

Breakout Session 3A: On the Land Programming

February 26, 2025

10:15-11:45am

Moderator: Ryan Daum—Manager of Economic Development, Tsawwassen First Nation

Speakers:

- Barb Joe— Chief, Champagne and Aishihik First Nation
- Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault — Director of Culture and Lands Protection, Tłıchǫ Government
- Kimberly Touchie— Yuułu?ı̨?ath Government

Chief Barb Joe:

- The Nation has been self-governing since 1995 under Land Claim and Self-Governing Agreements.
 - Two parks – one national and one provincial, lots of opportunities arise from these.
 - 1300 citizens spread widely – challenges to integrate them all in on-the-land (OTL) programming
 - Big focus on OTL programming as well as trips/experiences with cultural and spiritual elements.
 - Importance of community members and land guardians being on the land to establish presence and usage
- Several OTL and other programs
 - Specific to different times of year.
 - Relating specific programs, i.e. gopher camps, to specific culture and traditions
 - Hunting, trapping, fishing, etc.
 - Sometimes target those who are not in a position to receive this knowledge from their immediate family
 - Language immersion program – accredited program to create intermediate language speakers
 - You can't just learn in a classroom, you must be outside to know limitations and realities.
- Annual general assemblies held on the land wherever possible.
- Importance of place and oral history
 - Department overlap/turnover a big issue
 - Noted lack of coordination and priorities for OTL activities

- Land guardian program
 - Four-to-six citizens monitor things on the land, report back on sites.
- One issue: sometimes people don't like to go out to remote areas as previous generations did
 - Important to ensure that people are comfortable being off grid, etc.
 - There's a role for parents in this
 - Examples from other First Nations include Auntie-camps and Uncle-camps for those who didn't get these knowledges and skills from their parents

Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault:

- Language and culture are intertwined
- Everything that our government does is about preserving, protecting, and promoting land rights and connections for future collaborations.
 - Journeys of Our Ancestors
 - Targeting post-secondary institutions to teach skills
- Programming examples
 - Caribou Monitoring Program
 - Science (water monitoring, animal tracking)
 - 50/50 program for purchasing goods that enable being on the land
 - Many other departments within the government use some form of OTL programming
 - I.e. Department Of Health within Tłıchq Government recently heal a detox camp
 - Hide tanning
 - Essential good for survival
 - Done with a mix of modern and traditional tools and products
 - Important to care for tools before, during, and after the process
 - Out of respect for the hide, keep tools sharp and clean
- Importance of safety in all of this can't be understated – both modern and traditional understandings
- The people who taught us on the land were "our real professors"
- Ways of documenting traditional activities (e.g. filming), are important to preserving and sharing knowledge for future generations
- The Chief and other leaders model their leadership through hunting and other traditional activities

Kimberly Touchie:

- Presenting on the *Kakawīnminh* program

- Named for Killer Whales – matriarchal and multi-generational nature captured the intention with this programming
- After the “Men’s Warriors” Program was started, this program was started to fill a similar role for women
- Collaborative effort between staff multiple departments of the Nation’s government
 - Necessary for success to bring together multiple skillsets and areas of knowledge i.e. financial management, grant-writing and report writing, languages.
- Program has a significant family element and emphasizes multi-generational connections
 - Encouraging leadership and skills development
 - Includes traditional practices/skills such as speaking, dancing, singing
- It’s a colonial concept to learn “within four walls”
 - Try to include Elders and knowledge keepers as much as possible in the OTL programming and outside learning
- Examples of activities
 - Learning and singing women’s warrior song while camping
 - Medicinal plant walk
 - Collaborations with Men’s Warriors group
 - Salve making
 - soap making
 - Connecting and learning from Elders
 - Jarring fish
 - Making shawls
 - Bentwood Box making
 - Photography camp
 - Surfing
- Impact on youth
 - When given opportunity to learn from Elders in a fun and interesting way, they will take it and get so much out of it
- Warriors Program video
 - Trail making lessons – how to use the right materials and methods to make longer-lasting, safer trails
 - Enable Elders to safely access cabin and camp
 - Collaboration with Parks Canada
 - Archery
 - Fishing

- Chopping wood
- Getting youth to spend more time outside and form closer bonds
- Learning responsibility
- “Provide, protect, prepare”

Q&A:

- **Q:** Given the importance of the connection between the people and the land, what benefits have you seen to your community from the work you’re doing?
 - **A (Barb):** We’ve been self-governing from 30 years. As an observer who doesn’t collect data or anything like that, it keeps the culture going. You see youth doing things that my grandmother did, things that youth would have been doing 50-100 years ago. Although the setting and style of learning is slightly different, and the stories have evolved a bit, what they are learning and the benefits are so important.
 - **A (Tammy):** Connecting and building relationships between Elders and young people, stories and traditions wouldn’t be able to survive otherwise. So many within the community haven’t completed school, but have skills from being on the land. There’s a community member who has a problem with drinking but who was very enthusiastic to participate as a leader—and did so sober. So, programs like this are an outlet for people and a great way to keep people healthier. The benefit of these programs extend far beyond the participants into the rest of the community. Increasing connections between young people and elders has benefits both ways.
 - **A (Kimberly):** Programs increase our pride in our territory, by doing the same things that our ancestors did.
- **Q:** What is your advice to communities who want to get started with programs like this?
 - **A (Tammy):** You have to get started with what you have. You don’t always need money to do things. In my job as an educator, we were hosting new principals and administrators from Northern schools. We got the chance to work with them to develop programming related to culture and language with little-to-no funding. Everyone had some ideas, but in sharing with one another, everyone took away so many more ideas. Furthermore, Elders in my community have so much to give, and they want opportunities to share their knowledge. All you need is space and some tea and cookies, and you can create a positive space for people to share.
 - **A (Barb):** My nation created a vision statement in 1994 (a year before effective date) towards sharing culture, etc. From the Council’s perspective, we just have to put the resources forward and organize, and the community—especially the Elders—will use their skills and abilities to make it happen.