



P.O. Box 553
108 Mile Ranch, B.C. V0K 2Z0
tel: 250.706.1610
fax: 250.397.2769
email: grahamleslie@shaw.ca

Autumn 2024 Newsletter

So much has occurred since we published our Spring 2024 Newsletter in June, and we will try to cover all of it as succinctly as possible.

1. Our New Cultural Centre: Ckultenellcw

We finally secured our occupancy permit from the CRD in the first week of September and were able to hold a ceremony on September 6th to celebrate the event. All the details surrounding the ceremony are set out on our website at www.nsculturalsociety.ca. Our readers are invited to review that account.

As is normal with the construction of a major project like ours, there were a handful of deficiencies that needed to be dealt with, and all but one of them have now been corrected. The one that remains to be dealt with, is a significant one that is not likely to be corrected before the end of November. It involves the state of the cement floor that was treated with a finish that your Society directors considered to be unsatisfactory, and decided it needed to be corrected. The process for correcting it is quite complicated and laborious, and will be carried out in two stages. The first stage will not start until mid-November and will be run as an experiment in the storage area of the building. If the result is considered to be satisfactory, the same process will be carried out in the rest of the building, and we estimate that the entire job won't be completed much before Christmas.

Despite this disappointment, we remain truly excited about the fact that our five Northern Secwepemc Nations now possess a brand new, beautiful and functional cultural centre that is the realization of our 20-year dream.

2. Our Next Steps

Our immediate challenge is to hire a manager for the facility. He or she will be the only full-time employee of the Society and will need to possess a wide variety of talents and experience. We were reluctant to advertise for the position until we could be assured that the funding commitments we had earlier received from our member Secwepemc Nations, were turned into reality, and now that we have funding to cover the cost of the salary of the manager and the other costs of operating, we will post the opening in the very near future. The position will be open in the first instance to members of the Tsq'escenemc at Canim Lake, the SXFN at Dog Creek and Canoe Creek and the Esk'etemc at Alkali Lake. We hope to fill the position with one of their Band members, but if unable to do so, we plan to post the position at the Xat'sull and Williams Lake First Nations.



3. Additional Outside Funding

With the funding we obtained from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Northern Development Initiative Trust, we were able to retain David Jensen's renowned exhibit design consulting firm to create the 16 banners that were displayed in our building on September 6th. Those banners are provisional in the sense that they seek to tell the story of how we got to the stage we have reached, and to explain that there is much more yet to come when we have obtained more funding. The banners will need to be taken down and stored while the restoration of the cement floor is carried out but will be rehung as soon as that work has been completed – most hopefully before Christmas.

In the meantime, we are preparing two more applications for funding. The first is for a \$500,000 grant that would enable David Jensen's exhibit design team to continue working with the Society to create many more banners, telling the stories that have been suggested by the three communities of Tsq'escenemc, SXFN and Esk'etemc. Our belief is that at the culmination of that work, we will be able to open the facility to the public as well as to members of our Northern Secwepemc communities, and we would then feel comfortable charging an entrance fee to the public, knowing that we have something worthwhile to share with them.

The second funding application we are preparing is for \$40,000 which would finance specialized equipment for storing and displaying the many artifacts that have already been offered to the Society, and the others we expect to receive as time goes by. We are hopeful that some of the funding remaining from our construction budget will cover the cost of some display cases in the meantime.

4. Outdoor Signage

Thanks to the funding that we obtained from the federal government's Museums Assistance Program, which has financed the exhibit development project at Esk'et, and which had been earmarked for similar work at Xat'sull and at the Williams Lake First Nation, we have been able to cover the cost of our exhibit design consultants who are producing (1) an array of tall banners that will be erected inside the Centre, and are designed to provide an explanation to visitors of what we hope to display in the future, once additional funding has been secured, and (2) some exterior signage that will be erected along the pathway that will take visitors from the parking area at the BC Government Rest Area, and bring them to the building. Those signs will briefly describe the history of the pre-contact way of life of the Northern Secwepemc people and the impact that contact and the colonial influx had on that way of life and the centuries old culture. Visitors journeying through this landscape along this carefully designed pathway, will be led to the building where they will be able to experience the information and images contained on the tall banners.



5. Our 2024 Annual General Meeting

At the time of writing, our President Irene Gilbert had not yet set a date for our 2024 AGM, but this meeting must be held before the end of this calendar year and may take place in early December when the Society appears at the invitation of the CRD to make a presentation to its board of directors.



Notes to the Reader

1. If you would prefer not to receive future monthly Newsletters, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.
2. If you are not on our direct emailing list, but would like to be added to it, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.