and Services*** directory.

This “**PIPS**” directory summarizes the sector's areas of focus and provides project-by-project details on the work currently active within ?amak?is Ktunaxa.

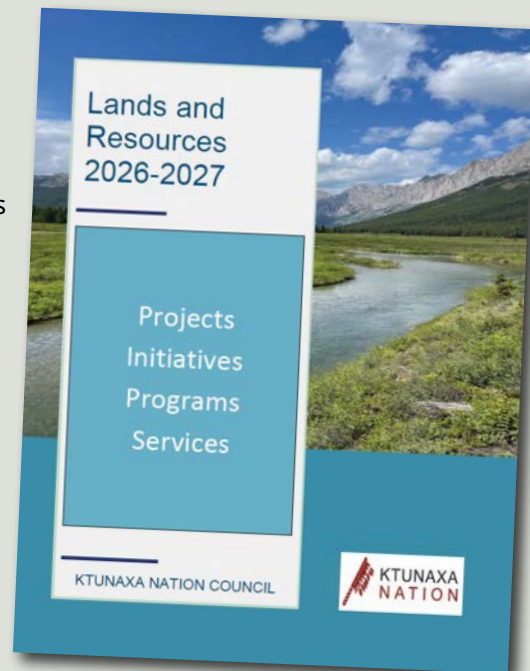
It supports transparency and shared understanding—helping leadership, communities, partners, and staff **quickly see what is being worked on, where** projects are taking place, **who** is involved, and **what** the intended outcomes are.

Just as important, the directory supports better planning.

It helps us **identify connections** between projects, anticipate capacity needs, and coordinate with other Nation initiatives so that our efforts reinforce each other over the year ahead.

Building the team has also been a major focus.

Over the past year we filled key roles to strengthen internal capacity so we can better serve the Nation with consistent support and timely follow-through.



I want to acknowledge and **thank Ktunaxa Leadership, community members, and our partners** for their guidance, patience, and continued collaboration.

Your direction is essential to ensuring our work is grounded, relevant, and beneficial for our Nation.

Jaime Vienneau,
Director,
Lands and Resources Sector



Ki?su?k kyukyit qapiniski?,

Stepping into a new role as Associate Director, I am excited to support the organization in strengthening its impact and advancing down a path guided by ?aknumu?tihi.

I look forward to working collaboratively to build on the foundations in place and the growth underway.

A key priority of this role has been to **coordinate and align programs and initiatives** in a way that maximizes their effectiveness and reach.

By fostering clear communication and thoughtful planning, we aim to ensure our efforts are strategic, responsive, and grounded in the needs of those we serve.

Collaboration is central to how we're moving forward.

Key deliverables and advancements we made in this past year include the completion of the **Community Engagement Guidebook**, a living-document that is supporting, grounding, and guiding Lands & Resources Sector practices.

We are also strengthening our spatial capabilities through **increased GIS capacities** and development of new spatial and data tools.

We're approaching the first pilot of using a **Land Stewardship Visioning** spatial tool in the Revelstoke Timber Supply Review.

We will continue to work alongside yaqan nu?kiy, ?aqam, Yaqit ?a-knuq?i'it, and ?Akisqnuuk First Nations **recognizing their knowledge, leadership, and lived experiences** as essential to shaping our work.

We have laid foundations over this past year and are energized by the opportunities ahead.

I look forward to **supporting innovation, strengthening partnerships, and contributing to meaningful progress** across the Ktunaxa Nation. Together, we can advance initiatives that will serve to create lasting, positive change.

Tanis Richmond,
Associate Director,
Lands and Resources Sector

Natural Resource Stewardship

ʔayut harvesting initiative

ʔa·knusti supported the **Lands Advisory Working Group** (LAWG) and Elders in hosting a landmark on-the-land meeting in Lumberton (June, 2025) with nine provincial representatives to address unauthorized commercial harvesting.

The session resulted in the signing of a **Letter of Non-Consent** by the Nation Chair, and co-signed by all four nasuʔkin, formally asserting Ktunaxa jurisdiction and referencing UNDRIP and the Ktunaxa Land Declaration.

This work laid the foundation for Leadership's endorsement in September to develop a permitting and education system for sustainable harvesting—an important affirmation of Ktunaxa authority and stewardship responsibility.

Their active presence across ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa reflects a continued commitment to safeguarding cultural and ecological values through direct, on-the-land stewardship.

Kicking Horse Canyon highway: Bighorn sheep monitoring

In 2020, the four-lane expansion of the Trans-Canada Highway prompted the Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC) to partner with the Golden District Rod and Gun Club (GDRGC) to **monitor construction and post-construction impacts** on the Kicking Horse Canyon Bighorn Sheep herd.

Monitoring was conducted collaboratively by KNC, GDRGC, and Cirque Ecological throughout both phases of the project.

To support monitoring efforts, **GPS collars** were attached to individual sheep, and **remote cameras** were installed throughout the construction corridor.

These tools were used to **assess herd health**, habitat use, movement patterns, and predator activity.



In addition, the BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) ensured **wildlife fencing** was installed along the entire length of Kicking Horse Canyon, extending beyond the wildlife overpass where fencing had previously ended.

KNC and Cirque Ecological **continue to monitor herd health and population trends**.

As a result of this collaborative effort, the **herd has nearly doubled in size**, increasing from 11 animals in 2020 to 20 animals in 2025—an encouraging milestone!

While environmental pressures persist, ongoing efforts focus on **habitat improvements**, tracking sheep and predator movements as the herd expands into new areas, and ensuring fencing structures remain effective.

This coordinated work has contributed to the stabilization and recovery of the Kicking Horse Canyon Bighorn Sheep herd.

KNC and Cirque Ecological look forward to continuing their collaboration to **support the herd's long-term resilience** and success

Aquatic Stewardship



Upper Kootenay Burbot Recovery Initiative

The Upper Kootenay Burbot Recovery Initiative made important progress this year as the project moved from feasibility work into full implementation.

In June, 2025, Ktunaxa Leadership approved the next five-year project plan, and in March of 2026 Environment and Climate Change Canada confirmed long-term funding support. This secures the resources needed to continue **rebuilding burbot populations in the Upper Kootenay and St. Mary systems**.

At the **Kootenay Trout Hatchery**, juvenile burbot continued to be successfully reared from St. Mary River stock, building on the first successful spawning events achieved in 2025.

The hatchery facility was expanded to improve rearing conditions and support larger-scale production in the coming years.

Winter ultrasound assessments identified approximately 15 mature females and 12 mature males likely ready to spawn, and a **detailed breeding plan** was developed to maximize egg fertilization and juvenile production.

Field crews also completed **juvenile burbot collection** in the St. Mary River to strengthen the hatchery broodstock program. A total of 53 juvenile burbot were captured across eight sampling sites, with 50 fish transported to the hatchery for future spawning.

This work was completed by a **team of Ktunaxa ʔa·knusti and KNC biologists**, with additional hands-on training provided to ʔa·knusti in training to help build long-term technical capacity within the Nation.

Winter radio tracking of adult burbot in the St. Mary watershed improved understanding of spawning timing, migration routes, and key spawning locations.

Surveys conducted on foot and by helicopter also provided new information on adult survival during the spawning season.



Habitat monitoring also expanded this year.

Water quality sampling and temperature monitoring were initiated in the Kootenay River upstream and downstream of the Skookumchuck pulp mill to better understand environmental conditions affecting burbot recovery.

This work will continue and expand in Year 2.

The project's **technical working group** continued regular coordination among partners, including Ktunaxa Nation Council, Yaqit ʔa·knuqʔi 'it, ʔaqam, the Province of B.C. and the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C.

New partnerships were also developed with UBC researchers to strengthen analysis of radio and acoustic telemetry data.

\$58 million project funding allocation*							
\$6M	\$6M	\$6M	\$6M	\$6M	\$16M	\$6M	\$6M
Non-competitive funding to Ktunaxa (52%)					Funding for competitive projects approved by Joint Review Committee**	Non-competitive funding to other First Nations (21%)	
ʔAkisq̓nuk	ʔaq̓am	yaqan nuʔkiy	Yaq̓it	Ktunaxa Nation Council		Shuswap Band	
						Syilx Okanagan Nation Alliance	

Environmental Damages Fund Program (EDF)

Background: From fines to funding

The Ktunaxa-led Environmental Damages Fund (EDF) program was created to **redistribute a major fine** that was paid by Teck Coal Limited in 2021. Teck was found guilty of dumping waste rock into the Upper Fording River and Clode Pond in 2012 and was ordered to pay a **\$60M fine** under Section 36(3) of the *Fisheries Act*.

The waste rock contained high levels of **selenium, calcium, and carbonate**.

Selenium can be toxic to aquatic life at high levels. High concentrations of **calcite** can cement rocks together on the riverbed, reducing the number of available spawning grounds, and **carbonate** can encourage calcite formation.

The ruling was a milestone for the Ktunaxa Nation, as it **acknowledged some of the harms** that have been done in Qukin ʔamakʔis (Land of the Raven). It was also the largest-ever pollution charge enforced under the Federal *Fisheries Act*.

The Ktunaxa Nation and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) are **working collaboratively** to facilitate the EDF program over the next five years.

Most of the money will remain in Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis for **Ktunaxa-led fish and fish-habitat improvement direct-fund projects**.

Six million dollars each will be distributed to Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC) and the four Ktunaxa First Nations in Canada (totaling \$30M to the collective).

Eligible projects

Types of eligible projects include restoration, environmental-quality improvement, research and development, and education and awareness.

Ktunaxa Nation Council has allocated a portion of its \$6M to **fund five capacity positions** (one position at KNC and one position each at the four Ktunaxa First Nations) to facilitate the projects until 2030.

Joint Review Committee**

The **Ktunaxa First Nations and KNC** are also jointly reviewing letters of intent and full project applications from the **Call for Applications (CFA)** process with ECCC, in which any interested party could apply for funding to complete fish and fish-habitat improvement projects within Qukin ʔamakʔis and the downstream area to the U.S. border. All projects must be eligible under the same categories as above. The total funding available through this competitive funding stream is \$16M.

Remaining funds

The remaining \$14M of the original fine paid by Teck Coal was split between the **Government of Canada** (\$2M), **Syilx Okanagan Nation Alliance** (\$6M) and **Shuswap Band** (\$6M).

Syilx Okanagan and Shuswap Band were awarded funding for direct-fund projects because they are a part of the Canadian portion of the Columbia Watershed.

The majority remains with the Ktunaxa Nation, the only Nation participating in the review of competitive projects with ECCC.

** Of the \$60M fine, \$2M went to ECCC for administrative collaboration, leaving \$58M to allocate for projects.*



Norns Creek Fan Barrier Project

The Norns Creek Fan is an **important fish habitat** feature at the confluence of Norns Creek (also known as Pass Creek) and the Columbia River at **íkiksiᑦuk**, (Castlegar).

The area is popular for fishing, being situated along the popular Waldie Island riverside walkway.

The shallow gravel fan within the Robson Reach White Sturgeon Critical Habitat Area is protected by the *Species at Risk Act*.

It is critically important habitat for **wiyaᑦ** (White Sturgeon) spawning in the spring and year-round forage, **qustiᑦ** (rainbow trout) spawning from late winter to late spring, **kokanee** spawning in the late summer and early fall and **kanusqᑦupak** (kokanee salmon).

Now, with the recent salmon reintroduction efforts, both **Chinook** and Sockeye (**swaqmu**) are again spawning on the fan in the late summer and early fall.

The issue

When water levels are low the fan is exposed and **off-road enthusiasts** use the fan as a playground.

This can pollute the water and damage the habitat, eggs and emerging fry.

Actions we took

To prevent vehicle access we recently **installed a barrier gate and concrete roadblocks**.

An **educational sign** with content from Lance Thomas and Jaydon Francis, and design coordination by Blaine Burgoyne, will be installed to share public education about the importance of the fan.

If you are travelling through the Castlegar area and want to see giant White Sturgeon in their natural habitat, they can be viewed year-round from the pedestrian walkway on the Robson Bridge over the Columbia River. (*Pictured above.*)



Bringing The Salmon Home: The Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative

The Ktunaxa Nation continued to play an active role in the **Bringing the Salmon Home Initiative**, a collaborative effort led by the syilx Okanagan, Secwépemc, and Ktunaxa Nations to restore salmon to the Canadian Columbia River Basin.

Ktunaxa representatives contributed across all levels of the initiative, including Leadership, governance, technical activities, Indigenous Knowledge and cultural guidance, communications, outreach, and community engagement.

A **significant milestone** was reached when adult sockeye salmon released as fry in 2023 were detected during 2025 returning to the Columbia River system as far upriver as current fish passage allows, providing renewed hope for salmon reintroduction efforts.

This achievement was announced by Jason Andrew and other leaders of partner Indigenous Nations at the Columbia River headwaters.

In September 2025, the Ktunaxa Nation hosted the third **Tri-Nation Cultural Gathering** at the Columbia River headwaters, bringing together Elders, knowledge keepers, Salmon Warriors/youth, and technical staff to share teachings, strengthen relationships, and celebrate progress toward bringing salmon home.

Ktunaxa representatives also helped lead other **cultural gatherings**, youth/Salmon Warrior engagement activities, salmon release ceremonies, and calling-back ceremonies that support the long-term goal of restoring salmon to their ancestral waters.

The Bringing the Salmon Home delegation met with B.C. Premier Eby at the First Nations Leadership Gathering in 2025. L to R are Jaime Vienneau (KNC), Mark Thomas (Shuswap Band) Jason Andrew (KNC), Premier Eby, Vickie Thomas (KNC), and Rosalie Yazzie (syilx Okanagan).

Throughout the year, Ktunaxa representatives took part in habitat and climate-change-impact assessments, **salmon releases** and monitoring activities, conservation hatchery and fish-passage planning, studies tracking the return of adult sockeye salmon, and knowledge synthesis.

These **technical activities** are highlighted in infographics developed through a collaborative effort of the CRSRI Technical Working Group, Communications Advisory Group, Fuselight Collective, and artists from each partner Nation: Marisa Phillips (Ktunaxa Nation), Kel-c Jules (Secwépemc Nation), and Sheena Hooley (syilx Okanagan Nation).

Those infographics will soon be available via the website **columbiariversalmon.ca**.

Upper Columbia River Chinook Salmon

Recent observations of juvenile Chinook salmon during a BC Hydro fish salvage near Trail provide convincing **evidence of successful spawning** in the transboundary reach of the Columbia River.

The juveniles are believed to originate from adult Chinook trans-located in 2025, indicating that spawning and incubation occurred successfully despite highly regulated flow conditions.

These findings represent an important milestone for Chinook reintroduction efforts.

Observations also highlight potential vulnerabilities for juveniles during early life stages, suggesting opportunities to further refine flow management to support survival.

The Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative (CRSRI) stands as a tangible outcome of Nation-led governance and inter-Nation collaboration.



Ktunaxa Nation-Wide Gathering, April 2025

Strategic Initiatives & Planning

Ktunaxa Land Stewardship Vision

After two years of work, we have reached a milestone in developing a **spatial support system** to assist the Ktunaxa Nation land stewardship efforts across ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

The **Ktunaxa Land Stewardship Vision** is founded upon decades of information gathering, (including both Ktunaxa Indigenous knowledge and Western science) which has been developed into a **comprehensive data catalogue** and sophisticated **mapping and analysis tools**.

This improves the readiness of our Ktunaxa Nation for technical engagement with other governments on land-and-resource-stewardship matters.

Information gathering included many rounds of interviews and discussions with Ktunaxa ʔakʔsmaknik.

This rich information base includes many traditional land use and occupancy studies, which represent formal records of our continuous occupation and use of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Data has been brought together using a computer-based **Geographic Information System (GIS)**, in the form of a comprehensive Ktunaxa 'data catalogue.'

This is the first time that such an extensive set of data layers related to values in our homeland has been assembled.

The **data catalogue** allows us to examine the Ktunaxa values that occur in different places within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and identify how values are distributed across the landscape.

An **online geospatial hub** has been developed and training has been completed in each of the Ktunaxa First Nations on how to access the information to promote information sharing across our Nation.

The Ktunaxa Land Stewardship Vision is intended to be a **living document** that can be developed in stages, updated over time as new information becomes available, and revised as needed to respond to the evolving needs.

Community Engagement

The Lands and Resource Sector Engagement Team members are Kristen Casnaw and Naya Duteau.

They have refined their **engagement methods** based on experiences with Ktunaxa ʔaq̓smakník at dinner meetings and gatherings on the land and in community.

Their approach is to create space for Ktunaxa voices, bring people together, and build engagement processes that reflect Ktunaxa values, responsibilities, and connection to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

They developed a **Citizen Engagement Guidebook** as a tool to support consistent engagement across Lands and Resource Sector projects.

It represents over three years of hands-on experience coordinating engagement activities and hearing directly from Ktunaxa citizens.

While the guidebook was created to support the Lands and Resources Sector, there is an opportunity to share it with other sectors and align different frameworks and

processes so engagement can become more consistent across the entire organization.

The guidebook reflects teachings from Ktunaxa citizens who share their knowledge generously via advisory groups such as the Traditional Knowledge and Language Advisory Committee (TKLAC) and the Lands Advisory Working Group (LAWG).

It will support staff to approach engagement in ways that are **consistent, respectful, and aligned with Ktunaxa values**, while still allowing flexibility to meet the unique needs of each project.

The team, the methods, and now the guidebook provide a good basis to help create more **meaningful opportunities for Ktunaxa ʔaq̓smakník** to learn about and contribute to projects on lands and waters within our homelands.

LandsCommunityEngagement@ktunaxa.org

Mining Oversight

EVR Greenhills Operations Cougar Phase 5 Project

The **Cougar Phase 5** project at Elk Valley Resources' (EVR) Greenhills Operations was approved for mining by the Province of B.C. in September of 2025.

The mine plan includes the loss of Porter Creek as usable fish habitat, with water being redirected as a result of mining activity.

Therefore, EVR was required by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to develop an off-setting plan for the *"Harmful Alteration, Disruption or Destruction"* of fish habitat.

EVR had been proposing the creation of new fish habitat connected to an existing side channel to the Fording River.

The loss of a tributary like Porter Creek and the replacement with a groundwater-fed off-channel habitat was a concern.

Additionally, EVR could not guarantee water volume in the proposed groundwater channel, thus creating uncertainties around the effectiveness and longevity of the offset.

Staff from Ktunaxa First Nations and KNC provided an **alternative off-setting project**: The removal of highway and railway culverts on Line Creek / Dry Creek, which currently act as barriers to fish passage.

Three KFNs (yaqan nuʔkiy chose to align with any comments made by Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓i'it) and KNC provided letters to the DFO outlining concerns.

As a result, **EVR changed its proposed off-setting plan** to the Line Creek / Dry Creek culvert removal project and, once complete, it will restore fish passage within the tributary to 4.3 kilometres of spawning, rearing, and overwintering habitat.

Education & Employment



TEAM MESSAGE

Over the past fiscal year, our team demonstrated a strong commitment, adaptability, and continued growth as we navigated team changes and continued learning.

Through this year the team stayed grounded in our shared mission and focused on **supporting Ktunaxaniḡtik and other clients** in a meaningful way.

Even through transitions in staffing and evolving responsibilities, the team showed resilience, collaboration, and a steadfast dedication to service.

These strengths ensured continuity in supporting clients while also strengthening our internal practices, relationships, and shared capacity.

We move into the next fiscal year with enthusiasm and optimism.

We're excited to build on these foundations:

Supporting clients, advancing our priorities, and working on upcoming projects to strengthen our work and positively impact Ktunaxa ʔaqṣmaknik.

Mission Statement

We are Ktunaxa citizen-centered, working creatively and strategically with ʔaqṣmaknik in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, to support & empower Indigenous people reaching their full potential, and achieving self-sufficiency and overall desired quality of life.

Four Pillars

- 1 **Empowering Ktunaxa-Centered Education**
- 2 **Workforce Training for Ktunaxa-Centered Employment**
- 3 **Ktunaxa-Informed Educational Governance**
- 4 **Community Engagement in Ktunaxa-Centered Lifelong Learning**



GOV

Ktunaxa youth at the 2026 Gathering Our Voices (GOV) Conference in Vancouver, where they joined more than 1,000 Indigenous youth from across British Columbia for a week of learning, culture, and connection.

Education Ambassador

This fiscal year marked a renewed focus for the Education Ambassador position, with the role being refreshed and focused on supporting **earlier and more consistent connections with Ktunaxa youth** as they move through the school system.

We are excited to have Caytlyn Luke join the team in the role and look forward to the positive impact this work will have in strengthening relationships with youth, families, schools, and communities.

A key priority was to build and strengthen relationships with Ktunaxa youth across a range of settings, including middle school, secondary school, and alternative programs.

Since the start of the school year in September, approximately 20 **school visits** were conducted at Kootenay River Secondary School, Fernie Secondary School, Mount Baker Secondary School, and Laurie Middle School. These outreach visits focused on **building relationships**, increasing visibility, and creating supportive connections with students.

As a result, about 15 students reached out for additional support through **one-on-one tutoring and homework assistance**. Students ranged in age from Grade 4 through to post-secondary. Their tutoring and homework support sessions were scheduled flexibly, based on individual needs, to ensure accessibility and readiness.

In addition to individual supports, **homework groups** were attended in the communities of Yaqit ?a-knuqti'it and yaqan nu?kiy, providing opportunities to engage with students in a supportive learning environment.

Looking ahead, a key objective is to expand and formalize homework support opportunities by **establishing regular homework groups** within each community.

Our sector is committed to increase community presence through visits to each Ktunaxa First Nation, and to strengthen relationships and ensure consistent support for Ktunaxa learners.

ISET

Indigenous Skills and Employment Training

The Indigenous Skill and Employment Training (ISET) program is an **agreement between Ktunaxa Nation Council and Service Canada**, a Federal agency, which focuses on supporting First Nations people within the Ktunaxa ʔamaʔkis to access education, training, and employment opportunities.

The program provides **financial support for post-secondary education** (including tuition, books, and living allowances).

It also provides additional supports such as **Industry Certification Training, Job-Start Supports** for tools, personal protective equipment, and work gear for immediate job opportunities, as well as the administration of the **Summer Student Program**.

Over the past year, the ISET program supported a total of 26 post-secondary students, 15 who were Ktunaxa.

In addition, 48 clients accessed funding for industry-certification training and job-start supports; 30 were Ktunaxa. These supports enabled individuals to gain the necessary skills, certifications, and equipment required to enter or advance in the workforce.

The summer student program had 22 youth participants, including 12 Ktunaxa students.

Participants **gained valuable work experience** across a diverse range of industries, including automotive services, bookstores, youth and summer programming, community engagement roles, and outdoor education settings.



These opportunities provided meaningful exposure to various career pathways while supporting skill development and workforce readiness.

Who accessed ISET in 2025	Total	Ktunaxa	Notes
Post-Secondary Education Support	26 students	15 students	Post-secondary financial assistance
Industry Certification Training & Job-Start Supports	48 clients	30 clients	Certifications, tools, PPE, work gear, etc.
Summer Student Program	22 youth	12 youth	Work experience

Ktunaxa Training Fund

The Ktunaxa Training Fund provides **flexible support** for situations where Ktunaxa citizens have training needs that fall outside of our government-funded programs’ eligibility. It lets us to respond to individual circumstances without program constraints to ensure clients can access meaningful opportunities.

This year the fund supported **four post-secondary students** with financial assistance towards their education and training goals. In addition, the fund supported a **six-week computer training program** at the request of several Ktunaxa citizens. The training was designed to build foundational skills and increase confidence with everyday digital use.

Sessions were held twice a week at yaqakiᑭ ʔitqawxaxamki (The Place where People Gather) at **College of the Rockies**, and included instruction in basic computer, terminology, file management, Gmail, Google docs and Google sheets. Participants also developed practical skills in email communication, Internet navigation, and the use of QR codes.

To support accessibility and hands-on learning, **each participant was provided a laptop** for the duration of the program and upon completion they were able to keep the laptop to support continued learning and ongoing use beyond the training period.

We plan to implement weekly workshops again in the early 2026–27 fiscal.



*Photos of the 2025 Ktunaxa Nation Youth Summit
courtesy of Blaine Burgoyne.*

BladeRunners

The BladeRunners Program is an agreement with the Province of B.C. It is designed to develop employability skills and create pathways to sustainable employment for youth and young adults (aged 15 to 30) who are experiencing barriers to education and employment.

The program provides a minimum of 70 hours of **training**, including 35 hours of certificate-based training and 35 hours focused on employability and **life skills development**.

During the year, the program was delivered through a combination of individualized, relationship-based support, and cohort-based training.

We supported 44 clients, (13 of whom are Ktunaxa), with many others working towards completion with ongoing support.

We delivered **four Bladerunners cohorts**, each offering hands on, practical learning, and industry recognized certifications. They provided participants with skills directly applicable to employment and everyday life.

Cohorts included a Small Engine Repair, two land-based learning/CORE Hunting, and an ATV & Chainsaw certification. The cohorts took place in Cranbrook, Yaqit ?a·knuqti'it, and yaqan nu?kiy.

All were well attended and all participants were engaged, eager to learn, and completed the training. Their feedback expressed positive outcomes including increased confidence, improved job readiness, and enhanced employment opportunities.

The Bladerunners program continues to be a valuable initiative in supporting youth to build practical skills, gain certifications, and increase their readiness for the workforce, while being flexible enough to community needs and interests.

WorkBC

Education & Employment maintains a **collaborative partnership** with WCG Services, the current contractor responsible for delivering the WorkBC Program.

While our sector no longer directly administers the WorkBC program, the agreement ensures ongoing connection, coordination, and **support for community members accessing employment services**.

Through this partnership, space is provided to support WCG's Indigenous Employment Consultant, Carl Ibbotson, creating a consistent and welcoming environment for clients to access services.

In addition, cultural training and opportunities to participate in community events are offered, helping to **ensure services are delivered in a respectful and culturally relevant way**.

This collaboration provides benefits for clients, including access to familiar and culturally safe space, strengthened relationships, and coordinated supports.

It also allows for continued communication and alignment between organizations to ensure that mutual clients receive **seamless employment services**.

Youth connection

Ktunaxa Youth Summit

This year, our sector's **8th Annual Youth Summit** approach shifted in response to feedback from youth and community.

While the summit was previously a two-day event for youth aged 15 to 24, planning expanded to be more inclusive of younger youth, beginning at age 12, and to create more opportunities for them to connect through larger gatherings and shared experiences.

Due to the timing of reintroducing the **Gathering Our Voices (GOV)** event (which had a significant amount of interest and requires a lot of planning and travel), the 2025 **Youth Summit was a single-day event** at Key City Theatre in Cranbrook.

This year it included a workshop by facilitator and Ojibway hip hop artist **Cody Coyote** which focused on Indigenous youth empowerment, resilience, identity, culture and healing through music and storytelling.

Youth also took **workshops** about reflective journaling, mini-drum making, and traditional games, and took a spin on BC Road Builders Simulators (bcroadshow.ca). They enjoyed dinner and games at Encore Brewing in Cranbrook and then a concert by Coyote (codycoyotemusic.com).

Gathering Our Voices

KNC Education and Employment also **coordinated youth participation** in Gathering Our Voices from March 17 to 20, 2026, in Vancouver, with 23 youth representing each of the Ktunaxa First Nations.

Gathering Our Voices is Canada's largest Indigenous youth leadership conference and brings together Indigenous youth, chaperones, Elders and community members to connect with culture, leadership, wellness, education, career development and community-building opportunities.

The 2026 gathering included workshops, cultural programming, plenary events, a career and education fair, cultural exchange, and fashion show, creating a space for youth to connect with one another, explore future pathways and return home inspired to continue growing as leaders in their communities.

Youth engagement remained a meaningful focus with several opportunities to connect with Ktunaxa youth in safe, relaxed and culturally supportive spaces.

Youth camp

On August 25 to 29, KNC Education and Employment were invited as guests to **ᑭᑭᑭᑭ's annual CMH Youth Camp** (Canadian Mountain Holidays), where youth participated in leadership, teamwork and horsemanship activities, along with hiking, fishing, storytelling and time spent together on the land.

Being welcomed into youth-led and community-held spaces like this is a reminder of why this work matters and who it is for.

These experiences create lasting memories, strengthen relationships, and provide valuable insight into how we can continue to build programs that better reflect the needs, strengths and voices of Ktunaxa youth.

Forest Fun Day

In November, ᑭᑭᑭᑭ, ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ School, and KNC Education and Employment collaborated with Canfor and the East Kootenay Invasive Species Council, (a new participating partner), to host the 3rd Annual Forest Fun Day. Through collective working relationships with Canfor and local partners, the event brought students together for a day of hands-on, land-based learning in a familiar school setting.

Students rotated through outdoor learning stations focused on forest health, bug and tree species identification, GPS mapping, tree boring and counting rings, local wildlife, and creative activities. Forest Fun Day continues to be a fun and meaningful way to connect students with nature, industry partners, and land-based learning while strengthening relationships between the school, community, and regional partners.

Industry engagement



IMBA: Employment Task Group

Industry partnership work in 2025–26 included several distinct streams.

The Employment Task Group, specific to Elk Valley Resources (EVR) and the KNC-EVR Impact Management Benefit Agreement (**IMBA**), continued to build on the strategic relationship while identifying priorities for the 2026–27 workplan.

This year's work focused on creating clearer resources and **pathways for Ktunaxa citizens accessing education, training, and employment opportunities.**

Through the agreement, the **Ktunaxa Capacity Fund** continues to provide flexible support for citizens pursuing their goals and helps **reduce barriers** along their education and employment journeys.

Employment Task Group members also joined the Procurement Task Group and interested Ktunaxa businesses for a **tour of Elkview Mine** (pictured above) and the EVR warehouse. The visit provided a valuable look at reclamation, operations, and potential areas where employment, training, and business opportunities can better connect.

Looking ahead, the ETG will continue aligning its work with the Procurement and Employment Operating Working Group (PEOWG) 10-year strategic plan, the upcoming fiscal year priorities, and the IMBA review process to identify stronger opportunities and **long-term benefits for Ktunaxa citizens and businesses.**

Other industry work

Broader industry work continued through relationships with project partners and employers such as **BC Hydro, Canfor, Interior Health, Bird Construction, and MainRoad**, with a focus on staying connected to employment, training and procurement opportunities that may support Ktunaxa citizens and businesses.

BC Hydro

The **Revelstoke Generating Station Unit 6 Project** remained a key industry file in 2025–26.

BC Hydro is adding a sixth generating unit at Revelstoke Dam, which will add 500 MW of capacity, with construction expected to begin in 2026 and operations anticipated by December, 2032.

Our work focused on the scope and development of the **Ktunaxa Indigenous Stewardship Monitor Position** and workplan and review and negotiation of the **Indigenous Training, Employment and Procurement Plan**, including employment, training, procurement, reporting, contractor accountability and long-term opportunities for Ktunaxa citizens and businesses.

BC Hydro also provides financial support for driver's training and licensing costs for Ktunaxa Citizens.



Canfor

Canfor and KNC Education and Employment continued to maintain a collaborative working relationship in 2025–26, with a shared focus on supporting employment, training, recruitment and retention opportunities for Ktunaxa citizens.

This relationship also included efforts to build forest health awareness with youth and interested community members, helping connect learners and job seekers to a better understanding of forestry-related careers, sector needs and potential pathways into employment.

ICBC

This year, we strengthened our relationship with ICBC to better **support new and upcoming drivers** as they work toward getting on the road safely.

Through ICBC's pilot project, **our sector was awarded a truck (above)** that will help us transport youth to and from programming, field trips, and other learning opportunities across the territory, while also increasing our ability to connect with learners and communities.

ICBC also provided additional study resources, helping us create a more supportive and comfortable space for learners preparing for their knowledge exams.

This has been especially helpful for those travelling from out of town, as we have been able to better accommodate waiting periods and provide support before they write their exams.

Industry bursaries

BC Hydro, Canfor and MainRoad all contributed to our **Post-Secondary Bursary program** where **seven Ktunaxa citizens** representing yaqan nuʔkiy, ʔaʔam, Yaʔit ʔa-knuqʔit, and ʔakisqʔuk were awarded funds to help advance their education.

Programs included Geographic Information Systems, Plumbing Foundations, Business and Management Studies, Disaster and Emergency Management, Addictions Counselling, Pre-Law/Law School Preparation, and Education (focus on trades teaching).

These learners are building skills that support future employment, leadership, land-based and technical work, community wellness, emergency preparedness, governance, and education within the Ktunaxa Nation and beyond. **Thank you to our industry partners for the support!**





Post-secondary relationships

Engagement work stayed focused on ensuring education, employment and partnership **priorities are informed by Ktunaxa communities**, education leads, sector leadership and KNC governance processes.

Reviews of the College of the Rockies and Selkirk College **MOUs** (memorandums of understanding) advanced through two new working drafts, have undergone KNC policy review and are now moving into further community engagement to align with KNC's new governance strategy.

Partnership with **Selkirk College** has grown through multiple visits to the Silver King, Castlegar, and 10th Street campuses, where we have had the opportunity to learn more about effective partnerships, learner pathways, and innovative approaches to service delivery. These visits helped strengthen relationships with Selkirk staff, including their Indigenous student support team, so **Ktunaxa learners have a stronger support system in place** before leaving home to pursue their education.

This work has also included participation in Selkirk's Career Fair, the **Indigenous Graduation Honoring Ceremony**, and Selkirk Graduation events in May. Reciprocal field trip opportunities have further supported the relationship, including taking youth to Champion Lakes in October for integrated lab days and hosting the Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Diploma graduates on March 30.

In partnership with the Traditional Knowledge and Language Sector and ʔa·knusti, students had the opportunity to learn about land stewardship, Burbot restoration, and other projects within the territory, while also seeing how their education, experience, and enthusiasm could contribute to future employment opportunities.

Looking ahead

We are excited to advance the work plan and continue exploring meaningful and innovative projects over the coming year. A key focus will be planning around an Indigenous Teacher Education pathway in collaboration with the University of Victoria and College of the Rockies, with the **long-term goal of increasing the number of Ktunaxa teachers** and strengthening culturally grounded education within our communities.

This work is still in the early stages and will require continued discussion, community input and partner collaboration to ensure any future pathway is practical, accessible and reflective of Ktunaxa priorities.

The intent is to find and refine options that could support learners closer to home, create stronger entry points into teacher education, and help ensure Ktunaxa knowledge, language, culture and perspectives are better reflected in classrooms over time.

As always, we will explore new-and-improved ways to support clients and youth in achieving their education and employment goals, and ensure our services remain responsive, accessible, and impactful.



Economic & Investment

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Ki?su?k kyukyit ápiniskit,

I've been serving as the interim director since May of 2025 and it's been a pleasure to work with the Economic and Investment Sector team.

I have gained a much deeper understanding of the programs and services the sector offers and how they support Ktunaxa individuals, the KNC sectors, Ktunaxa First Nation initiatives, and Ktunaxa businesses.

The **sector team** is comprised of Shane Stewart (Team Manager), Travis Towsley (Economic Engagement Officer), Taylor Wilson (Administrative Coordinator) and José Galdámez (Project Management Team Lead).

I can honestly say without qualification that each team member understands and aligns their work with the KNC value statement: 'ápi qapsin kin ?itkin hin ?isti Ktunaxa' (Everything you do, you do for Ktunaxa).

My first couple of months were spent getting to know the strategic orientation of the sector, its programs, services, and initiatives, and 'who does what.'

The summer and fall of 2025 were mainly spent on **workplan evaluation** and budget reviews, which includes regularly updating the Ktunaxa Finance Board.

I started off the new year by revamping the sector's strategies, planning and reporting processes, and sharing Ktunaxa values with respect to what wealth means to us.

Thank you to Ktunaxanihtik who seek our support.

On behalf of the sector, I also thank our Chief Administrative Officer, Darrin Jamieson, the Ktunaxa Finance Board, and Ktunaxa Leadership for your guidance, direction, and support.

Last but not least, I take this time to express many thanks to our non-Ktunaxa partners.

Your support helps us with 'ápi qapsin kin ?itkin hin ?isti Ktunaxa'.

Huyas, Taxa,

Ray Warden,
Interim Director,
Economic & Investment Sector

SELF-SUFFICIENT



WORKING TOGETHER

Seven Nations Soaring Eagle Treatment Centre (7NSETC)

As in previous years, the sector provided **project management** support to the Social Investment Sector and yaqan nu?kiy for the development of the Seven Nations Soaring Eagle Treatment Centre.

7NSETC Guest House

Our sector also **project managed** the adjacent guest-house renovation, which included providing direct support to a Ktunaxa contractor, A&L Construction (Lexi Fullarton), leading this component of the work.

This partnership ensures that **Ktunaxa businesses** remain actively involved and benefit from this major community project.

The **First Nations Health Authority** contributed to the cost of renovating the existing house on the property, as well as supplying furniture for the entire facility.

ʔaǰam Community Enterprises

Our sector continued to provide support to the installation of the “**Growcer**” **hydroponic farm** that grows leafy greens.

We also supported ʔaǰam Trading with **business strategy** and with road signs to promote the gas station and food services.

Ktunaxa Nation Regional Health Centre

We provided **project management support** to the Social Investment Sector for the construction of the Ktunaxa Regional Health Centre, located in ʔa·kiskaq·i?it (Cranbrook).

The majority of the work occurred in the previous fiscal year and in April and May of 2025.

Our focus was on the installation of murals, setup of KNC **IT infrastructure**, including network equipment, cameras, speakers, and other finishing touches.

ʔAkisǰnuk First Nation

Since mid-2025, we’ve been providing **project management support** to the ʔAkisǰnuk Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) process.

This is a multi-year initiative and the group is now moving towards the engagement phase, which will include a review of AFN’s vision, mission, values, and principles.

Administrative support to NumCo & KNC Castlegar Building

We supported the NumCo Board of Directors (Ktunaxa Holdings Limited Partnership) with meeting coordination and record management for six meetings in 2025–26.

The sector continued to collaborate with Core Services to operate an office building in Castlegar owned by the Ktunaxa Nation Council.

Community Connectivity, Phase 2

Subsidized or Free Internet for ALL Ktunaxa First Nations band members!

Subsidized Plan

Get **\$55/month** toward
your current Internet bill.

OR

Free Plan

Register with Ktunaxa-owned
FlexiNet for **free, high-speed**
Internet service.

flexiNET
Broadband

For **ʔaǰam, ʔakisǰnuk, yaqan nuʔkiy**
Yaǰit ʔa-knuǰi'it band members,
wherever you live!

Contact us economic@ktunaxa.org
to start **250 489 2464**



An Initiative by the
Ktunaxa Nation Council
Economic & Investment Sector.
Approved by Ktunaxa Leadership.



KTUNAXA
NATION

Community Connectivity Initiative

**Thank you to Foraco Canada
Ltd. for continually funding
the entirety of this initiative.**

In 2023, we commenced **Phase 1**
of this initiative so that all Ktunaxa
living on reserve could access free
Internet service through **FlexiNet
Broadband**, or receive a subsidy
to offset Internet costs.

Phase 2 started in 2025 and now
includes all Ktunaxa, regardless
of where we reside in Canada.

INTERNET FOR KTUNAXA

Service recipients	Free plan	Subsidized plan	Totals at March 31, 2026
Total	153	148	301
ʔaǰam	53	38	91
ʔAkisǰnuk	61	53	114
Yaǰit ʔa-knuǰi'it	15	36	51
yaqan nuʔkiy	20	20	40
KFN admin offices	4	1	5
Total value of services	\$111,058	\$96,610	\$207,668
Total value of services from 2022 to 2026			\$524,401

Ktunaxa businesses & entrepreneurs

Ktunaxa Ready Business Directory

KtunaxaReady.com is an online resource that hosts information about Ktunaxa-owned and affiliate businesses and provides a portal for contract opportunities.

This is a platform for businesses to showcase their offerings, learn about procurement opportunities, and get important news updates.

Currently, the directory hosts 68 Ktunaxa businesses from a wide range of industries.

Thank you to our contributors for supporting the Ktunaxa Ready directory and Ktunaxa Ready Marketing program.

Thank you to BC Hydro, Columbia Basin Trust, Fortis BC and ATCO.

Testimonial

"The site really is a valuable tool for engaging FortisBC staff and its contractors with Indigenous businesses.

Showing a project manager the website really does open their eyes to the potential out there much more than just a list on a spreadsheet."

~Fortis BC



Features:

- Arts & Artisans
- Contracting
- Construction
- Consulting
- Culture
- Environmental Services
- Food & Beverage
- Forestry
- Fuel Services
- Health & Wellness
- Recreation & Tourism
- Retail
- Safety
- Security
- Traffic Control

KtunaxaReady.com

Ktunaxa Ready Portal contract opportunities	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Opportunities posted for Ktunaxa businesses	16	9	7	11	43
Ktunaxa businesses accessing the contract opportunity portal	13	18	15	16	N/A*

*No cumulative total as there are repeat clients accessing the portal.

Ktunaxa Ready marketing campaign

Ktunaxa Ready provides marketing campaigns to each participating Ktunaxa business at no cost. This allows businesses the opportunity to showcase their products and services through **various advertising channels** including radio, Facebook, Google, branded merchandise, professional printing, or customer-tailored campaigns.

This year we produced **16 targeted marketing campaigns** with an average of 54,000 Facebook views per campaign. Radio promotions air on 2Day FM 107.5 throughout the Columbia and Elk Valleys and Juice FM 94.1 in Creston.

Ktunaxa artisan support

In 2025, we organized a large **purchase of Ktunaxa artwork** for Elk Valley Resources' new Sparwood headquarters. A total of \$50,000 spanning 37 pieces of artwork was purchased from 12 Ktunaxa Artists.

Additionally, we sponsored two artisans for the Cranbrook Winter Market held in November 2025 at Western Financial Place. In December, we hosted the second annual **Ktunaxa Christmas Market** in the KNC building.

Nine artisans hosted booths to sell their products.

Ktunaxa entrepreneurial support

Our **Business Development Office** provided personalized business support and coaching to Ktunaxa entrepreneurs and community-owned development corporations.

These **supports are tailored to the individual business** and included marketing, strategy, sales, budgeting, design, finance, and grant and loan applications. Over the year, we dedicated 1,342 hours to client support.

Ktunaxa Business Microloans

The microloan program provides Ktunaxa businesses access to below-market interest rate loans of up to \$10,000 per application, with a lifetime maximum of \$25,000. **Financing is flexible** and can be used for any business operation needs. **Two loans were accessed** this year, for a total value of \$20,000.



Ktunaxa Business Grants

The Ktunaxa Business Development Grant program offers up to \$5,000 of startup or expansion capital per application, with a lifetime maximum of \$15,000. These grants are designed to be spent on tangible business purchases such as tools, computers, or other equipment needs.

Two grants were awarded this year, totalling \$10,000.

Thank you to Foraco Canada Ltd. for continually supporting the grant program.

Ktunaxa individual support

Throughout the year we hosted a series of **financial workshops and information sessions** on topics including budgeting, interest, investment, credit, credit scores, auto loans, grants, microloans, and tax tips for Indigenous businesses.

These workshops were held in ʔAkisq̓nuk, ʔaq̓am, Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓iʔit, and ʔa-kisq̓aq̓iʔit (Cranbrook).

Ktunaxa Business Showcase

2025



The Ktunaxa Business Showcase is an **opportunity created for Ktunaxa entrepreneurs** to expand their reach, network with potential collaborators, and gain exposure in both the local and regional business communities.

Thirty-five Ktunaxa businesses and artisans registered for the event.

Each participating business was allocated **budget to produce branded trade-show booth materials** and promotional merchandise.

The showcase took place on October 2 and 3, 2025 at the St. Eugene Resort pavilion.

Day One: A private networking event where Ktunaxa businesses were paired for meetings with approximately 100 individuals from 25 teams of industry and government partners operating in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Day Two: A public open house and artist market attracted nearly 130 attendees.

TESTIMONIALS

Ktunaxa business: "This is a valuable event for people to connect and feel proud of their entities."

Industry partner: "I find great value in this event...learning about the businesses and what they each provide."



2025 Ktunaxa Business Showcase	
Industry sponsorships: FortisBC, TC Energy, BCHydro, Elk Valley Resources, Columbia Basin Trust	\$70,000
Grant: (ETSI BC) Economic Trust of the Southern Interior	\$42,000
Sector contribution	\$10,000
Total event expenses (Venue, merchandise, catering, etc.)	\$122,000



External relationships that support Ktunaxa economy

Elk Valley Resources

The Ktunaxa Nation and Elk Valley Resources Impact Management and Benefits Agreement (IMBA) includes the joint **Procurement Task Group** (PTG).

Each Ktunaxa First Nation and Ktunaxa Nation Council's Economic and Investment Sector is represented within the task group.

The PTG meets regularly to create the environment where Ktunaxa businesses can successfully provide products and services to EVR.

Elkview Mine site visit

The Procurement Task Group organized and executed the Elk Valley Mine Operations **site visit for Ktunaxa businesses** in September, 2025.

This was for businesses to learn about upcoming expansion and capital projects that will be occurring within the next five years at the site.

BC Hydro

Regular **procurement check-ins** are set with BC Hydro to discuss opportunities tied to the Revelstoke 6 Dam expansion and other projects.

A total of **14 procurement opportunities** were posted to the Ktunaxa Ready member portal attached to BC Hydro projects in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

FortisBC

FortisBC is an active partner and **contributed funding** to the Ktunaxa Business Showcase and Ktunaxa Ready.

Canfor

We maintained consistent touchpoints with Canfor and are exploring **research opportunities** to reduce carbon emissions in the forestry industry.

Municipalities and government

We increased our outreach efforts to municipal governments and government agencies.

Over the year we **distributed five tender packages** from municipalities and regional districts, seven from ʔaqam, and six from other agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.

Innovation Science Economic Development (ISED) – Universal Broadband Fund (UBF)

A multi-year project in collaboration with ISED-UBF to **upgrade broadband infrastructure** has successfully increased Internet speed and reliability for Ktunaxa households.

Columbia Basin Trust

This year, Columbia Basin Trust contributed to Ktunaxa Ready Marketing Campaign, Ktunaxa Business Showcase, broadband upgrades and the Seven Nations Soaring Eagle Treatment Centre vehicle.

We thank Columbia Basin Trust for its continued support.

Governance

Self-governing NATION



Ki'su'k kyukyit, apiniskit,

It is a great pleasure to be reporting to you as the Senior Governance Lead serving the Ktunaxa Peoples, working for the Ktunaxa governments. This role is similar to the role I held before I began championing the B.C. First Nations Data Governance Initiative from 2012 to 2025.

I resumed the governance role officially in November and have assembled a team of Ktunaxa Nation Council staff working in governance-related functions to work as a governance team. It has been great working with **Marion Eunson** again in her new (but somewhat familiar) role as Industry Relations and Community Engagement lead, and with **Dr. Christopher Horsethief** as the Research Department lead.

Natasha Burgoyne has joined the team and works with Christopher as a Researcher/Archives mentor.

Margaret Teneese, Ktunaxa Nation Council Archivist, will mentor Natasha as they protect and make best use of the information held in the Ktunaxa archives.

We are still getting organized, formalizing roles and processes, and working with Leadership and the community governance and administrative leads to establish appropriate engagement and decision-making pathways to facilitate **community-driven, Nation-based governance transition**.

While I appreciated the opportunity to work specifically on advancing First Nations data sovereignty at the provincial, national and international levels as an enabler of a new fiscal and reporting relationship between the Federal Crown and Indigenous Peoples distinctly, **I missed working with Ktunaxa people**.

The **data work was always intended to advance Ktunaxa interests** and the business case that is attached to the national *First Nations Data Governance Strategy*, (which is enabling First Nations governments to take ownership of and control of their population data), has been founded on a principle of being community-driven and Nation-based.

Gwen Phillips,
Senior Governance Lead

?aknumutiit a ?ini wupnik
(Governance is not something new)

Ktunaxa aa haapsi ninku?is ?aknumutiit
(Ktunaxa always lived by rules)

The concept of “Nationhood” is associated with linguistic identity. **Language is the foundation of each distinct Nation-group in Canada**, following the philosophy of “where a People’s language touches the ground, they have title.”

The Ktunaxa language defines, aligns and instructs the Ktunaxa Peoples: **It is the foundation of who we are** as Ktunaxa, Kootenay, Kootenai, Kutenai, Ksanka, Flatbow people.

A Nation is not an entity, it is IDENTITY!
Hu nałani Ktunaxa - ka ąapi nała!

How does this relate to self-determination and self-government?

Asserting data sovereignty stops other governments from merely measuring what they want to measure and funding what they want to fund.

Funding is usually based on getting rid of disease and dysfunction to reduce how many First Nations people die, have disease, have been abused, neglected and so on. And yes, we want to get rid of those things, too.

But the **Ktunaxa people have said they want to invest in and measure strength, health, speaking our language, cultural vibrancy, working together, self-sufficiency...** the things associated with the Ktunaxa Vision:

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 as a self-sufficient, self-governing (Ktunaxa) Nation.



How it’s going

The first few months back I spent getting up to speed with the files and rebuilding relationships with the Ktunaxa governments and their staff.

I’ve been actively promoting transparency and collaboration across the KNCS sectors and senior management team.

Monthly Ktunaxa Nation governance staff meetings keep things moving along and a broad-based governance team, inclusive of Ktunaxa government staff, is facilitating communication and collaboration.

The governance team’s work over the next year will focus on realigning various processes and gaining recognition of the Ktunaxa Nation/Ktunaxa Peoples as distinct Indigenous Peoples with the authority of Ktunaxa governments recognized as **rightful title and rights holders**.

GOVERNANCE TEAM



Governance Goal (Draft)

The governments of the Ktunaxa Nation in Canada—ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation, ʔaq̓am, yaqan nuʔkiy and Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓iʔit First Nation—are governing independently while working together as Ktunaxa Nation rights holders, to advance Ktunaxa self-determination and self-government and to protect ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Toward this goal, we will achieve the following outcomes within the next year:

1. Purpose

- a.** The Ktunaxa Peoples in Canada are recognized as Indigenous people who identify with a distinct Indigenous Nation with Title, Inherent Aboriginal Rights, *Section 35* Rights and *U.N. Declaration* Rights. yaqan nuʔkiy, ʔaq̓am, Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓iʔit First Nation, and ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation governments' authority as holders of Ktunaxa Rights and Title in Canada have been recognized through the signing of a Recognition Agreement with B.C. and with Canada.
- b.** There is a shared understanding of ʔaknumuq̓tiʔit and ʔaknumuq̓tiʔis amongst Ktunaxa governments and agencies.

2. People

- a.** The people of Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓iʔit First Nation, yaqan nuʔkiy, ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation and ʔaq̓am—the ʔa·kanuxuʔniʔ, ʔa·kaq̓ʔaʔxuniʔ, ʔakiskq̓nukniʔ and ʔaqaʔniʔ, (status and non-status)—have been recognized as Ktunaxa citizens and are actively participating in governance processes.
- b.** Effective communication is taking place between and amongst Ktunaxa citizens, Ktunaxa governments and Ktunaxa institutions.
- c.** Ktunaxa people have a better understanding of nupiʔniʔwiʔ, ʔaknumuq̓tiʔit and ʔaknumuq̓tiʔis and ʔukiniʔwiʔiyaʔa and are participating in governance activities.



3. Processes

- a.** A community-driven, Nation-based approach to governance and service delivery is being implemented.
- b.** Effective, accountable and transparent communication, engagement, decision-making and reporting processes are in place within ʔaq̓am, yaqan nuʔkiy, Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓iʔit First Nation and ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation communities and collectively governed Ktunaxa Nation institutions.

4. Performance

- a.** Effective and enforceable ʔAkisq̓nuk First Nation, Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓iʔit First Nation, yaqan nuʔkiy and ʔaq̓am and Ktunaxa Nation government protocols are in place, including, where required, regulations, policies and procedures.
- b.** Respectful and accountable relationships amongst Ktunaxa governments, and with other governments, are re-established.

Maʔq̓ kuʔ qu·qakiʔ kumnaqakwaʔa na ku qaki·kanikin na hakq̓ankmiki ʔamak.

Let it be that we who are aboriginals of this island (North America) will never be poor and pitiful.

~ From the Ktunaxa Nation Leadership Prayer

Industry Relations & Community Engagement

Marion Eunson, Director, Community Engagement and Industry Relations

The Community Engagement and Industry Relations role and function were established in 2026 to strengthen coordination between Ktunaxa governments, citizens, KNCS sectors, and external partners. The role supports governance transition by ensuring engagement processes, relationship management, and environmental monitoring align with Ktunaxa priorities of self-governance, title and rights, and Nation re-building.

Work-to-date has focused on establishing relationships, improving communication pathways, and supporting alignment across governance, community, and industry.

Key activities & highlights (2026)

Community & citizen engagement

- Supported governance engagement sessions with Ktunaxa First Nations (Yaḡit ṽa·knuḡi'it, ṽaḡam and ṽakisḡnuk.)
- Participated in Ktunaxaniḡtik (census-related) outreach and community engagement initiatives.
- Responded to identified needs for improved communication, transparency, and follow-up between KNC and communities.

Industry & external relations

- External relationships with key partners (e.g., BC Hydro, Canfor, Columbia Basin Trust, FortisBC, TC Energy).
- Supported coordination of sector and KFN participation in industry engagement and agreement discussions.
- Monitored external environments to identify opportunities and risks related to Ktunaxa title and rights.

Governance & internal coordination

- Active participation in Governance, Leadership, and Sector Director meetings (January to May).
- Supported cross-sector collaboration to align engagement and messaging.
- Assisted with Land Declaration engagement, data sovereignty awareness, and agreement review discussions.

Communication & process development

- Presenting communication routing concepts to clarify roles, responsibilities, and information flow across Leadership, KNCS, and communities.
- Supporting improved coordination between KNC and KFN communications functions to reduce bottlenecks.

Key outcomes

- Refreshing and operationalizing a new engagement and industry relations function within Governance.
- Strengthening coordination with industry and increased awareness of KFN roles as rights and title holders.
- Identifying systemic communication and process gaps and highlighting opportunities for future process improvements (e.g., action tracking, clearer documentation, improved reporting).
- Supporting alignment of engagement activities with broader governance priorities and Nation re-building initiatives.

Priorities & next steps (2026–2027)

- **Engagement Framework:** Implement consistent, Nation-wide engagement and communication processes.
- **Industry Strategy:** Strengthen a coordinated approach to industry relations that reinforces KFN authority and increases participation.
- **Agreement Monitoring:** Support review and tracking of agreements to ensure alignment with governance transition.
- **Community Capacity:** Strengthen community-based engagement and feedback mechanisms
- **Territorial Presence:** Support initiatives that increase Ktunaxa visibility, public education, and connection to the land.

Hu naḡanaḡniṽni

I truly appreciate the opportunity to contribute with the Governance team, connecting community perspectives, governance priorities, and external relationships.

I look forward to formalizing systems, strengthening coordinated engagement, and ensuring meaningful citizen participation in governance transition and Nation re-building efforts.

Research Department

Dr. Christopher Horsethief,
Senior Research Lead

The Ktunaxa Research Department (KRD) will continue to support the development of **Ktunaxa-led research** designed to strengthen Nation-based and community-driven research, community engagement, ethics review, and collaborative research partnerships.

It will work to ensure research involving Ktunaxa people, communities, knowledge, and resources is conducted in ways **accountable to Ktunaxa values**, governance structures, and long-term community priorities.

The department is currently supported through the work of the Senior Research Lead, a Researcher/Archives Mentor, and soon to be joined by two half-time research positions. Together they will provide coordination across research ethics, community engagement, and research activities.

Collaboration with the governance and policy teams has established a stable foundation for supporting both internal Ktunaxa Nation Council research priorities and collaborative projects involving external partners, institutions, and funding agencies.

Over the past year, the Senior Research Lead refined the **Ktunaxa Research Ethics** process through the development of clearer intake pathways, research review procedures, and community engagement supports. This work is intended to improve coordination between researchers, Ktunaxa Nation Council sectors, member bands, external institutions, and community knowledge holders.

The goal has been **harmonizing Ktunaxa research capacities** across projects and partnerships, including collaboration between Ktunaxa researchers, community members, Leadership, technical staff, external academic institutions, and funding agencies.

The department will continue supporting the shared research standards, common engagement practices, and **coordinated approaches to data collection, analysis, and reporting**. This work will reduce duplication, strengthen communication between research initiatives, and support long-term Ktunaxa research capacity development.



The department will also continue implementing the Ktunaxa “Thinking with One Heart” methodology across a range of community engagement strategies.

This approach supports traditional problem-solving and collective knowledge refinement by bringing together **multiple perspectives within community dialogue**. Thinking with One Heart has increasingly been used to guide engagement sessions, research planning discussions, thematic analysis activities, and intergenerational knowledge sharing initiatives.

An additional priority has been **recognition of Ktunaxa lived cultural data as a rigorous and necessary form of evidence** alongside Western scientific technical data.

The department will standardize approaches that position lived experience, oral tradition, community observation, and intergenerational knowledge transmission as valid and actionable information across fields including health research, governance, education, language revitalization, and community planning.

This work supports more balanced and culturally relevant Ktunaxa research processes while **strengthening the ability of our knowledge systems to interact with external institutions on equitable terms**.



Research Department

Natasha Burgoyne, Archives Mentor & Researcher

As the Governance team's Archives Mentor and Researcher, my work focuses on knowledge gathering and sharing. I work with the Governance team at KNC and the community-based governance staffs, as well as being mentored by archives staff, to develop and operationalize **culturally appropriate standards and processes** through which to access and use archival materials.

The research will consist of **thorough review** of archival materials, citizen engagement, and other Ktunaxa research methodologies.

Under the guidance of the Senior Research Lead, the Archives Mentor and a project team knowledgeable in the topic, I am currently undertaking the development of a **practice-informed policy** intended to provide Ktunaxa-centered and approved pathways for determining the access, use and protection of sensitive materials at the KNC.

Additionally, I am working with archives staff to develop an archives policy and to determine **cultural and operational standards for archives access**.

The Research Department is aiming to build a well-rounded and robust information and knowledge base that has the capacity to defend, protect and maintain Ktunaxa people's interests, rights, and title.

Current and future areas of research include **gathering data on Ktunaxa historical relationships** with neighboring Nations, undertaking online research on historical relationships with Treaty 7 Nations in Alberta, and visiting archives throughout Alberta this year to further this research.

I will be conducting archival **research on past and present Ktunaxa governance models** to support governance transition as well as Ktunaxa law through the translations and interpretation of our stories.

I am currently working to **translate and interpret** a Lower Kootenay story about Skinkuꞵ and Naxni (Coyote and Caribou) with knowledgeable language speakers of Upper and Lower Kootenay dialects.

As someone who has been working for the last 11 years with the analysis of and participation in Ktunaxa land-based research, I am experienced in gathering data from traditional use, rights and interests, and land use and occupancy studies, as well as utilizing archaeology data, (reinforced with oral history and place names), to **support an encroachment strategy** and to back up our Ktunaxa Land Declaration.

As an early professional and Ktunaxa person studying anthropology, **preservation of Ktunaxa worldview is at the heart of my work**.

I believe **we must share what knowledge we have with each other** so that all Ktunaxa people have a deep embodied and intellectual understanding of who we are.

Embedded in my work plan and aligning with my life's work are **building pathways to Ktunaxa knowledge transfer**.

As Archives Mentor and Researcher, I envision creating **easy access pathways for information sharing**, identifying information needs of KFN governments, and teaching Ktunaxa people about Ktunaxa history and culture through readily available resources and access to land-based learning.

Core Services



What we do

As the service department for the Ktunaxa Nation Council, Core Services provides organization-wide leadership and support in **communications, facilities and maintenance, capital acquisitions, and information technology (IT).**

Finance, human resources, and policy and quality assurance also operate within Core Services and report directly to the chief administrative officer.



Communications

Rachelle Sebastian,
Manager of Communications

New website launch

Communications launched the new Ktunaxa Nation Council website on March 18, 2025.

The site is still at **ktunaxa.org**.

The redesigned site features **sector-specific news feeds** on sector pages and on the main news page, so visitors can find what they want and even discover something new—or something *old* that was not easy to find on the old site.

Dozens of stories from the old site were migrated to the new site to **retain continuity**. Some stories go back to 2007 when the old site was developed.

The **events calendar** offers users an at-a-glance monthly view with distinct events listings.

Communications staff can now share KNC events and Ktunaxa First Nation and community events as appropriate.

Other updates include a more targeted “**contact us**” experience for users, with general sector contacts available on each sector’s main page.

The web development team will provide coaching to their Communications colleagues on web management, including how to add and categorize “resources” (a new KNC-specific type of post) so stories appear in the right news feeds and are searchable.

Next steps include moving from Outlook to a dedicated **email marketing platform** (MailChimp) to make outreach easier and better serve KNC’s audiences.

Communications is also working with TKL and Finance to develop a donations strategy which would include a **donation button** on the website so people can donate to projects, sectors and initiatives as desired.

Ongoing work

Communications is focused on improving the quality, consistency, and efficiency of communications with citizens, staff, and other audiences.

Highlights of the team's ongoing work

- Coordinated and supported events, including the May Celebration, Open House, Charity Golf Tournament, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls gathering, TKL Language Summit, B.C. Elders Gathering, and other events.
- Monitored general inboxes (info@ktunaxa.org, news@, communications@, aga@, engage@, and so on) to relay incoming queries. Started to develop an email-response standard procedure to reduce response time and ensure messages go to the right person and sector.
- **Communications Hub:** Met with Ktunaxa government communications teams to support coordinated **community / Nation information sharing**.
- Started to work with Governance more closely to **align KNC's** governance and communications teams.
- Consulted with IT and Records Management to develop an **internal shared photo library** so visual resources can be easily uploaded, accessed and used across the sectors.
- Maintained internal and external communications through the bi-weekly internal **newsletter** and the **monthly community newsletter**.
- Provided poster design services to the sectors using consistent templates and featuring Ktunaxa graphic art.
- Developed and posted **video projects** for sectors and in collaboration with Ktunaxa communities.
- Maintained the **KtunaxaHakqiyit.org** platform.
- Maintained KNC's **Facebook** and **YouTube**.
- **Supported sectors** with promotional materials, photography, registration design and support, document design, business cards, name tags, directory management and more.
- Provided **editing, writing** and content strategizing services to the sectors and Leadership as requested.
- Produced the annual Ktunaxa **calendar**, featuring Ktunaxa language content (thanks to TKL) and showcasing Ktunaxa photographers. Communications took orders from allied organizations such as The Foundry and school districts. It's a way to cover printing costs and increase distribution so Ktunaxa citizens can receive the calendar at no cost.
- Designed and arranged production of the KNC **annual report** and various other publications.
- Expanded **public relations** and outreach through media releases, advertising, interview coordination, and regional promotion across ?amak?is Ktunaxa.
- Assisted with **Ktunaxa Land Declaration** outreach material development such as hand outs and posters.
- Stopped publication of **Ktuq?qakyam** to reflect low reader interest. Feature stories can now be posted to the website and shared via the email newsletter. The team will explore ways to provide print products to those readers who prefer them in 2026-2027.
- Developed draft **brand guidelines** and a style sheet, and updated the letterhead.
- Communications staff helped with the **Ktunaxa Nation 2025 Census**, designing both the print booklet and the online form.



Facilities and Maintenance

Adam Nicholas,
Core Services Director

The Ktunaxa Nation Council **Maintenance Department** is responsible for preventative, corrective, predictive, and reactive maintenance across all KNC facilities and assets.

The department also implements, coordinates, and oversees facility improvements, as well as vehicle maintenance and upkeep.

With a focus on continuous improvement, the team continues to build internal capacity with the goal of completing as much work in-house as possible.

KEY PROJECTS	
Ktunaxa Nation Council building	
Archives	Full renovation
Repository	Full renovation
IT	New carpet / paint
Director's wing	New flooring
Former clinic	Wall repairs, paint
Other buildings	
Complex Care House	Renos: Fence, garden and storage shed

Information Technology

The past year brought significant changes and challenges for the IT department. Following the retirement of the long-time manager Bob Luke, staff turnover left the team short-staffed for much of the year. Mark Weaver was hired as the new Manager of IT Services and tasked with establishing a strategic vision for the department.

From Mark Weaver, Manager of IT Services:

Looking ahead, the Ktunaxa Nation Council IT department will be guided by a strong focus on resilience and continuous modernization.

As digital demands continue to expand, existing systems are being increasingly challenged by aging infrastructure that can no longer effectively support modern workloads.

This underscores the need for proactive investment and deliberate planning to ensure the technology environment remains reliable, secure, and capable of supporting organizational growth.

Building resilience into core systems will better position the department to respond to evolving business needs while reducing the risks associated with outdated platforms.

A key priority moving forward is the systematic replacement and upgrade of end-of-life equipment, including servers, networking devices, and storage platforms.

These efforts will be guided by strategic refresh cycles that align with business objectives and sustainability targets.

By prioritizing both hardware and software investments, the department aims to improve operational efficiency, reduce downtime, and enhance overall performance.

At the same time, incorporating sustainability considerations into procurement and lifecycle management practices will help reduce environmental impact while supporting long-term value.

In parallel with infrastructure improvements, work has begun to strengthen the technology team in support of continued growth within the Ktunaxa Nation Council.

This includes a focused commitment to developing internal talent and creating clear pathways for advancement.

By fostering a culture of learning and promoting from within, the department aims to build a skilled and adaptable workforce that is well positioned to support the evolving technology landscape and contribute to the organization's broader strategic goals.

Capital asset summary

Adam Nicholas,
Core Services Director

This summary provides a high-level overview of the Ktunaxa Nation Council's principal assets, organized into commercial property, vehicle assets, and commercial equipment. Collectively, these assets support administrative operations, community services, transportation requirements, emergency response capacity, and essential infrastructure.

Commercial property

The KNC holds a portfolio of commercial properties that supports governance, health, housing, and community-based service delivery.

The portfolio includes these assets:

Ktunaxa Nation Government Building
220 Cranbrook Street N, Cranbrook

Complex Care House
2001 Industrial Road #2, Cranbrook

Scotty's House
202 13th Avenue S, Cranbrook

Ktunaxa Regional Health Centre
32 9th Avenue S, Cranbrook

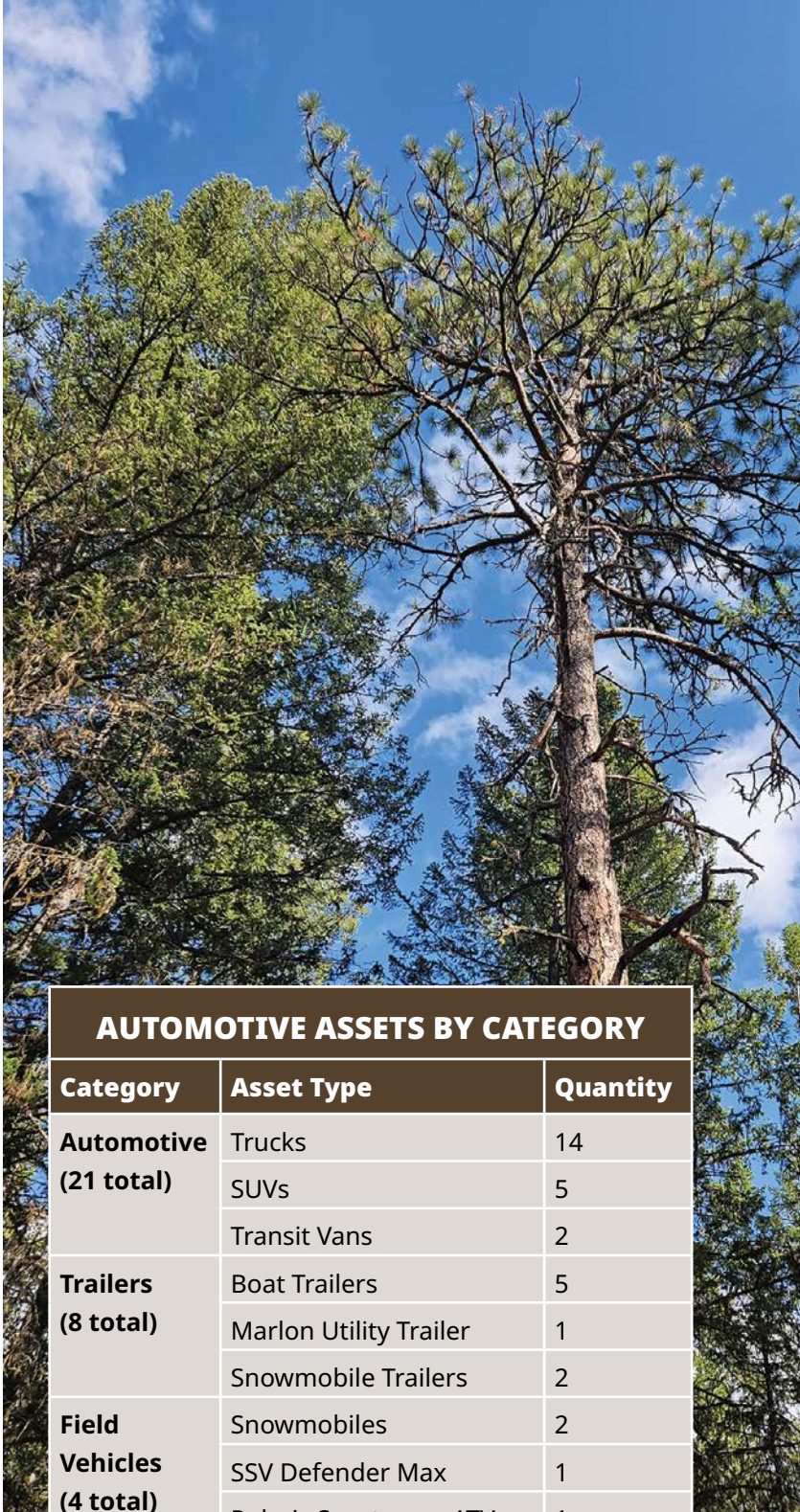
Castlegar Business Centre
1444 Columbia Avenue, Castlegar

Commercial equipment

The Ktunaxa Nation also maintains specialized commercial equipment and infrastructure to support operational capacity and essential services.

Commercial equipment assets include:

- Broadband **fibre-optic infrastructure**, including towers and sheds.
- **Invasive species control equipment**, including a hydro-blast boat sprayer trailer.
- **Fire suppression equipment**, including two specialty trailers with tanks, hoses, and pumps.



AUTOMOTIVE ASSETS BY CATEGORY

Category	Asset Type	Quantity
Automotive (21 total)	Trucks	14
	SUVs	5
	Transit Vans	2
Trailers (8 total)	Boat Trailers	5
	Marlon Utility Trailer	1
	Snowmobile Trailers	2
Field Vehicles (4 total)	Snowmobiles	2
	SSV Defender Max	1
	Polaris Sportsman ATV	1
Watercraft (3 total)	Kingfisher Boat	1
	Voyageur Canoe	1
	Thunder Jet Boat (Lands)	1

Automotive assets

The KNC maintains a range of automotive assets to support operational requirements, service delivery, transportation, and emergency response activities.



HR Human Resources

Amanda Casey,
Human Resources Manager

This year, KNC Human Resources has continued efforts toward efficiency, improving processes, and extending increased opportunities to Ktunaxa.

We have created an HR network including the HR departments across the communities, increasing opportunities for collaboration and information sharing amongst our teams.

Professional development

In November, we brought **Indigenous Perspectives Society** to Cranbrook to deliver lateral kindness training to KNC staff. We continue our work with Lana Bavle, who delivers **Core Strengths** and team building training to KNC staff. These programs work to improve communication amongst team members by recognizing individual communication styles and motivations, and then extends into building team charters recognizing common values and goals.

Mentorship and capacity building

We have made some strides toward improving visibility of mentorship opportunities through the recruitment of a **Mentorship Coordinator**.

Year-over-year comparison	2023–2024	2024–2025	2025–2026
Total number of employees	148	143	158
New hires over the reporting period	40	42	9
Number of Ktunaxa employees*	64	49	48
Percentage of Ktunaxa employees	43.2%	34.3%	30.4%

**Note: Demographic information requires that staff self-identify. While we encourage all staff to identify their status, they are not required to do so.*

Additionally, the **Ktunaxa ʔaqʔsmaknił Capacity Support Strategy** project is underway, with extensive literature review completed and the project phases having been identified. Engagement with the Ktunaxa First Nations will be soon underway to identify broader goals.

Efficiencies

Our team has been working with the Policy and Quality Assurance team to engage with KNC staff on on-boarding experiences and processes in order to further improve our processes. Overall, the feedback has been strong, with some areas of inefficiency identified and addressed, and we continue to seek opportunities to further improve the employee experience.

Finance

Danny Bollinger,
Chief Financial Officer

The Ktunaxa Nation Council Finance Department provides professional expertise, direction and support based on strong internal controls, management best practices, risk identification and assessment practices and timely reporting that contribute to transparency and accountability.

This promotes sound information for long-term, informed decision-making by senior management, sectors and departments as well as Ktunaxa Nation Leadership.

The 2025–2026 fiscal year turned out to be a one of learning and change for the Finance team, with two out of five positions in the department being unfilled for extended periods of time, and the retirement of the Director of Finance, Lynn Armstrong.

I would like to thank Lynn for her years of dedicated service and for the great team she has left in my hands. I’m also looking forward to guiding Finance’s contribution to the Nation Vision and Mission.

Finally, I would like to thank the Finance team for taking the time to bring me up to speed in my role and for stepping up and doing whatever was needed this year.

A job well done!

2025-26 accomplishments include:

- Continued focus on operational effectiveness and efficiencies.
- Implementation of a new Group Health Plan.
- Cross training and capacity building for coverage within Finance.
- Review and source enhanced insurance coverage through a new provider
- Timely and accurate financial reporting, including enhancing internal Ktunaxa-centric outcome metrics to be used by directors/managers and Leaders for effective decision making.



CORPORATE FINANCE PROFILE	
Auditor	MNP
KNCS Banker	TD Cranbrook
Corporate Legal	Miller Titterle, Rella Paolini & Rogers
Insurance	HUB
Health & Benefits	Canada Life
The KNC is the Plan Holder and the Administrator of the Group Pension plan with Canada Life. The Pension is a defined contribution plan matched by the employers. The Group Health Plan and the Pension are for Staff and Elected Leadership.	

A look ahead to 2026-27:

- Enhance communication with communities through regular CFO meetings and touchpoints to support and collaborate with Communities on issues and opportunities.
- Continue to develop and refine Ktunaxa-centric outcome measures to create evidence-based funding drivers; expand understanding of Ktunaxa determinants of success; and Return on Investment of Service delivery tied to quality of life and citizen impact.
- Insurance Provider Review and market assessment to determine if there are additional cost savings and / or increased coverage options.
- Improve financial acumen and education of staff through Finance led sessions for internal staff to improve accounting records and create efficiencies by eliminating process constraints.

IMBA Impact Management & Benefits Agreement

Every five years, the IMBA states that a review has to be carried out.

This year we've focused on an IMBA review in addition to the regular activities of the different working groups.

With COVID-19, staff turnover, and Teck Coal Limited becoming Elk Valley Resources (EVR), the five-year review has been significantly delayed.

A third-party company conducted a review of the IMBA based on interviews with the working group members, and the results were shared with Ktunaxa leadership in the summer of 2024.

Directions were given to **share results with citizens**, which was done through engagement in that fall. After two online sessions of engagement, citizens shared they were unsatisfied with the recommendations and strongly **asked to be involved in the review** rather than merely engaged.

Ktunaxa Nation Council issued a call out in April 2025 to attract members to an **IMBA Review Task Force**.

As a result, a **six-member task force came together to lead the review**. It consists of two Elders, two citizens-at-large, and two youth (with representation from each of the four Ktunaxa First Nations).

The task force held its inaugural meeting in September of 2025. **Its main purpose is to make recommendations to Ktunaxa Leadership based on the five-year review of the IMBA.**

After some discussion within the task force, it became evident that members felt the depth and breadth of the five-year review conducted was not adequate to formulate and make well-informed and evidence-based recommendations to Ktunaxa Leadership.

WORKING GROUPS

Cultural Working Group
Traditional Knowledge
and Language

**Environmental
Working Group**
Lands and Resources

Employment Task Group
Education and Employment

Procurement Task Group
Economic and Investment

IMBA Review Task Force
Ktunaxa First Nations

The task force **developed a workplan**, and "Phase 1" is to conduct a clear assessment of the IMBA's successes so far.

To inform the assessment, the task force struck a sub-committee, which will create and **distribute a series of surveys** based on the elements of the IMBA.

These online surveys will be sent to members of the four working groups, as well as to the IMBA principals,

senior managers and managers for both EVR and KNC.

Surveys will also go to Ktunaxa businesses listed in the Ktunaxa Ready directory, Ktunaxa employees and previous applicants of KNC, Ktunaxa citizens and Ktunaxa Leadership (Fall, 2026).

In the collaborative spirit of the IMBA, **regular updates have been provided** to EVR, and, at EVR's request, the work plan has been shared.

The KNC IMBA manager also gave regular updates at each of the different working group tables.

The task force will regroup in September of 2026 to review the survey results.

The information generated from these surveys, as well as from the previous reports and recommendations, will be compiled to inform Ktunaxa Nation Leadership.

Alexis Martig,
IMBA Manager

Who We Are

WE, THE KTUNAXA, are the peoples of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, our territory and homeland, where we have lived since time immemorial. We are also known as Kootenay in Canada, and Ksanka, Kootenai, or Kutenai in the United States.

Our Nation currently includes the four Ktunaxa First Nations: ʔakisq̓nuk, ʔaq̓am, Yaqaṇ Nuʔkiy and Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓h̓it in Canada, and we recognize and affirm our enduring connection to our sister Ktunaxa communities in the U.S.: Ksanka, of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Montana, and ʔaq̓anq̓mi, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho.

Our Creation and ancient oral histories tell us where our lands are: Stretching from Ya-qawiṭh̓i-ki (near the Big Bend of the Columbia River) in the north, straddling Naṣmuq̓in (Rocky Mountains) southeasterly to Ya-qawiṭh̓aṇki (southwest Montana), thence northwest to Kik̓siṭuk and ʔakink̓aʔnuk (Castlegar area), thence north to Ktunwakanmituk Miṭq̓aqaṣ (Revelstoke area), and north of the Big Bend of the Columbia River.

Our culture and identity are rooted in our land. Ktunaxa place names, stories and songs passed down from untold generations are a rich cultural heritage written across our homeland. Our language, ʔa-kḷuqaq̓wum, is ancient and a language isolate, unrelated to any other in the world. ʔa-kḷuqaq̓wum is integral to our identity—we are the Ktunaxa ʔaq̓ismak̓nik.

Our Covenants Since Time Immemorial

WE HONOUR THE COVENANTS

given to us by Creator to live in, occupy, utilize, protect, cherish and celebrate ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

We are bound by Creator's Natural Law, ʔa-knumuṭt̓ih̓i, which requires the protection of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa now and forever.

Yaqaṭ Hankat̓ih̓iṭki na ʔamak—Our people care for the land, the land cares for our people—is our stewardship responsibility.

We steward our lands, water, and air to honour and respect ʔa-kxaṁis ʔapi q̓apsin—All living things—as anything that affects one affects everything else, including ourselves.

ʔa-kuk̓pukamnam is how we identify as being Ktunaxa, through our ancestral lineage. That is, we have roots that tie us to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, and we are of this land.

We, the Ktunaxa,

We hold our inherent, sovereign rights and title to all the territory which we have held intact since time immemorial.

We reaffirm the declaration by our Chiefs of our Ktunaxa sovereignty and unceded title and rights as set out in the *Kootenay Nation Land Claim and Declaration* signed on July 8, 1981, and all that our leaders have said to settler society respecting our sovereignty to this land since contact.

We maintain our right as a sovereign Nation to govern ourselves and our territory in accordance with our own laws and traditions, including the right to use and occupy our land, decide how our land will be used, and enjoy the wealth that comes from our land.

We require the Crown to deal with us honourably, uphold our rights and recognize our laws and legal orders as a sovereign People.

We expect everyone to respect our rights, culture and decision-making processes.

declare and make known to all

We will refute other First Nations who make unsubstantiated claims to rights to our territory and homelands in present-day British Columbia.

We require other First Nations who visit these homelands respect our laws and protocols, as we would when visiting your homelands.

We are willing to work with other First Nations through processes based on mutual respect and recognition.

We are of one heart and mind to protect ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa for present and future generations of Ktunaxa.

We shall continue to work with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes of Montana and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, our sister Ktunaxa communities in the U.S., to protect and uphold Ktunaxa rights.

We maintain our right to develop laws and policies consistent with this Declaration.

**Declared on the
23rd day of April , 2025,
by the Chiefs and Councillors of
ʔakisq̓nuk, ʔaq̓am, Yaq̓an Nuʔkiy
and Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓h̓it First Nations
at Kyaknuq̓h̓it (Invermere, B.C.).**

We Have Persevered, Survived & Flourished

WE HAVE ALWAYS RESISTED incursions to our territory and efforts to deny our existence and extinguish our rights. Our ancestors protected our territory by joining together to seek treaties of mutual recognition and respect with other Indigenous peoples and, where necessary, to fight.

When the first Europeans arrived, we welcomed trade and commerce and offered to share our wealth with the newcomers. We never consented to these newcomers taking our lands. We have never been defeated in war, nor have we entered into treaties with the Crown or ceded our lands.

Despite the creation of colonial boundaries that sought to divide us, we never consented to the creation of the Canada – U.S. border. We deny the Federal and Provincial claims to ownership of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

We were party to petitioning the Prime Minister of Canada in March of 1912 to seek recognition of our rights—to no avail. We affirmed the Kootenay Nation Land Claim and Declaration in July, 1981, to express to the world our inalienable right to maintain our sovereignty.

**In spite of all the atrocities laid upon us,
we maintain our cultural connection to
our land, our language, and our spirituality
to this very day.**

**We continue to live and flourish,
we have never left, and we will always
remain in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.**

ktunaxa.org/about/declaration/



KTUNAXA
NATION

Map Key



Ktunaxa First Nation
& Tribe



ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa



ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa
(in BC)

Ya-qawičhi-ki
(Yellowhead Pass)

Kunanuqłiʔit
(Kootenay Plains)

ʔaknuqłuk
(Golden)

Yaqnukat
(Banff)

ʔaknuqtapčik
(Calgary)

Ktunwakanmituk Mičqaqas
(Revelstoke)

Yakyučki
(Radium)

ʔakisq̓nuk
(Columbia Lake)

Kakaminuqłiʔit
(Elkford)

ʔakwum
(Lethbridge)

ʔaq̓am
(St Marys)

Čaqahak
(Ferne)

ʔaqyamłup
(Nelson)

ʔakinkaʔnuk
(Arrow Rock)

Kiksłuk
(Castlegar)

ʔa-kiskaqłiʔit
(Cranbrook)

yaqan nuʔkiy
(Lower Kootenay)

Yačit ʔa-knuqłiʔit
(Tobacco Plains)

ʔaq̓anq̓mi
(Bonners Ferry)

ʔa-knukininis
(Eureka)

ʔaqswaq
(Libby)

Kamanqukut
(Sandpoint)

Kqaya-qawa-kiuʔnam
(Kalispell)

Kupawičq̓nuk
(Elmo)

Spuqin
(Spokane)

Tuhłnana
(Missoula)

Ya-qawičłamki

The boundaries depicted on this map reflect information available as of the date of its creation and do not comprehensively or exhaustively define the geographic limits of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa (Ktunaxa territory).

0 50 100 Km
1:3,000,000 N

Mapping by: Ktunaxa Nation Council // Date: 2025-05-16 // UTM Zone 11-NAD 83 // Source: KNC, Esri, USGS