



2024

ACTION PLAN

LYACKSON FIRST NATION

**Thuythut tseep kwus syaays
tse', nilh 'uw 'un sulhween'ulup
tun'a 'iin' sul'uthutulup. Hekw
tthun sul'e'luhw.**

Be ready for the upcoming work you will do; what you are doing now follows the teachings of your Ancestors. Remember your ancestors.



Laxele'wuts'aat, Shana Thomas, Hereditary Chief
Brena Robinson, Councillor
Rachel Flowers, Councillor
Shayli Robinson, Councillor



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INTRODUCTION

Au Siem Leey'qsun Mustimuhw,

We are very pleased to share this Leadership Action Plan with you. The Leey'qsun Leadership has been so energized by the signing of our Incremental Treaty Agreement with BC and Cowichan Tribes, which will see the re-establishment of our Leey'qsun Village site on Vancouver Island become a reality!

This has been a long-fought effort for our People. Leaders of Leey'qsun, going back to the first Land Commission hearings, are evidence of our Leadership fighting for the return of our Land to our People.

We raise our hands to all our Leaders who have gone before us for this work. We thank all former Council members, particularly N'us TThoma, Jennifer Jones; and Tul qwe muwlt, Frank Conibear, who were long-serving Leaders at our table, for their dedication.

We raise our hands to Grand Chief Pahalicktun, Richard Thomas, for his unrelenting dedication. He consistently raised this issue at every meeting he attended, never stopping during his 31+ years of service. Words cannot express how much we appreciate his advocacy, dedication, diligence, and commitment to ensuring Leey'qsun Mustimuhw secured land on Vancouver Island.

While Lyackson is involved in many projects and initiatives, this Action Plan is focused specifically on the "Now What?" There are many things we must do to prepare ourselves for the re-establishment of our Village Site. This action plan focuses on ensuring we are proactive and ready.

We look forward to your participation, engagement, and project results that will flow from this hard work.

Huy tseep qu Siem,



Laxele'wuts'aat
Shana Thomas
Hereditary Chief



Brena Robinson
Elected
Council Member



Rachel Flowers
Elected
Council Member



Shayli Robinson
Elected
Council Member



Lyackson Leadership

Laxele'wuts'aat, Shana Thomas, Hereditary Chief.

Shana's Grandfather is the late hereditary Chief, Thee-o-letza, Clifford Thomas from Lyackson; her Grandmother is the late Joyce Moody from Squamish Nation; her great grandfather was George Moody, hereditary Chief, Squamish Nation, and her Great Grandmother was Mary Albany of Songhees First Nation. She has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science (2001) and a Master's Degree in Indigenous Governance (2008), both from the University of Victoria. As a student, Shana was selected as the representative for the Native Student Union and elected to the UVic Student Society Board of Directors. She was the Chairperson of the Aboriginal Student's Caucus of the BC Federation of Students.



Shana served eight years as an elected Council member for the Lyackson First Nation (2002-14). She was elected by the Coast Salish Chiefs of Vancouver Island as the Coast Salish representative to the First Nations Health Council (2010-12) and, as such, was part of the negotiating team that transferred the Pacific Region Health Canada to the creation of the First Nations Health Authority. She was elected by the Chiefs of the First Nations Summit as Treaty Commissioner to the BC Treaty Commission (2009-11), where she facilitated tripartite treaty negotiations between First Nations, Canada and BC. Shana worked for the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (2001-07) as Communications Director, then Senior Negotiations Support. She worked with Chief Judith Sayers as a Negotiator for Hupacasath First Nation (2007-09). Shana was retained as a Sessional Instructor, teaching First Nations issues at Vancouver Island University, the University of Victoria and Camosun College (2008-15).

Shana started consulting in 2009, and as a consultant, she has had the privilege of working with various First Nations and First Nations Organizations from across BC and Canada. Some of Shana's Clients have included the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Ktunaxa, Tseshaht First Nation, Songhees First Nation, First Nations

Health Authority VI Region, Kuu-us Crisis Society, Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS), Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Pacheedaht First Nation, Carrier Sekani Family Services, and many others.

Most recently, working with Halalt and Lyackson First Nations, Shana negotiated the return of two economic parcels of land for Halalt valued at 1.2 million and negotiated an Incremental Treaty Agreement with BC and Cowichan Tribes for the re-establishment of a Lyackson Village site on Vancouver Island. She was the Lyackson representative of the historic Quw'utsun Nation (QN) and BC Government-to-Government Agreement Implementation Board. She was also the Governance Technical Representative to the Indigenous Management Board, a collaboration of Coast Salish Communities on VI to re-establish their authority in the Marine Areas and breathe life into implementing UNDRIP.

Shana is a mother of two and a grandmother of three. She is in the final year of the Doctorate of Social Science Degree Program at Royal Roads University. Her research interests include Indigenous Law Revitalization, Nation Rebuilding, Self-Government and Accountability Structures, Indigenous Rights, Reconciliation Frameworks, and Conflict Resolution.

Brena Robinson, Elected Councillor

Brena Robinson's grandparents are Thee-o-letza, Qwalthi'lum, Clifford Thomas, from Lyackson and Joyce Moody Thomas from Squamish. Through her grandmothers, she is connected to the Songhees Nation (Albany Family) and Cowichan Tribes (Louie Family).

In 2002, she started working at Hul'q'umi'num Treaty Group as the Communications Liaison Officer for Lyackson. Through this work, she went door-to-door to all our Members' homes to deliver the monthly newsletters. She was honoured to be invited into our Members' homes for tea or coffee. She learned about the concerns and challenges our Members faced. In addition, she attended the monthly meetings for the Elders of Lyackson, Halalt, and Lake Cowichan and the monthly Elders Meeting for all the Hul'q'umi'num Nations. At these meetings, they discussed our history and shared stories about our territory, and they very firmly directed Robert Morales to get it all back. *"We want all our land, water, sky, below the earth back, and everything on, below, and above; We want everything back; lock, stock, and barrel!"* The Elders were strict but humorous and loved pulling pranks on unsuspecting communications liaison officers. Brena shared this because she often reflects on our Elders, many of whom have passed, and she thinks about what they would say to her. They were part of the driving force behind her return to school; our Elders always said that education was the #1 priority.



She has a bachelor's degree in business administration, specializing in accounting, and diplomas in Indigenous business leadership, business management, finance, and various certificates. She started working at the CRA in 2013 and has had several

promotions since then. She is currently working on a special assignment as a Senior Project Coordinator. Through her work, she helps to create an innovative way for the Government of Canada and BC First Nations to work together to reach their shared goals and overcome their shared barriers through the spirit of reconciliation.

Brena is serving her 4th term as an elected Councillor for Lyackson First Nation and has been on Council since 2017. She went from being the youngest and least experienced Council member to the oldest with the most experience in 2022. She has high expectations of Lyackson, not only from our Leadership and staff but also from our Membership. She believes we all have a responsibility to Lyackson: to ensure the future is healthy, strong, and vibrant, not only for us but, more importantly, for those yet to come. We need to do it in a way that honours our ancestors and makes them proud of us.

She is grateful for the support of her sta'lus, Barry, and five children (Shayli, Eliza, Salisha, Bracia, and Blaze) who continue to inspire and motivate her. I *raise my hands* to my mom, aunties, uncles, cousins, and our Membership. Huy' tseep q'u siiem.

Rachel Flowers, Elected Councillor



'uy skweyul si'em nu sii'ye'yu. Rachel's grandfather was Clifford Thomas, and her grandmother was Joyce Moody. She is married to Kody Doxtater (Mohawk), with whom she has a son, Elijah, and a daughter, Clementine.

She is a PhD candidate in Law at UVic. Her dissertation (*Tl'uts'maat: Woven Close Together. Witnessing the Relationship Between Law and Art*) examines the juris generative role of women's labour in Coast Salish law and the connections between our legal orders and art. Her master's thesis (*Xwnuts'aluwum: T'aat'ka' Kin Relations and the Apocryphal Slave*) examines the political consequences of ethnographic representations of Coast Salish peoples in relation to war and slavery. Rachel has also published (*Refusal to Forgive: Indigenous Women's Love and Rage*) in the *Decolonization* journal.

Rachel studies Hul'q'umi'num' in her free time and has travelled all over Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw territories to celebrate and participate in our culture and ceremonies. Her children, community, and identity as a hwulmuhw slheni inspire her to achieve.

Shayli Robinson, Elected Councillor

Hailing from the Thomas family of T'eet'qe', Shayli Robinson is a proud hwulmuhw slheni serving her first term as a Councillor for the Leey'qsun mustimuhw and comes from a lineage of hard-working Coast Salish people: her mother is Brena Robinson (Lyackson), her grandmother is Laurie Dales (born Thomas, Lyackson), her great-grandmother was Joyce Moody (Squamish), and her great-grandfather was Clifford Thomas (Lyackson). Through her grandparents, she also has familial connections to the Songhees Nation (Albany family) and Cowichan Tribes (Louie family).

Shayli has lived on Lək'wəŋən territories her whole life and currently works as the Executive Coordinator for the Songhees Development Corporation. She graduated high school with a double dogwood in French Immersion and studied Indigenous Studies and Political Science at Camosun College. Shayli previously served as both an Executive Assistant and Policy Assistant for the Songhees Nation; Constituency Assistant to the Hon. Minister Carole James, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill and BC Minister of Finance; Cultural Programming Facilitator in the *Our Living Languages* gallery at the Royal BC Museum; and was in the 10th cohort of the BC Public Service Agency's Indigenous Youth Internship Program. Shayli is grateful for her time in these roles, gaining invaluable insight, knowledge, and skills to help with her lifelong goal of serving her community in moving forward.

Shayli has been an active member of Lyackson First Nation since childhood, as her mother always emphasized the importance of community involvement. She is honoured to serve her Nation and its Members as a Councillor. Her passions lie in Indigenous governance and nationhood, language revitalization, and performance art; she is also a doting auntie to many nieces, nephews, and fur babies—Au siiem.



History of Lyackson

Before the introduction of the reserve system on Valdes Island, there were three permanent settlements on Valdes Island: T'eet'qe' (T'a'at'ka7), Tth'exul (Th'a'xel) and Tth'hwumqsun (Th'xweksen). These villages have an important relationship to another village, T'eet'qe', located on an island at the confluence of the Koksilah and Cowichan Rivers.



T'eet'qe' was the largest village on Valdes Island and, in the mid-nineteenth century, hosted the second-largest population of Coast Salish people in the Gulf Islands, estimated at up to 650, and is today part of Lyackson IR 4. Tth'exul is located at Cardale Point, on the island's southwest side, and was not set aside as reserve land, being privately owned today. The late Lyackson Elder Agnes Thorne was born on Valdes Island and spent her childhood at Tth'exul, where her father was born. She recalled that there was a considerable affinity between Tth'exul and T'eet'qe'; however, they retained their identity as distinct villages with distinct names.

Tth'hwumqsun (Th'xwemksen) is located near Cayetano Point on the south end of Valdes Island and is part of Lyackson IR 5 today. In the 1980s, the late Agnes Thorne estimated that in the previous century, there may have been five long houses at the point, which housed between 100 and 150 people on a full-time basis. However, by 1915, only two or three houses still stood at this smaller winter village site, as most people had moved to Shingle Point or other locations off-island. Tom Peters, a Lyackson elder who grew up on the southern end of Valdes Island, remembered five families and seven modern-style houses in the area.

As shared in: Leaving Valdes, Staying Lyackson: Voices of the Indigenous Community of Valdes Island

Lyackson Creation Story

Franz Boas' ethnographic work in island Hul'q'umi'num' communities provides one of the earliest recordings of the Lyackson oral tradition, the origin story of Valdes Island. The story was originally published in German in 1895, then translated and republished by Bouchard and Kennedy in 2002.

A long, long time ago, Sqoē'te used to be a tree standing upright whose top reached up to the sky. Down this tree, the people descended from the sky, as did deer with white backs, black legs, and antlers, which bent forward and covered the sides of their faces. When the people had arrived on earth, they pondered how they could bring down the tree. So, two men called for the rats and told them to gnaw through the tree. When the rats had gnawed for twenty days, they had almost reached the middle of the tree. The two men then told them to start from the opposite side, and here, too, the rats gnawed a deep hole. While the rats were gnawing, the people sang in order to keep their spirits up. The people were glad that the tree would fall soon and sang, 'Oh, let it fall and not break. Many deer will live on the trunk, and we will build our houses on it.' When the rats had finished their task, they ran out of the tree, and it fell over. But the top broke off and formed Ā'wik-sen Island. Many deer then lived on the islands.





The Vision of Lyackson

We aim to be a healthy, self-sufficient, and visionary Nation that honours the aspirations of our ancestors and mustimuhw today in ways that are rooted in our culture and traditions for future generations.

Mission Statement

With one heart and one mind, Leey'qsun Nation is committed to achieving our vision by uplifting our snuw'uy'ulh and cultural practices while implementing innovative programming, projects, and initiatives for the Leey'qsun mustimuhw.

Value Statement

Thuythut tseep kwus syaays tse', nilh 'uw 'un sulhween'ulup tun'a 'iin' sul'uthutulup. Hekw tthun sul'e'luhw.

Be ready for the upcoming work you will do; what you are doing now follows the teachings of your Ancestors. Remember your Ancestors.

Our Principles

The Leadership affirmed the four fundamental **snuw'uy'ulh** teachings that will guide Lyackson's governance:

1. **Ts'its'uwatul**: taking care of one another.
2. **'Uy shkwaluwun**: doing things with a good heart, good mind, good spirit.
3. **Lal'um'uthut**: be cautious, take care, looking after oneself.
4. **Nuts'a'maat**: to work together, to work as one.



Action Plan Overview

The Lyackson First Nation's Chief and Council developed this Action Plan during their October 4-5th, 2024, "Leadership Priorities and Strategic Planning" session. The plan focuses on advancing governance, lands and resources, and the economic and cultural well-being of Lyackson Members in preparation for the reestablishment of our Village site on Vancouver Island.

This Action Plan has four themes:

1. Getting Our House in Order
2. Getting Ready for Business
3. Protecting and Reinforcing our Language, Culture, and Traditions
4. Advocacy

Success will be measured by focusing on People, Purpose, and Performance. This approach ensures ownership, scheduling, and implementation by Lyackson Leadership and its Members.

A strong culture driven by a shared purpose (mission, vision, values, and strategy) is essential. Effective internal relationships — between the Chief and Council, Members, and staff — are crucial, as are external relationships, to support Lyackson's future vision.

A culture of mutual trust, effective communication, and respect for diverse roles fosters inclusivity and dynamism. This environment empowers individuals, values diverse contributions, and directly addresses performance challenges.

High-performing First Nation governments operate as "one team," eliminating the "us vs. them" mentality. This Action Plan reflects Lyackson's commitment to authentic strategic leadership, enabling the Chief, Director of Operations, and staff to implement strategic goals, and manage risk effectively.

1. Getting Our House in Order

Several vital Actions must be accomplished to prepare Lyackson for effective governance as a First Nation that supports its Members. These Actions will establish guidelines and processes that pave the way for economic and social success. *These Actions can be performed simultaneously, and the order does not dictate priority.*

ACTION 1

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION LAW (FAL)

A FAL is a set of governance and finance practices that help Leadership and staff make informed decisions and run Lyackson well. A Nation that lives by its FAL, commits to good governance and finance practices over the long term.

Task(s)

- Continue with community engagement
- Establish an Advisory Committee
- Complete the Governance Policy

Lead

Chief

Communication Process

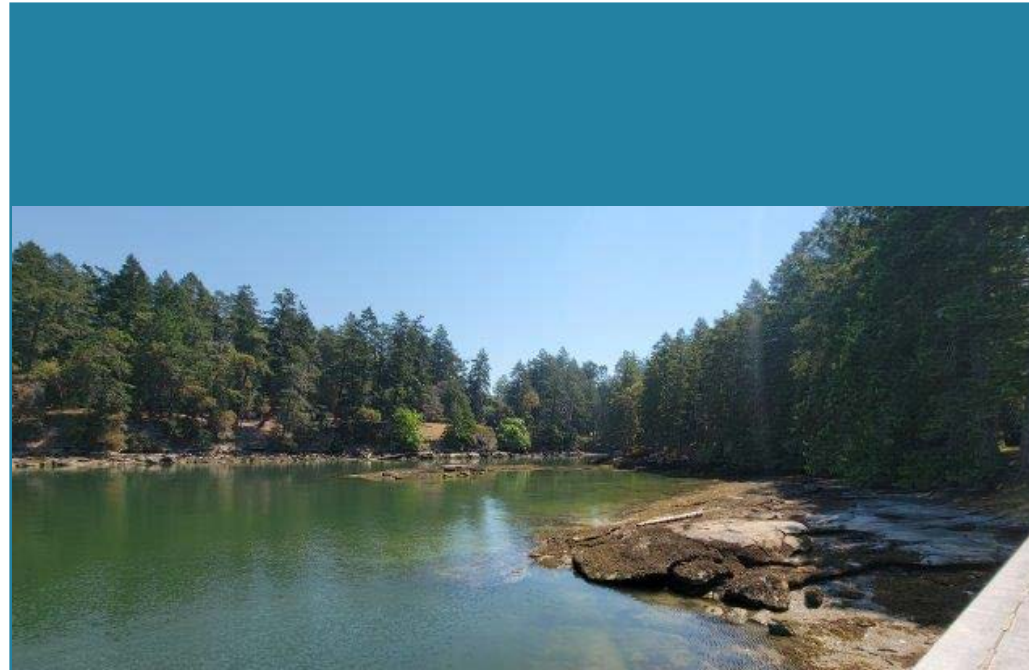
- Community engagement schedule
- Referendum package for Members

Capacity Needed

- Advisory Committee
- Referendum process capacity
- Consultant to review law and policies

Timeframe

December 2025 for referendum and adoption



ACTION 2

HUMAN RESOURCE POLICY

An HR policy is a set of rules designed to organize Lyackson's human resources management. It covers all human resources-related areas, including work organization, recruitment, compensation, training, leave, dismissal, etc.

Task(s)

Review and rewrite the current Human Resource Policy to ensure it meets the requirements for FAL certification

Lead

Director of Operations (DoO)

Communication Process

Chief is the link to the Leadership table

Capacity Needed

- Secure funding for policy review and rewrite by HR consultant
- Hire HR West Consulting

Timeframe

Ready to adopt by February 2025 Leadership Planning Session

ACTION 3

LAND CODE DEVELOPMENT OF LYACKSON LANDS

As a signatory of the *First Nations Land Management Act*, the next step is to draft the Land Code, with the members, which, once approved by our community, becomes the fundamental land laws of Lyackson. When it comes into effect, approximately 44 sections of the *Indian Act* no longer apply, and Canada is no longer involved in the decision-making of Lyackson's land and resources.

Task(s)

- To continue with community engagement
- Complete Land Code

Lead

Chief

Communication Process

- Community engagement schedule
- Land Code package for Members

Capacity Needed

- Hire consultant
- Advisory Committee/Champions Table

Timeframe

Determine with ISC where LFN is in the queue for review



ACTION 4

MEMBERSHIP CODE

Section 10 allows First Nations to control their band membership by creating membership rules/codes. These rules/codes must be approved by the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations of Canada. The Indian Registrar maintains Section 11 band membership lists. We were custom, under section 10 but now ISC says we are Section 11.

Task(s)

- The next step is Legal Advice
- Secure consultant

Lead

Chief

Communication Process

Draft ready for community review

Capacity Needed

- Follow up with ISC regarding funding and s.11 VS s.10 Indian Act Band
- Hire consultant

Timeframe

Draft for the community by March 31, 2025

ACTION 5

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING (CCP)

Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP) is a process through which Lyackson can plan its development to meet its community's holistic goals, targets, and visions. The CCP is also known to the community as the Community Vision Plan (CVP).

Task(s)

- Complete the CCP
- Establish Champions Table

Lead
Chief

Communication Process

- DoO the reporting link
- Councillor Shayli to be the link to the Leadership table

Capacity Needed

- Hire a CCP consultant
- Secure funding for CCP Steps 2 and 3

Timeframe

Previous CCP (March 2025), Final CCP (March 2026)



ACTION 6

360 DEGREE ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

If Lyackson (Membership and staff) can understand what happened in the past, clearly visualize what is happening in the present, and understand what the future will likely hold, Lyackson will be in a prime position to leverage our capacity and knowledge to govern effectively.

Task(s)

- Organizational review of
 - Staff
 - Boards
 - Committees

Lead

Chief and Council

Communication Process

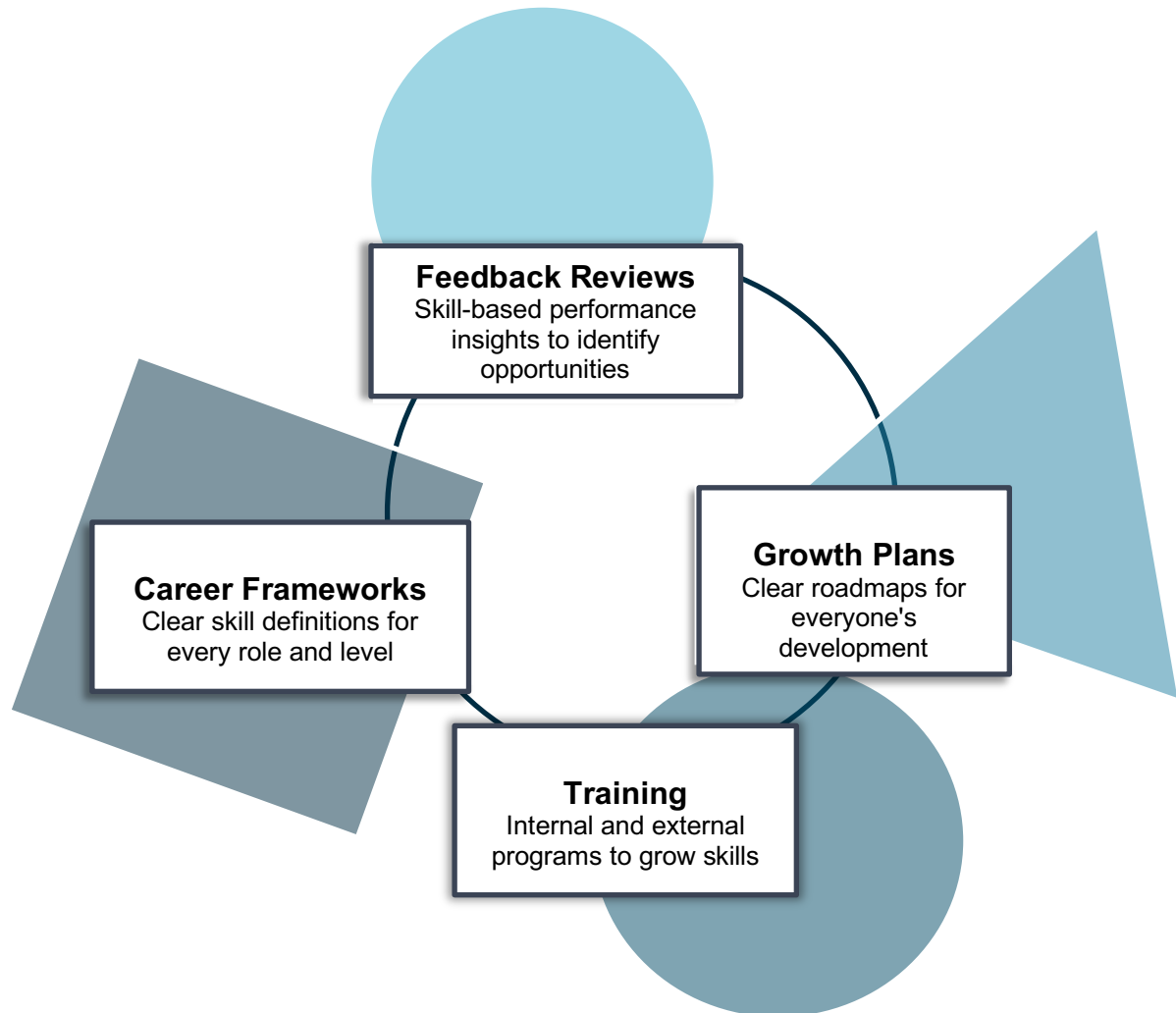
- Develop internal communications
- Develop survey

Capacity Needed

- Locate funding
- Hire consultant

Timeframe

June 2025 Report: “This is the State of LFN”



ACTION 7

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

The communication mediums and related tools that Lyackson will use to communicate in a consistent manner internally (Membership, staff) and externally (organizations, government, stakeholders).

Task(s)

- Revamp the website and social media, and develop process with the member App to ensure congruency between all applications
- Develop internal templates for Leadership (e.g. Meeting agendas, itineraries, briefing notes)
- Develop external templates for the community (e.g. Notices, events, agenda)
- Develop a records management system

Lead

- Chief
- Director of Operations

Communication Process

- Develop protocols and templates for staff to post on social media applications
- Chief to bring to Leadership

Capacity Needed

- Locate funding to hire a Media Consultant from the closed bid requests
- Develop protocols and templates for staff use
- Ensure all staff and leadership are provided with the training to locate documents

Timeframe

October 31, 2025

2. Getting Ready for Business

ACTION 1

ESTABLISHING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The primary goals of the Lyackson Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) are establishing an organizational vision for economic development, wealth creation, self-sufficiency, job creation, and diversification for Lyackson and its Members.

Task(s)

- Incorporate Lyackson Economic Development Corporation
- Set up a corporate office
- Map economic opportunities and projects

Lead

- Chief and Council
- Chief Executive Officer (to be hired)

Communication Process

- Seek input from Members, staff, stakeholders
- Inform Members, stakeholders
- Develop a survey, host community meetings

Capacity Needed

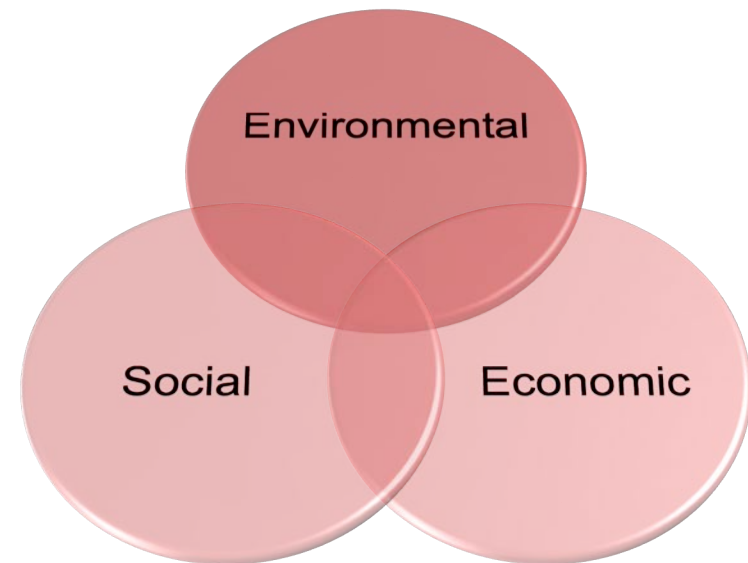
- Legal Support for EDC incorporation and development of LFN and EDC relationship protocol
- CEO and staff
- Develop a strategic plan that includes an organizational needs analysis, inventory member businesses, and Identify the training needs of Members to fill capacity gaps

Timeframe

June 2025 – Incorporate EDC

March 2026 – Corporate office set-up

June 2026 – Map economic opportunities



3. Protecting and Reinforcing Our Culture, Language, and Traditions

A prosperous Lyackson community would thrive by embracing our culture, utilizing our language, and implementing our traditions as integral aspects of daily life. The leadership of Lyackson is tasked with ensuring that the development of these initiatives is secure and beneficial for all Members.

ACTION 1

SNUW'UY'ULH GOVERNANCE PROJECT

LFN's codification of our Oral History, traditional teachings, and laws.

Task(s)

Develop a workplan for reinvigorating our traditional laws

Lead

Chief

Communication Process

Seek input /Indigenous Traditional Knowledge from the community, broader Quw'utsun Nation community, staff, and Leadership

Capacity Needed

Dr. Sarah Morales, UVIC Indigenous Law
Indigenous Law Research Unit

Timeframe

June 2026

ACTION 2

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Leadership encourages the development of culture and language programming for youth, families, and Elders to continue learning our language and traditions.

Task(s)

- Perform a department 360 analysis – identify gaps
 - Weaving Classes
 - Traditional Medicines
 - Language Classes
 - Drumming and Singing
 - Hunting and Fishing
 - Genealogy

Lead

- Rachel
- Director of Operations

Communication Process

Advocate for Members to participate

Capacity Needed

- Develop a work plan
- Inventory member resources
- Secure culture and language funding

Timeframe

December 2024



4. Advocacy

Leadership effectiveness is demonstrated by achieving specific goals, meeting targets, and delivering tangible results. To achieve this, Lyackson's leadership will actively advocate for Members with external stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the Action Plan. This advocacy is a key component of our transformational leadership approach

The following chart outlines Lyackson Leadership's external advocacy efforts, identifying the Chief is the key individual responsible for relationship development and specific initiatives. This advocacy is crucial for achieving tangible outcomes for the community.



Success Indicators

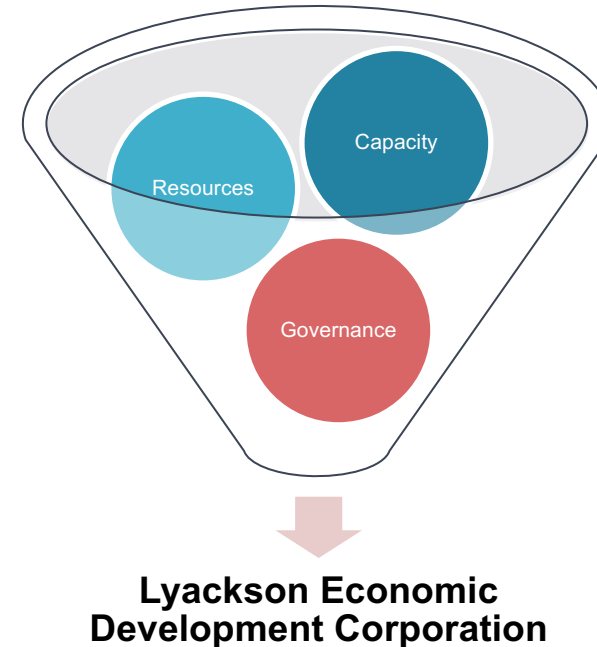
1. Our House is in Order

Lyackson Leadership has completed all the requirements to ensure the effective, efficient, and accountable governance of the Lyackson First Nation to ensure Members' needs are met.



2. We are Ready for Business

Lyackson's Economic Development Corporation has completed its **governance** structure, and its Members have accepted its relationship with Lyackson Leadership. The corporation has also identified how it will sustainably utilize its **resources** to become prosperous and secure the staffing **capacity** required to run it.

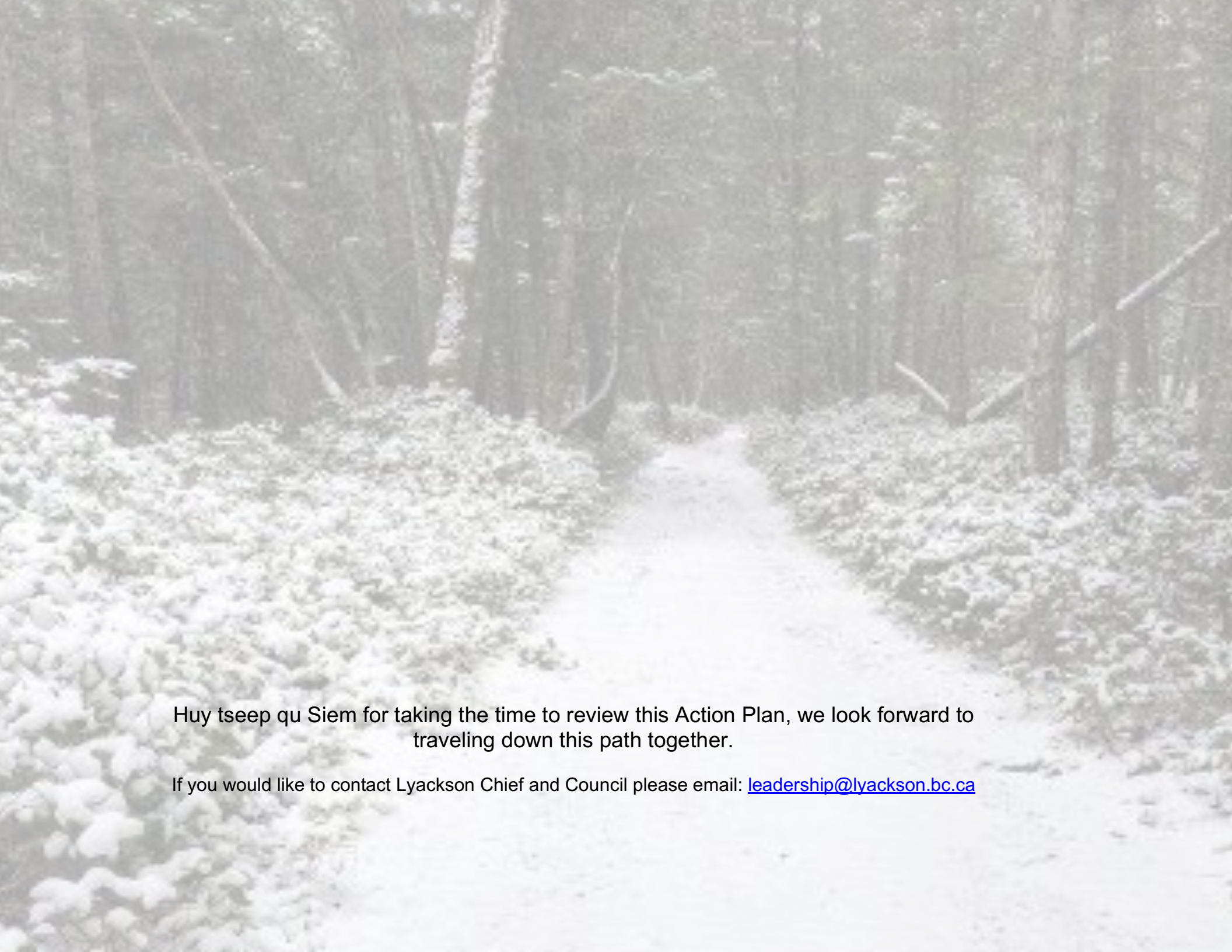


3. We are Protecting and Reinforcing our Culture, Language, and Traditions.

We have ensured our Members:

- Were involved in deciding what our **community desires**
- Are introduced to **Weaving Classes**
- Learned about our **Traditional Medicines**
- Are supported with **Language Classes**
- Are involved in **Drumming and Singing** in our work and life
- **Hunting and Fishing** opportunities are supported
- Are involved in mapping our **Genealogy**





Huy tseep qu Siem for taking the time to review this Action Plan, we look forward to traveling down this path together.

If you would like to contact Lyackson Chief and Council please email: leadership@lyackson.bc.ca