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St'át'imc Government Services

August 2023 Newsletter



Geographic Information System (GIS)

Talicia has been busy this summer supporting the Heritage and Environment departments with their GIS needs on several projects. GIS support for the Heritage team has been focused on producing maps for BC Hydro projects, these maps have been used for notice of intents (NOIs) and project reports. Talicia has also been working on managing the Reservoir Archaeology Program (RAP) data and editing maps for reporting. She has been supporting the Environment team by producing maps, managing data, administering the Esri mapping applications, going on field trips, and attending meetings. Talicia attends meetings for three working groups:

LaJoie Technical Working Group, McKay Creek Fire Rehab Planning, and the Fraser River Bighorn Sheep WorkingGroup. She recently attended the Esri User Conference virtually to remain updated with the Esri applications that are used.

Cheyenne Watkinson

Introduction

Hello St'at'imc! My name is Cheyanne and I am excited to be joining the team as the Communications Specialist supporting the St'at'imc Chiefs Council (SCC). I have a diverse background of work experience and I have recently completed my Associate Certificate in Graphic Design at BCIT. I am passionate about networking, creativity, and finding new innovative ways to communicate to communities. In my free time (and depending on season), I enjoy hockey, golf, drawing, & biking. I am looking forward to contributing my skills and knowledge to the team and help the organization drive towards creating a bright future for the St'at'imc Nation. I cannot wait to meet more people and do not be afraid to say hi! Thank-you for your warm welcome.



Environment –

New Staff Updates

Chanvre Oleman Introduction and BC First Nations Forestry Conference

My name is Chanvre Oleman, I am the Wildlife and Lands Technician - Youth Hire for the summer of 2023. This is my third summer back with the Environment Department at St'át'imc Government Services (SGS). I am a student at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops for a Bachelor of Science Degree.

During my three summer work terms, I have learned how to grow my learning and experience in different fields of study in biology, environment, natural resources and how to apply my work experience here at SGS to my university education. One of the field skills I have learned at SGS is how to do environmental DNA (eDNA) testing on White Sturgeon, Coho, and Chinook. eDNA testing is a scientific tool used to detect which fish species, amphibians, and other aquatic species are present in an aquatic environment. eDNA can be captured, collected, and analyzed from water, snow, ice, sediment, soil, and even air. Another SGS Environment Project wherel was able to apply to my education is the McKay Creek Rehabilitation Planning.I learned how to evaluate pH in soils at burned areas and assisted with starting a project on Post-Wildfire Food Security, which will maintain traditional food at McKay Creek.



Image above is a picture of Chanvre with the CEO of the BC First Nations Forestry Council, Leonard Joe.



Image above is Denise Gallant with Chanvre. She is the Workforce Advisor at the BC First Nations Forestry Council.

On June 28 and 29, I attended the BC First Nations Forestry Conference at UBC. I was awarded the “Embracing Your Roots” for assisting in translation of common names to the St'át'imc names for important natural resources and receiving an acknowledgment in the Bridge-Seton Watershed Plan. The team of SGS Environment and Two Worlds Consulting have been working on this Report since spring 2021. In 2021, I remember when my manager, Ellen Reyes, worked on the Report and we had to bring boxes of files back and forth from her office to the C-can behind the SGS office. The boxes were filled with reports and videos of previous employees and Elders that were interviewed for their local knowledge of the St'át'imc Territory.

Lesley Riley Introduction

Kalhwá7álap nskwátsitsa.

Hello, my name is Lesley Riley, I come from the T'it'q'et First Nation community. I am a mother of two beautiful children, and I have a passion for protecting our Land and the Environment.

I am hired as the new Junior Wildlife and Lands Assistant for St'át'imc Government Services (SGS). I am excited to be working for SGS and being a part of the Environment team.

I recently completed my certificate in Natural Resources Technology at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. Other certificates and skills I have achieved are Resources Information Standards Committee (RISC) Certificate, Environmental Monitoring Certificate from the University of Northern BC, and Project Management Fundamentals Certificate from the University of BC.

My previous work experiences in Lillooet include working on the Strategic Forestry Initiative Project at P'eg'píg'lha Council as the Forestry and Trail Project Assistant, St'át'imc Eco-Resources as the Administrative Assistant/Field Technician, and Lillooet Tribal Council as the Cultural and Heritage Report Writer/Heritage Field Reconnaissance Crew Member.

kukwstum'ckálap, Thank you to all for this exciting opportunity and I look forward to building capacity and skills with the Environment team at St'át'imc Government Services.



SGS Environment Field Programs

July 6-7 Night Snorkel Surveying at Seton Portage

On the evening of July 6, members of the SGS Environment team (Ellen Reyes, Darwyn John, Chanvre Oleman and Nicole Morgenstern) participated in late night snorkel surveying alongside InStream Fisheries Research's (InStream) Biologists and a Fisheries Guardian from P'egp'íg'lha Council at Seton Portage. SGS Environment has been working with existing collaborations including DFO's Salmonid Enhancement Program (SEP) and the Portage Creek Chinook Working Group since spring 2021 to understand and implement management strategies for the endangered Portage Creek Chinook population. The snorkel surveys took place from

9:00 pm to 4:00 am and utilized dry suits, snorkeling gear, rulers, headlamps, and flashlights to detect the presence of Chinook juveniles and other fish species present in Portage Creek. The number and size of all fish species were recorded at each survey location and will be utilized in inform future phases of the recovery program.



SGS Environment plans on investing in snorkel gear and further training to allow for this type of study to eventually be conducted and led by SGS Environment and St'át'imc community technicians. The team will be heading out with InStream again in August to conduct creek habitat assessments, a second session of night snorkel surveys, and installation of PIT antennas and power system.

SGS Environment and InStream gratefully acknowledge the financial support from DFO's British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) to fund the Portage Creek Chinook Salmon Recovery Program.

July 12–14 Vegetation Growth Analysis at McKay Creek with Virginia Oeggleri from UBC's Indigenous Ecology Lab

From July 12 to 14, the SGS Environment team (Darwyn John, Chanvre Oleman, Nicole Morgenstern, Nina Andrascik, and Lesley Riley) joined Virginia Oeggleri who is a Master's student from UBC's Indigenous Ecology Lab. Virginia and the head of the lab, Dr. Jennifer Grenz are conducting a project titled “Vegetation Growth Trajectory Responses of Native and Invasive Plants Across Different Biogeo climatic Zones within the McKay Creek Wildfire Area”. Virginia has been working alongside a talented team including technicians from LRISS (Lillooet Regional Invasive Species Society).



The project has over 80 plots scattered across the McKay Wildfire zone at different elevations, Biogeo climatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) zones, and various burn severities. Some are known to have invasives and others had no prior invasives noted. Each plot is 3 meters by 3 meters square. Information gathered from each plot

includes plant species, vegetation coverage, presence/absence of invasives, soil quality, and forage analysis. Select plots have been “fenced in” using wooden posts and fish net. Virginia and her team have been re-visiting fenced plots to ensure no wildlife or birds have been negatively affected by the fishnets. A sign has been attached to fenced plots that provides information on the project and associated organizations.

SGS Environment would like to thank Virginia and her team for taking the time to show us their study methods and share knowledge on the McKay Creek wildfire. Our team is looking forward to the results of this study and gaining a better understanding of wildfire effects on vegetation and invasives in the area.



Salmon environmental DNA (eDNA)Sampling at Bridge and Yalakom Rivers

As of mid-June, the field program of the Chinook and Coho eDNA Project at Bridge and Yalakom Rivers, in collaboration with Xwísten, has drawn to a close. The next step is to discuss and analyze the eDNA results with Xwísten and create a final report.

It was a great opportunity for our team to see a project from start to end with phases that included planning meetings, project design and study locations, logistics, eDNA methods training, and completion of all eDNA field surveys. Our Summer Youth Technician, Chanvre Oleman, played a key role in the Yalakom River fry emergence eDNA field survey by assisting with the data collection, filtration, and data management.



Post-Wildfire Food Security Project

St’át’imc has observed an increased risk of wildfire, including the 2021 McKay Creek Wildfire. The fire burned an area of approximately 500 km2 north of Lillooet and was classified as “Out of Control” by the BC Wildfire Service. Wildfires alter the land and availability of traditional plants and culturally appropriate foods, which contribute to the physical, social, and spiritual health of the Nation. This Project will allow St’át’imc to better understand how traditional plant resources respond to wildfire impacts and then adapt to these changes.

The team of SGS Environment and GIS are establishing a baseline ecosystem composition, and identifying and assessing the health of traditional plants. A total of six sites within the same BEC zones will be surveyed: two sites will be the control areas of mature ecosystems that are not impacted by recent fire, two areas that have been recently burned, and the last two where burning took place approximately 15-20 years ago. The McKay Creek wildfire is the case study area that has been recently burned.

The interview guide and maps for the Project are complete. SGS are ready to conduct outreach with the northern St’át’imc communities and interview Knowledge Keepers and Elders on their qualitative understanding of traditional harvesting and land management practices. Interview transcripts will then be produced and used to inform survey methodologies for next year’s field season.

SGS gratefully acknowledge the financial support from the First Nations Health Authority’s Indigenous Climate Health Action Program (FNHA ICHAP) and the Real Estate Foundation of BC to fund the Post-Wildfire Food Security Project.

Capital Planning

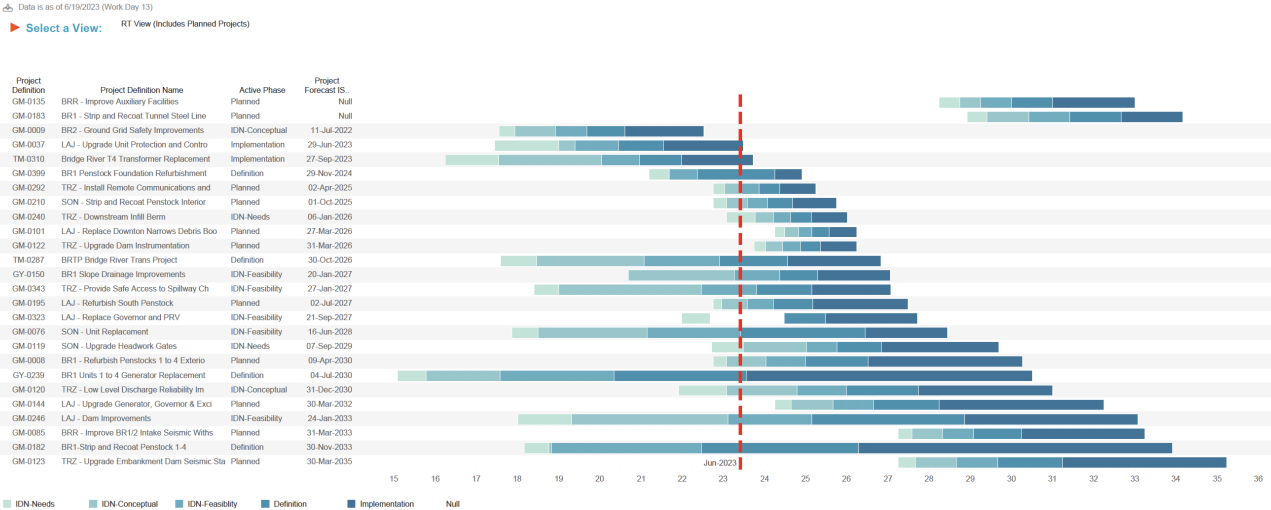
The Quarterly Capital Planning Meeting was held on July 20. The complete set of materials for the meeting can be found on the [SharePoint site](#).

Two significant projects, not subject to a first right of refusal, i.e., open to all St'át'imc businesses, were the focus of this meeting.

BC Hydro provided two significant information sheets about future opportunities (to be issued in January 2024) related to the Bridge River Transmission Line Project (B RTP). BC Hydro intends to provide St'át'imc businesses, along with their partners, the opportunity to do the access road clearing and construction and the opportunity to construct the line itself. The actual information sheets can be found on the [SharePoint site](#), or can be requested by contacting SGS – Sherry Kane (relationsmgr@statimcgs.org) or Al Boldt (cpm@statimcgs.org).

Below is a chart that shows both the BC Hydro active and planned major projects. The darker the line the closer the project is to completion. Although several projects are near completion, many more projects through 2036 are in the planning stages. This means many more opportunities for St'át'imc businesses for the next 10 or more years. To date over \$30 Million worth of opportunities have been awarded to St'át'imc businesses and their partners.

Bridge River Systems



Explore project related information at your own pace by accessing information on SharePoint.

Here is a small sample of what you can find on the [St'át'imc SharePoint Information Portal](#):

- Information related to the [Reservoir Archaeology Program](#) (RAP) and the [Seton Lake Erosion Management Plan](#) (SLEMP)
- [List of the BC Hydro projects](#) in St'át'imc Territory
- Copies of the [BC Hydro project opportunities](#) that have been provided to St'át'imc businesses
- Materials and notes on the [Quarterly Capital Planning Meetings](#)
- A [glossary of commonly used project and system terms](#)

The St'át'imc SharePoint Information Portal access now requires Multi-Factor Authentication – an instruction sheet has been sent out on how to set this up. The instructions also provide a way to contact tech support should you have a problem. If you did not receive the instructions, please call Sherry Kane at SGS (778.771.5903)



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