



the BEATING HEART

Sts'ailes Community Newsletter

• August 2018

• stsailies.com

LAND CODE PASSED

Results within the newsletter.



OPEN LETTER TO ALL STS'AILES COMMUNITY MEMBER'S

From: Sts'ailes Chief and Council

Subject: Elk Conservation

July 17, 2018

Since time immemorial, and continuing to today, we have governed, managed and accessed the fish and wildlife for the benefit of our present and future generations based on our knowledge and laws. We are proud stewards of fish and wildlife. We take seriously our responsibilities for conservation and ensuring our members harvest wildlife in a sustainable manner. Hunting rights are held by the Community (not individuals), in order that our community is able to protect the resources for future generations. We place a strong emphasis on the cultural, historical, and traditional teachings of our ancestors.

Since 2011 Sts'ailes has supported the translocations of elk to our territory. As keepers of this land we are involved in preliminary habitat studies, providing follow-up services such as monitoring the Elk population, and enforcing stewardship. This initiative, and our involvement is in-line with Sts'ailes Council's vision for establishing a Land Use Management Plan for sustaining and protecting natural resources within the territory. We believe that the re-introduction of Elk into our territory is beneficial as it was an important part of our traditional diet, and cultural and spiritual practices. The presence of Elk in our Solh temexw is encouraging to the Elders, and a valuable opportunity to reinforce our cultural practices among the youth. Having a local source of elk once again provides us greater access to this traditional resource.

Sts'ailes has conducted spiritual ceremonies to welcome elk back to our homelands. This is a significant step in managing our own resources and asserting our title to the land. This helps to restore the natural biodiversity and ecosystems that our people have enjoyed historically. The elk are now starting to recover in population.

Sts'ailes is in negotiations with Conservation Office Service to develop an MOU and one of the sections involves reintroduction and management of elk in our territory. We agree that the hunting of elk (at the current elk densities) threatens the sustainability of elk populations within the Sts'ailes traditional territory. The harvesting of elk within the Sts'ailes traditional territory by their members, or the general public is not permitted until such time that the elk populations within Sts'ailes traditional territory reaches an appropriate density as defined/ negotiated by the province and the Sts'ailes Council.

We will be doing a harvesting plan of elk for our hunters in the near future. We will also plan a community feast and celebration to share the elk. In order to do this we must strongly protect the Elk in our territory. Poaching of elk will not be tolerated.

Sts'ailes Chief & Council

RESULTS - STS'AILES LAND CODE REFERENDUM

335
VOTED "YES"

22
VOTED "NO"

1
SPOILED

358 TOTAL VOTED: 42.2% of eligible voters participated with 94% Approved to pass the Sts'ailes Land Code

CONGRATULATIONS PRIZE DRAW WINNERS:

1. \$500 Cash - William James Charlie
2. \$500 Walmart Gift Card - Gordan Blain
3. \$50 Cineplex Gift Card - Dena Leon
4. \$50 Cineplex Gift Card - Adele Shirley Peter-Point
5. \$35 Superstore Gift Card - Stephanie M.R Leon (not Adams)
6. \$35 Superstore Gift Card - Walter Phillips Sr.
7. LUP survey - Aaron Leon

Thank you everyone who participated in the Sts'ailes Land Code Vote

Happy Anniversary
Dawn and Mike!

Here's to many more years to come!
Love aunty Mish, Jordyn and Ron

Happy Birthday to my
birthday buddies:
Lois, Mike, William, Allen
and Greg!

Hope you guys have a
wonderful day!
Love Mish

Happy Birthday
Godwitch!

Hope you guys have a
wonderful day!
Love Mish and the Kids

Happy Birthday Bestie
Dawn

I want to say thanks for always being there....and I am so
thankful to have you. So on your day...we celebrate you.

Happy Birthday to my birthday buddies:
Aidyn and Ayshia!

Sending you lots of love and good wishes!
Love aunty Mish, Jordyn and Ron

I love you millions and trillions of stars!
Love Mish



SUBMITTED ARTICLE

FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES SEEK HEALING THROUGH ST. KATERI

ARTICLE BY

Agnieszka Krawczynski



The communities of Sts'ailes and Seabird Island in Agassiz at a chapel on the American feast day of St. Kateri Tekakwitha.
(Photos by Connie Meskas)

AGASSIZ—St. Kateri Tekakwitha is proving a powerful symbol for two First Nations communities in the Eastern Fraser Valley.

The Sts'ailes (Chehalis) and Seabird Island peoples in Agassiz, B.C., have found her to be an icon of inspiration, strength, and reconciliation.

"We certainly need a lot of prayers because in this world today, there are so many things that can lead our people astray, especially alcohol and drugs and all of the destruction they cause in our individuals and families," said elder Virginia Peters.

"We really want our people to be able to deal with those kinds of problems and we can be strong in prayer."

St. Kateri is that example of strength for the Sts'ailes and Seabird Island people. Peters said the Indigenous saint suffered the pains of smallpox and tuberculosis, as well as the deaths of her parents and brother, but did not let those pains pull her away from faith. She was baptized, made a vow of perpetual virginity, and cared for children, the elderly, and the sick.

"Even though she was filled with scars," St. Kateri "showed all of us the importance of devoting ourselves to someone higher."

The community hosted a procession to honour St. Kateri on her American feast day, July 15. (The Canadian feast day is April 17). Peters was thrilled.

"The procession meant a whole lot to me," said Peters, who led the march, riding atop a firetruck escort as 40 community members walked through the Sts'ailes reserve praying the Rosary.

"How strong our people can be if we always remember the power of prayer!"

She said St. Kateri has been a powerful force for reconciliation in her community. Many First Nations people who left the Catholic Church due to abuses in residential schools are turning to the saint to find ways to embrace their faith and their culture.

"We don't have a lot of people still practising" in the Catholic Church, but "a lot of them are very spiritual and true

to our traditional ways," said Peters. "We need to see some blending in both of our ways."

St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Agassiz cares for two chapels in First Nations communities: Our Lady of Fatima in Sts'ailes, and Immaculate Conception on Seabird Island. Peters said they do good job of uniting religion and tradition.

"It wasn't permitted in the past to have a feather or smudge or drumming in the church. Now, we blend all of that in and we can really worship in both of our ways."

The positive reception is good news for Deacon Jamie Meskas, a permanent deacon currently on assignment at the Agassiz parish.

"It's a very broken, hurt community that needs a lot of healing," he told The B.C. Catholic. "Reconciliation is not a word just to be said. To me, it inspires action."

The July 15 procession began with Mass, followed by walking, prayer, and drumming across the length of the reserve and back to the church, where they had a community picnic and an outdoor First Nations ceremony and a community picnic.

The ceremony involved placing tobacco in a shell and burning it, its smoke symbolizing their prayers being carried toward heaven.

Beside embracing First Nations symbols like drums and tobacco smoke, Deacon Meskas has found other ways to encourage First Nations people to give Catholicism another chance. He has brought in relationship healing and other programs and a food bank. He has also made it a personal rule that when he gets up to share the Gospel, elders get a chance to speak too.

About two and a half years ago, he said there were only two or three people coming to the chapels regularly on

Sundays. Now, 15 to 25 of them come.

"St. Kateri's life symbolizes to us that the Gospel can shine a light on the culture. They don't oppose each other," he said.

"We look at it as the Church being rebuilt to what it once was."

Peters trusts that the First Nations community's ties with the Church will only grow stronger. Before the procession, her granddaughters were invited to say a prayer in traditional Halq'emeylem, an "awesome" experience for everyone, she said.

"That really goes to show it's going to go down to the next generations."

ARTICLE SOURCE: <https://bccatholic.ca/content/first-nations-communities-seek-healing-through-st-kateri>



An image of St. Kateri during the procession.



Deacon Jaime Meskas (left) marching next to two priests.



SUBMITTED ARTICLE

STÓ:LO COUPLE IMPROVING ACCESS TO LOCAL, FAIR TRADE FISH

New salmon and seafood processing facility opens near Harrison Mills

ARTICLE BY

Nina Grossman



Francine and Darwin Douglas stand in front of their new venture: the Stó:lō Seafood Company. The processing facility on Scowlitz territory will improve access to high-quality, locally sourced and produced salmon and seafood products. (Nina Grossman/The Observer)

Since 2013, the Highway 9 route to the Rosedale overhead has boasted the eye-catching, red, black and white painted Cheam Trading Post. The shop markets local, fair-trade, hand-crafted goods and wild, sustainably-harvested Coast Salish food and fish products.

But without their own facility, owners Darwin and Francine Douglas have been at the mercy of suppliers, sometimes making it difficult to provide the quantity and quality of product they want.

That's why the couple is excited to open Stó:lō Seafood Company, a

processing facility where they can freeze, store and smoke their own supply of fish, along with custom orders from local fishers. If all goes as planned, their new venture will bring even more local and ethically produced salmon and seafood products to the area.

"Now we're able to really plan and sell products for the customers we're serving in the Fraser Valley," Francine told the Observer. "There's a confidence factor when we are able to buy fish right from the river and it's in our hands as it travels...into our processing line and into the freezer."

"We know the life of the fish and we know it hasn't been sitting for a year or more in some storage facility."

With the new facility and smoking equipment, Stó:lō Seafood Company can produce its own smoked salmon and salmon jerky in flavours like candy and wild blackberry.

The couple has built relationships with First Nations fishers up and down the coast, and while they will prioritize local supply, fish purchases will depend on season and availability. Still, for the most part, the sockeye salmon, halibut and other fish products the company

produces and sells will have strong ties to Stó:lō landscapes, heritage and culture.

But improving local stock and controlling product quality aren't the only reasons the facility is important.

Both Francine and Darwin have Stó:lō ancestry – Francine is originally from Sts'ailes, and Darwin from Cheam First Nation – Both of their families have long traditions of fishing the coastal waters and connections to the long fight for First Nations fishing rights against settler legislation that barred them from their ancestral tradition.

The processing facility is symbolic of the reclamation and stewardship of the people who have fished the river for hundreds of years, if not more.

At the grand opening ceremony Aug. 2, Darwin noted how it wasn't until the 1990s that First Nations people in B.C. were able to start buying and selling fish legitimately through 'pilot sales agreements.'

"My late uncle, Sam Douglas and many of our other chiefs here in this Stó:lō territory worked hard to make that happen," he said. "This is a new business that's about taking control of a resource that we feel we have a right to catch and to trade."

"[We are] working to take a share of the marketplace in salmon and seafood because we feel that as First Nations we deserve that."

The building that hosts Stó:lō Seafood Company isn't exactly brand new. It's on Scowlitz territory, where it was

once operated as a federally-inspected fish processing facility before a fish shortage forced its closure. The couple is now renting the building and have renovated it to once again meet provincial, and hopefully soon, federal fish processing standards.

Scowlitz chief Andy Phillips praised the initiative of the couple.

"I imagine our ancestors are looking down and smiling that this is being realized again," he said.

It took almost a year of hard work to get the doors open, but the facility is now impeccable, brightly lit, spotless and able to hold thousands of pounds of fish – all in all, a big change from running the Cheam Trading Post.

But the Douglasses are ready for the challenge.

"We've gone to school for a little bit of business training and education, but we really learned business just like many other First Nations entrepreneurs – we've learned it through experience," Darwin said.

"And we find that First Nations people are very entrepreneurial people and they're business-minded. We've always traded, and we continue to do that."

"That's what we're doing now, just on a different scale."

Aside from improving control over quantity and quality of their product supply, the Douglasses are prioritizing fair trade deals for the fishers they purchase from, and, as much as possible, keeping the fish in the community.

"Now we are able to offer local fishers fair trade for their products and then actually have it available to their neighbours and their families," said Francine. "Since the get-go, that was always our mission with the trading post. We want to sell anything wild, anything local and anything fair trade."

And Stó:lō Seafood Company is creating jobs too. The couple is looking for locals from Sts'ailes, Scowlitz, Harrison and other communities to come in and apply for work – no experience required.

The facility's grand opening coincides with the super-sockeye run that fishers have waited four years for. The run estimate for Fraser sockeye this year is between seven and 13 million fish depending on the impact of the warming ocean and in-river conditions.

ARTICLE SOURCE: <https://www.agassizharrisonobserver.com/news/sto-lo-couple-improving-access-to-local-fair-trade-fish/>

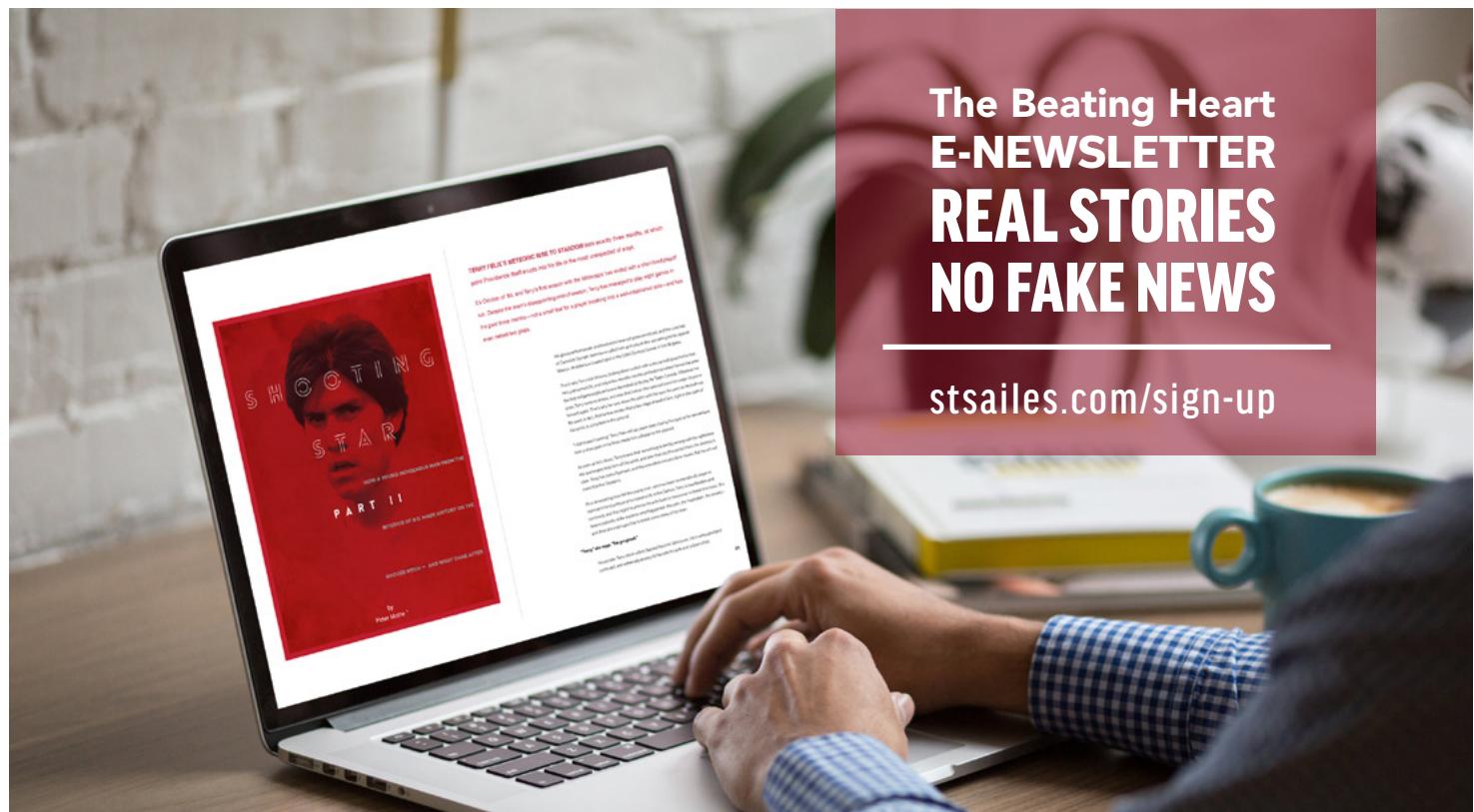
WE ARE LOOKING FOR YOUR SKILLS!

Sts'ailes Lhawathet Lalem is currently seeking local Artisans. Artisans would be named and listed as leaders of some of the workshops / skills we can offer to our clients. Groups would range anywhere from 30-150 people and each artisan would set their costs along with any other information. If you would like to offer your skillset to a wide range of people please contact me.

A list of types of skills groups are looking for:

- Weavers
- Language
- Drummers
- Medicines
- Drum making
- Art
- Canners
- Nature walks
- Story telling
- Other

Laura Wright, Sts'ailes Lhawathet Lalem Manager
t 604-796-9832 | e laura.wright@stsails.com



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Information Session - Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada

CRA – Benefits & Credits

- Benefits and Credits available
- Canada Child Benefit and Children's special allowances
- Disability Tax Credit & Child Disability Benefit
- GST/HST Credit
- Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)
- CRA forms and resources

Service Canada – Programs & Benefits

- Pension information for elders on Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan
- Get a Social Insurance Number (birth certificate in most cases will be required)
- Receive an access code to sign up for online My Service Canada/CRA accounts (ID will be required)
- Find out how to find benefits
- General Government of Canada information

Date:

Friday September 7, 2018 at 10:00am – 2:00pm

Location:

4691 Salish Way – Sts'ailes EAS Office
Agassiz, BC

Presented by: CRA & Service Canada

For more information please contact:
SASET at 604-858-3691 or
Email: info@saset.ca



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members to discuss our programs in further detail. I can also highlight the number of student supports we offer, as well as the potential for student transportation from areas within Agassiz, Chilliwack, Hope and Sts'ailes.

It's never too late to earn your grade 12, or to work towards your goals! I am currently scheduling routine community visits, let me know which date works best for you!

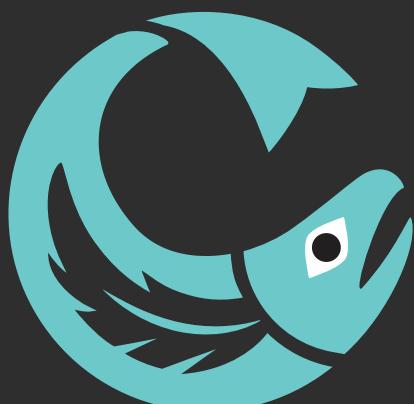
Thanks!

Shannon Chapman | Marketing & Outreach Coordinator | Seabird College

Email: schapman@seabirdisland.ca

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