

# Nexwagwez?an

“There for us”



**DASIQOX**  
TRIBAL PARK

# Reconciliation & Respectful Engagement

- Canada and British Columbia have committed to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action & United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- They have asked First Nations to step forward with suggestions to support, our communities are responding with this initiative
- Respectful engagement:
  - Listen without interrupting, staying open to new ideas & perspectives
  - Speak with respect for other's experiences
  - Engage in dialogue, not debate – the goal is shared learning



# What is Dasiqox Tribal Park?

- About 300,000 ha of spectacular & culturally-significant wildlife habitat, lands & waters in the shared caretaker areas of the Xeni Gwet'in and Yunesit'in in Tsilhqot'in territory
- A vision for the management & governance of this area that reflects the vision & values of our people
  - Includes healthy lands & waters, Indigenous cultural revitalization, and sustainable local economy
- A framework for making sustainable land use decisions in Xeni and Yunesit'in territory, which supports established constitutional rights



# What is a Tribal Park?

- Indigenous-led conserved & protected areas that prioritize clean waters and healthy lands, people and wildlife, where Aboriginal rights to trap, hunt, fish, harvest can be exercised
- Different from conventional provincial/national “parks”
  - Not about “preservation” of an ideal or static landscape
  - Is about protecting the core relationships between people and the land so that both stay healthy into the future.
  - Includes sustainable use of the land – as determined by Indigenous communities



# What is a Tribal Park?

- Recognized internationally (IUCN, Australian examples); federally supported initiatives in Canada (IPCAs), relatively new model but building on over 30 years of precedents in BC
- Other Tribal Parks in BC:
  - 1981: Duu Guusd Tribal Park – Haida Nation (eventually became a conservancy)
  - 1984: Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Park - Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations
  - 2011: K'ih tsaa?dze Tribal Park - Doig River First Nations

Tofino Mayor Josie Osbourne: “I’m mayor of the only municipality located in a tribal park across Canada, and I’m very proud of that.”



# Shared Values

- Clean water
- Healthy fish (freshwater and salmon) and wildlife
- Community health and well-being
  - Cultural revitalization: show language camps, culture camps, healthy youth pursuits, gatherings, etc.
- Healthy, sustainable food and resources (i.e. Aboriginal rights)
- Sustainable, local economy for the long term
  - 300 years, rather than 30
- Coordinated management framework
  - Uphold free, prior & informed consent and reduce uncertainty



# Why did we establish Dasiqox Tribal Park?

- Tsîlhqot'in have a long history of caring for the land – including exercising responsibility for keeping it healthy, as they have done for thousands of years
- Indigenous people have been excluded from their right to exercise responsibility and authority through land use decisions affecting their territories for generations
- Our people have a right and a responsibility to be actively involved in any decisions about how our territory is managed, as affirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)



# Why did we establish Dasiqox Tribal Park?

- Proactive step towards our desired future, asserting what has been the case all along: ecosystem health, cultural vitality, and a sustainable regional economy are all interdependent.
- Emerged from the clear priority to protect vital headwaters of a Fraser River tributary, its freshwater fish and endangered salmon runs
- Based on elder's teaching that you have to look after the land, then it looks after you, we decided to name our own vision for our lands and people:  
**Nexwagwez?an ('there for us')**





# Where is Dasiqox Tribal Park?

- About 125 km southwest of Williams Lake, BC
- Lies outside our Declared Title Area but within the area where our rights were recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada
- Joins up a number of existing Provincial parks and protected areas, promotes habitat connectivity



# Who is in charge of the Dasiqox Tribal Park?



- Collaboratively led and governed by two Tsilhqot'in communities: Xeni Gwet'in First Nation & Yunesit'in First Nation
- The initiative's Steering Committee is made up of Xeni Gwet'in and Yunesit'in Chief & Councils
- Support from Tsilhqot'in National Government

# Who works for the Dasiqox Tribal Park?

- Staff coordinator position, currently based out of Williams Lake
- Administrative support provided by the Dasiqox Tribal Park Initiative (DTPI), a project on the Tides Canada shared platform.
- Technical and research expertise hired as necessary for work determined by the Steering Committee
- As the initiative evolves, the goal is to continue creating more jobs, especially in the communities



# Where are we at in the planning process?

**2014:** Announced intention to create Dasiqox Tribal Park

**2015:** Commissioned strategy report, established action areas

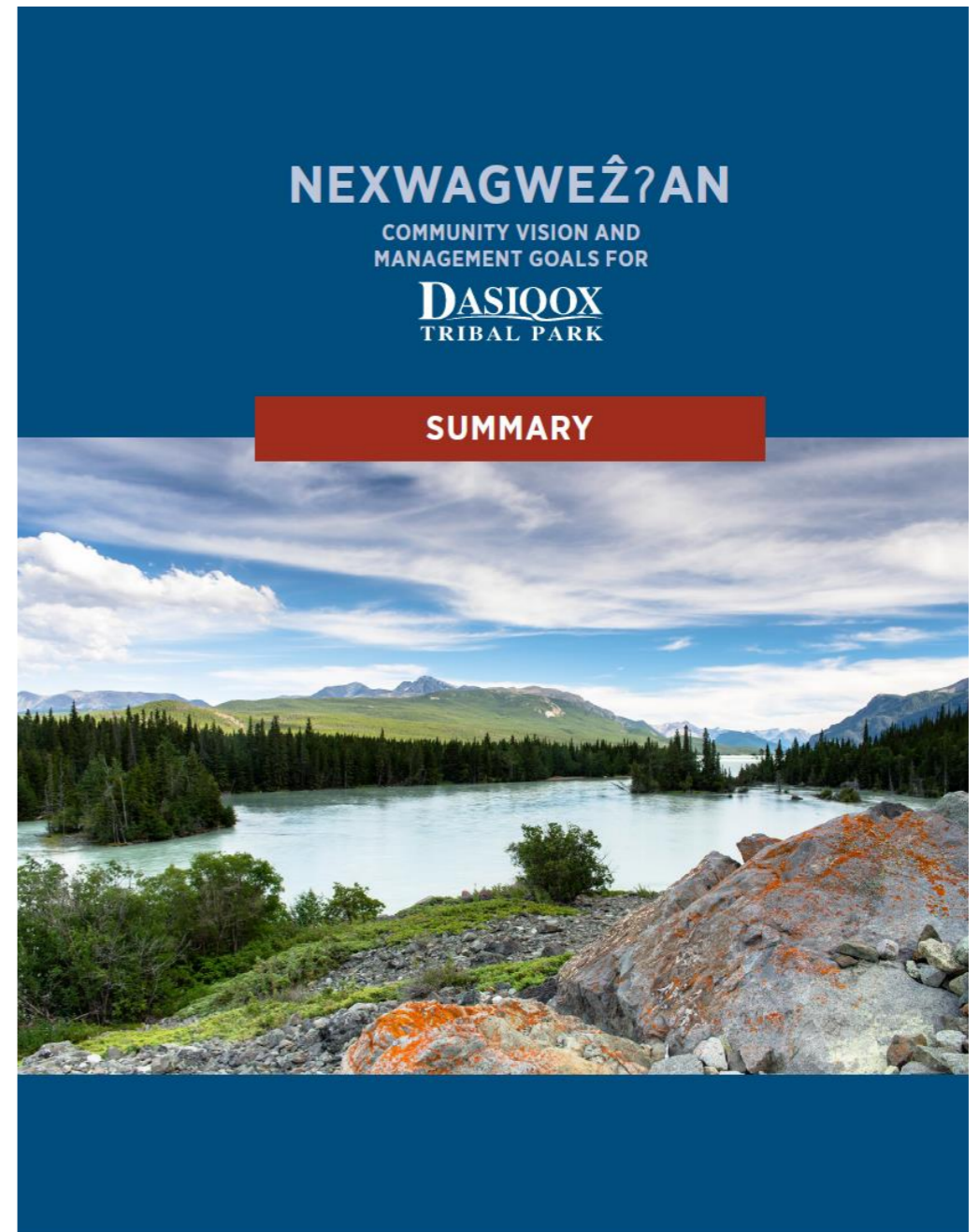
**2016-2017:** Conducted interviews, focus groups with 70+ community members

**2018:** Released community vision & management goals; public outreach; working on interim protection measures

**2019 & beyond:** Developing policy and operational procedures; developing & implementing management plan

# Community Vision & Management Goals

- Based on in-depth research methods for community engagement; interviews, focus groups, community meetings, and verification with 70+ community members
- Consultation and opportunities for community input are ongoing
- Represent the vision, principles and goals named by community members
- Seeking feedback on summary version



# Community Vision Statement

**With the Dasiqox Tribal Park, the Tsilhqot'in people assert our responsibility and our right to protect this place.**

**Where the waters, land, forests, animals, and people are full of life, thriving, healthy, and strong in our relationships with each other.**

**We are part of the land; the land is part of us.**

**We take care of each other.**

**Our spirits are joined with this place, through time.**

**The Dasiqox Tribal Park is the heart of a strong Tsilhqot'in culture.**

**It is a place where we hunt, fish, learn, teach, and share while spending time out of the land respectfully, a place where we feel happy and healthy.**

**It is there for us, it is there for future generations.**

**Nexwagwez'an.**

# Key Principles: Fundamentals of Nexwagwez?an



## Principles

1. Everything is Interconnected
2. Water is Life
3. Respect
4. Healing, Health, Well-being
5. Honouring Spirit
6. Caretaking
7. Thriving Culture
8. Sharing Knowledge

# Management Goals

**The vision & principles are reflected in the three main pillars of the Tribal Park:**

- Ecosystem protection
- Cultural revitalization and healing
- An economy for sustainable livelihoods





# Ecosystem Protection & Stewardship

- Land is managed in a way that protects and maintains healthy ecosystems for future generations
- Ts̓ilhqot'in knowledge and cultural practices related to land stewardship is maintained and revitalized.
- Lost and degraded ecosystems are restored



# Ecosystem Protection & Stewardship

## Past & current work:

- Inventory of Wildlife, Ecological, and Landscape Connectivity Values, Tsilhqot'in Cultural Heritage Values, & Resource Conflicts in the Dasiqox-Taseko Watershed (McCrary, Smith & William, 2014)
- Ecosystem-based management planning (Herb Hammond, 2015)
- Cumulative effects pilot project (ongoing)
- Ecological restoration projects (in development)
- Guardianship/climate monitoring program (in development)



# Cultural Revitalization & Healing

- Hunting, fishing, and harvesting plants and animals follows Tsilhqot'in laws – harvesting pressure is reduced to restore wildlife populations
- Dasiqox Tribal Park is a place where Tsilhqot'in communities cultivate an ongoing culture of teaching and learning from each other and from the land
- Cultural practices and ceremonies for healing are revitalized and held



# Cultural Revitalization & Healing

## Past & current work:

- Culture camps, healing camps, elder/youth gatherings, pack trips (ongoing)
- Language programming (ongoing)
- Revitalizing Tsilhqot'in law to support Tribal Park development (ongoing)
- Guardianship program (in development)



# Economy for Sustainable Livelihoods

- Not a traditional “park” – building a sustainable local economy based in healthy relationships with lands and resources is a high priority
- Dasiqox Tribal Park is not subject to industrial-scale resource use or extraction
- Opportunities are created for cultural and ecological tourism, outdoor recreation, value-added forestry initiatives and land monitoring programs



# Economy for Sustainable Livelihoods

## Past & current work:

- Yunesit'in 5-year Economic Development Plan & Xeni Gwet'in Vision for Sustainable Development
- Aquaculture program (2015-ongoing)
- Research on sustainable forestry models (ongoing)
- Forest-to-Frame – milling local logs for housing products (Ecotrust Canada, ongoing)
- Ecological restoration (in development)
- Payment for ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration (in development)



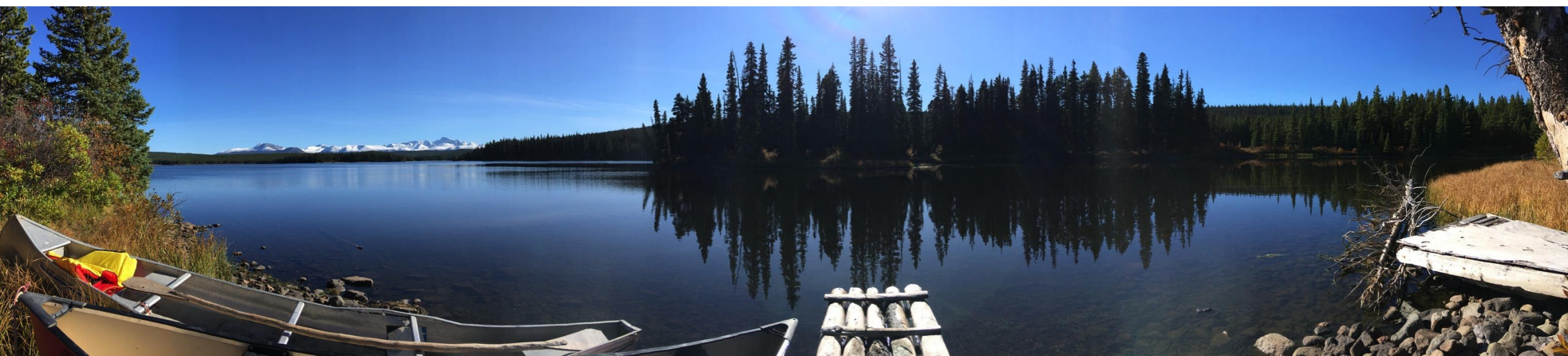
# Economy for Sustainable Livelihoods

- Planning for a sustainable economy will be part of the Tribal Park - but what is being presented today is not an economic plan
- Livelihoods includes all the ways people use and live off the land, even those that don't generate \$ - such as hunting, fishing, foods, clean air and water, and constitutionally protected Aboriginal rights



# Current activities

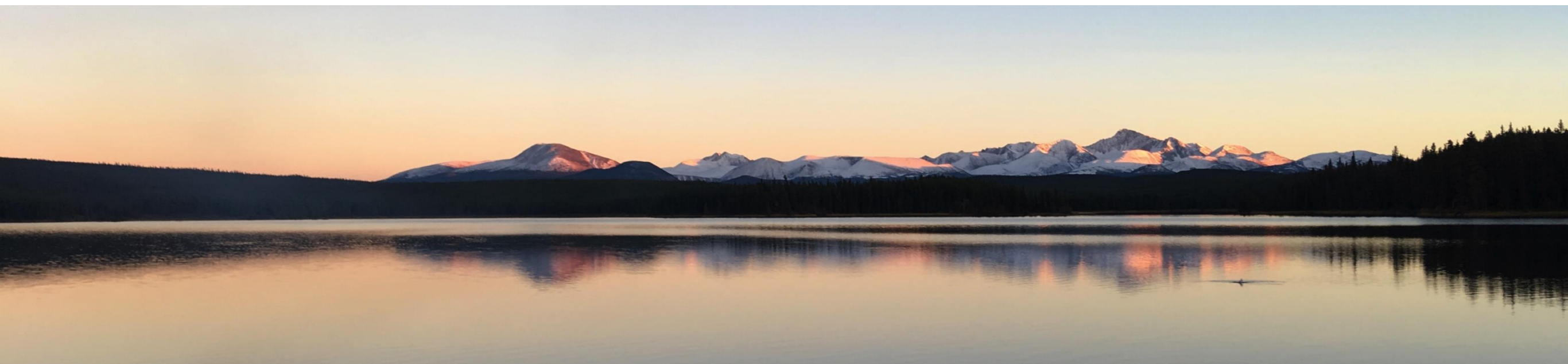
- Outreach & engagement on the Community Vision & Management Goals
- Capacity-building and local economic development
- Management planning and work to answer operational considerations
- Research for evidence-based decision making
- Cultural and community-building activities on the land
- Research/development of sustainable forestry and restoration models, esp. in era of wildfires and climate change





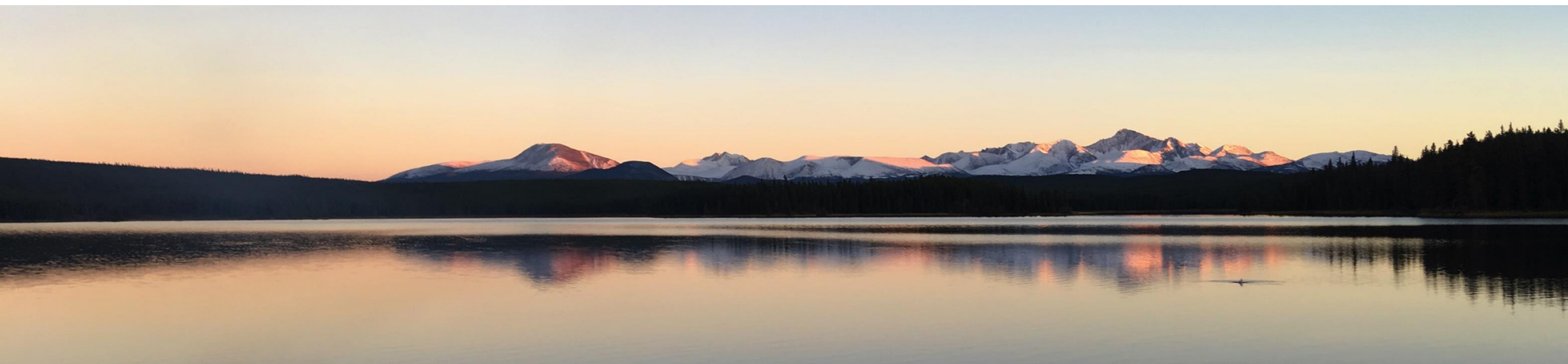
# Looking forward...

- Dasiqox Tribal Park is a new, ground-breaking opportunity for the reconciliation of Tsilhqot'in and non-Indigenous values and relationships
- Dasiqox gives British Columbia a potential new way forward where Indigenous values and laws are part of decisions about the land



# Looking forward...

- We are working to define, both for the Ts̓ilhqot'in and the broader community, our proposed management plan and economic development activities for the area
- Developing a management approach through community engagement, for an Indigenous protected area in a region where there is no existing model, takes time
- Yunesit'in and Xeni Gwet'in are currently seeking feedback from the public on the community vision and management goals until the end of September 2018



# People and Place



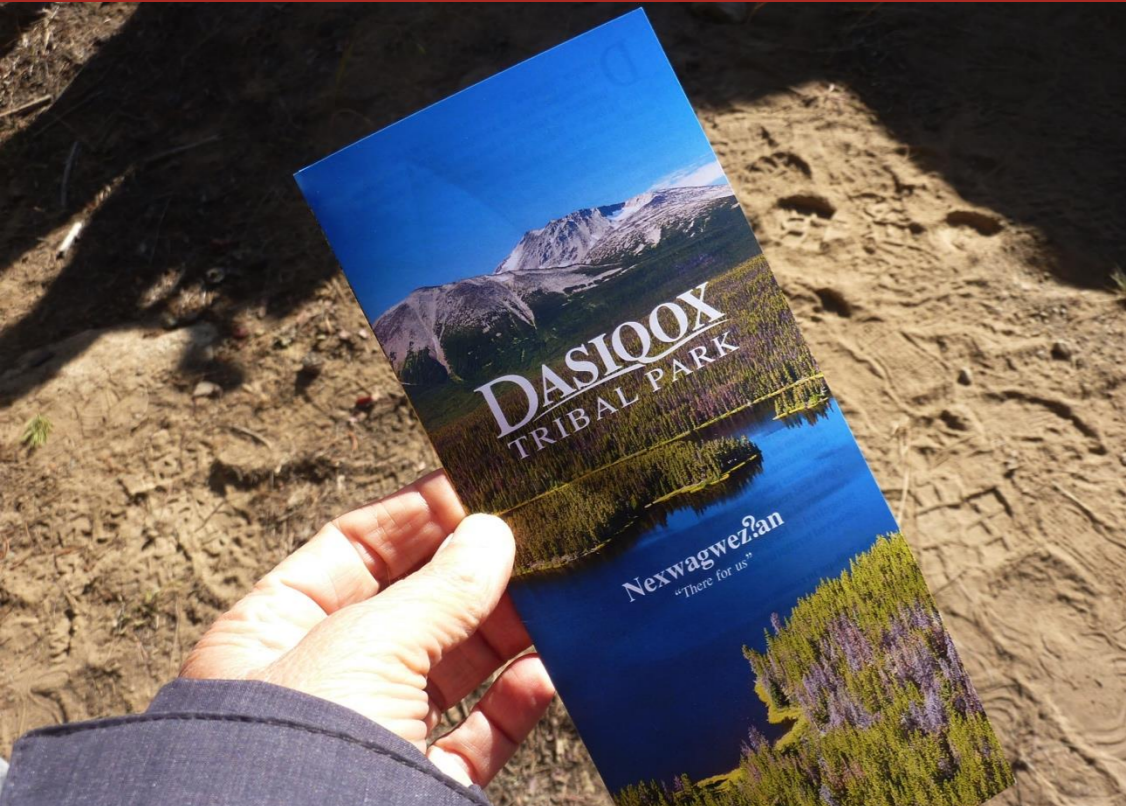
# People and Place



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# Thank you & questions



Reminder: respectful engagement  
in the spirit of reconciliation