

As the summer season heats up, the number of drownings and accidents on the water increases. According to the Life Saving Society of Canada, the majority of people who drown have no intention of going in the water. This summer, refresh your knowledge with some basic facts on drowning, and simple safety tips and practices that could save lives. For the statistics below, we referenced Statistics Canada, the Life Saving Society, the Canadian Pediatric Society, the British Columbia Coroners Office, the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program database, and the Canadian Vital Statistics Death database.

## Drownings in Canada

- Drowning is the third leading cause of accidental death worldwide, preceded by unintentional poisoning, such as drug overdose, and motor vehicle accidents
- More than 450 people drown in Canada each year
- Between 2015 and 2020, there have been 1,768 drownings in Canada and nearly half of all cases happened in lakes or ponds in the same period
- Water-related deaths are most likely to happen between May and September, with nearly two-thirds happening during a recreational activity
- Nearly 80% of drowning victims are men
- Children aged nine or younger make up nearly 80% of drowning-related visits to hospital emergency departments

## Swimming

The Canadian Pediatric Society says that a lack of supervision is the greatest risk factor for drowning in children under the age of five. It recommends swimming lessons for all children over four, and advises that confident swimming does not replace adult supervision. As well:

- In drownings of children, 97% of cases happen due to absent or distracted supervision
- A child can drown in as little as one inch of water
- Across all age groups, one-third of drownings happen when people are alone
- Between 2016 and 2020, 1% of drownings were in a setting supervised by a lifeguard



## Boating and water sports

Whether on land or water, drug and alcohol-impaired driving is unsafe and illegal.

- 60% of boating incidents resulting in death involve alcohol
- Nearly 30% of water-related deaths of youth and adults involve alcohol
- Across all age groups, more than 80% of fatal drownings happen while people are not wearing a life jacket or Personal Floatation Device (PFD)
- According to Canadian regulations for small vessels, every boat in Canada, including kayaks and canoes, must have one Canadian-approved PFD per person on board
- Boaters with improper or inaccessible life jackets or safety equipment can be fined upwards of \$200
- Life jackets provide insulation and heat, and help avoid cold water shock and hypothermia, which can happen in water temperatures of 21 degrees Celsius or colder



## Water Safety Quick Tips

- Never swim alone; always bring a buddy
- Don't overestimate your swimming abilities
- Be aware of currents and strong waters
- Never dive headfirst into a body of water
- With children, don't rely on water wings, swim rings, and other inflatable toys to replace adult supervision
- Children should be kept within an adult's sight and reach at all times when in and around bodies of water
- Wear a lifejacket while boating or doing water sports
- Always have a spotter in the boat when towing someone during water sports
- If you have a pool, secure it with appropriate barriers to prevent unsupervised access to the water
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Learn to swim - it's never too late

# Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation Skawahlook



## A message from Chief Maureen Chapman Shxwetélmel-elhót

Happy Summer!

I am looking forward to the year ahead and I hope that everyone had a great Christmas and winter season.



The highlight of the year will be the celebrations in August. Our community is in a very good position to welcome the new Chief and Council as a lot of thought and work has gone into the transition. I will be available to respond and assist, whenever called upon, but I am also looking forward to the time to explore new adventures and spend more time with my son, grandsons and great-granddaughter. It has been 26 years of learning new things, meeting many leaders and community members along the way and cherishing the memories from the children and families I have had the honour to meet and spend time with.

I wish everyone well and I look forward to hearing about your successes as the years progress. Thank you for your support, dedication, and commitment to the success of our community and holding the standard very high in how we conduct ourselves. Each of you is a representative of Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation and I am pleased that there is so much pride shown in who we are as a First Nation and pride in being responsible, caring and accountable to the vision of our community.

Creator's blessings, guidance and protection to all of you in the future. It has been my great honour to have served as your leader and I am looking forward to participating as a member in the years ahead.

## CONTACTS

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CIRNAC- Crown Indigenous Relations and  
Northern Affairs Canada  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/crown-indigenous-relations-northern-affairs.html>  
ISC - Indigenous Services Canada  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada.html>  
or 1-800-567-9604

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Grand Chief,  
Hereditary Chief  
and Councillor  
Ceremonies -  
August 1, 2025**

**Annual Gathering  
August 2, 2025**





## A message from Councillor Debra Schneider Tá:leyelhot

Hello Family,

Summer is here. This is my last write up for the newsletter as part of the Council. I am going to make this short and sweet. It has been an honour to represent Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation as part of the Council.

I wish the new Chief and Council all the best for our future. I know you will excel in whatever you do.

When you receive this newsletter, I will be close to being officially retired from my obligations as Council. I retired a few years ago from Lands Manager.

I have already settled into the retirement mode, and I am enjoying it immensely. Enjoy your summer, and I look forward to seeing everyone at our Community Gatherings.

God Bless you all!

Debra (Tá:leyelhot)



# Syéxw Chó:leqw Adventure Park



Since its creation almost seven years ago, Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation has regularly expanded and added attractive new elements to the Syéxw Chó:leqw Adventure Park (SCAP).

For 2025, this included the addition of a 3-storey tree house and a new pump track.

The tree house was built with funding from several grants and has been on our wish list for awhile. It was designed as an attraction for children approximately 8 years and up and has features that are a little more challenging than those on the playground. This includes a variety of ladders and steps for climbing as well as several slides. The tree house also incorporates natural themes. Although it looks like it is made from wood, it is actually a molded plastic that will last for decades with only a little gentle upkeep.

The pump track expands on our biking trails and is a new feature built totally in and from the natural surroundings. It can be used by people of all skill levels as it is built fairly low but also provides a nice challenge with a fast, circular track with mogul-type features.

As well, we have now added a permanent counter to the park. This will give us an accurate count of visitors and also provides an hourly breakdown of people entering the park. This information is important to show whether the park is a growing attraction and also helps when we are creating funding proposals as we can prove the park's popularity.

In the first 3 weeks after the counter began providing information, the park was averaging approximately 70 visitors a day.



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## A message from Councillor Jenn Carman Sáyémtelót

As we move into the heart of summer, I'm truly looking forward to our upcoming family gathering. These events are always a special time to reconnect, celebrate, and enjoy being together as a community. I hope everyone is able to attend, it won't be the same without you.

This year's gathering is especially meaningful as we prepare to honour Chief Chapman and fellow Council Member Schneider. Their years of dedication and service have left a lasting impact on our Nation, and I look forward to showing our deep gratitude for all they've done.

At the same time, we are entering a new chapter with Sharron stepping into the role of Chief. I'm excited about the future under her leadership, and the era of change and renewal that this transition brings. There is great energy ahead, and I look forward to working together as we continue building a strong, vibrant path forward for our people.

Wishing everyone a safe and joyful summer. See you at the gathering!



# SKFN Staff News



## Introducing Jennifer Macdonald Managing Director

My name is Jennifer Macdonald and I am honoured to be the new Managing Director at Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation, taking over for Sharron once she becomes Chief in August. I have been working at Sq'ewá:lxw since mid-March, getting to know the staff, community members, and the work being done.



My role at Sq'ewá:lxw will include overseeing the staff, project management, and working with members to address their priorities and needs. It is an exciting time to be part of all the developments at Sq'ewá:lxw and I look forward to getting to know the members as we move forward with our work.

In my role at Sq'ewá:lxw, I will oversee the daily work of staff both inside and outside the administration building and respond to questions, comments and needs of the membership.

I am a longtime resident in Coast Salish territory, growing up in and receiving my education in Abbotsford and later moving to Chilliwack where I worked for many years in Infant and Child Development and then on projects including Indigenous Historical Impacts training, and overdose prevention and opioid addiction. I currently live in Rosedale where I enjoy hiking, gardening, cooking, reading and having a fire in the yard. I spend much of my spare time with family in Green Lake, near 70 Mile House, where we enjoy water and winter activities depending on the season.

I consider myself blessed each day to live in such a beautiful environment and often think about how important it is to look after what is here for future generations.

I can be reached at 604 796-9129 or by email at Jennifer@skawahlook.com



## Introducing Baby Ophelia

Environmental Cultural Coordinator (ECC) Trena Point and ECC Assistant, William Baker are overjoyed to welcome their beautiful baby girl. We are pleased to announce the arrival of Ophelia, born on April 8th at 7:22 PM, weighing 9 lbs 10 oz.

Staff are also pleased to share in their joy and send warm congratulations to their growing family.

## Memorial Bench

This spring, Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation added several new benches on Skawahlook IR#1. Two were installed at the cemetery while a 3rd, in honour of Brett Chapman, was placed in front of his fish hut on the road leading to Grace Estates.

SKFN was pleased to work with the family to match the bench colours with the fish hut and to honour Brett in the place he most enjoyed. We hope community members will take a moment to visit and reflect on their memories of our much-missed member.



CLASS  
2025

**Graduation**

*Congratulations!*

Congratulations to Jordan Ammerman on his Graduation from University.

Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation is proud to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Jordan, who graduated on June 14th from Central Washington University. Jordan earned not one, but two Bachelor of Arts degrees - one in Secondary Education and the other in History Education with a minor in Theater.

Jordan's dedication, hard work, and commitment to his education are truly inspiring. These accomplishments reflect his passion for learning and teaching and we are confident that he will make a meaningful impact in the lives of future students.

Oh behalf of the entire community, Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation, congratulations Jordan, on this incredible milestone. We are proud of you and excited to see where your journey takes you next!



## Welcome Sq'ewá:lxw's Newest Member

Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation is pleased to present our newest member. Please help us welcome Naomi Martin. Glenn Martin and his spouse, D'arcy Bowker welcomed little Naomi on March 27, 2025, at 1:29 am, weighing in at 8 lbs. and 13 oz. Congratulations on your adorable bundle of joy, Glenn and D'arcy!!



## Bead-A-Thon

On June 21, 2025, in celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day, the Ruby Creek Art Gallery proudly hosted a First Nation Bead-a-thon at the Sq'ewá:lxw Community Hall. The event featured eight talented beadworkers who showcased their stunning works of art and generously offered lessons to anyone interested in learning the craft.

In addition to hands-on learning, a Beader's Marketplace was set up for visitors to purchase beautiful beadwork and browse a variety of items from the Ruby Creek Art Gallery. The Hall saw a steady stream of guests throughout the day, creating a warm and engaging atmosphere.

It was a wonderful event, filled with creativity, culture, and community. We are grateful to all who participated and attended—and we're already looking forward to expanding the event next year!



## Forestry Gate

Due to ongoing issues with people misusing Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation (SKFN) traditional territory, last fall Sq'ewá:lxw installed a gate to prevent unimpeded access to the Garnet Forest Side Road.

This move is part of SKFN's longer-term strategy of reaching what is known as a Reconciliation Agreement with the BC government. A Reconciliation Agreement would give SKFN control over certain aspects of its territory and services with the opportunity for the First Nation to capitalize financially. In SKFN's case, we are seeking:

- authority to oversee the use of the traditional lands;
- to have guardians on the land to monitor any work and land/water remediation; and,
- to offset the costs and to benefit SKFN and its members through financial agreements when resources (e.g. timber or minerals) are being extracted.

Under current provincial policy, First Nations tend to receive nothing or very little while corporations and the government makes millions (if not billions) from resource activities on unceded traditional territories.



## Grace Estates Tenants Meeting



On April 8, 2025, Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation hosted the residents of Grace Estates for a first-ever meeting of the administration and the non-members living on Reserve lands.

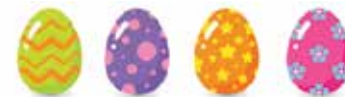
Approximately 1/2 the residents attended the meeting. We conducted the session in a culturally appropriate way: by setting the table for our visitors and ensuring they were treated with respect and kindness.

During this session, we discussed issues including taxation, land use, administration responsibilities, emergency management and fire safety, etc. We talked about respecting and protecting the land and explained why some areas (specifically Brett's fishing spot and the cemetery) were off-limits to non-members.

We hope this will set the tone for a positive relationship going forward as SKFN is responsible for ensuring the safety of all people living on its Reserve lands.



## First Annual Easter Egg Hunt



On April 19, 2025, Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation, with the assistance of the Easter Bunny, held its first ever Easter Egg Hunt at the Syéxw Chó:leqw Adventure Park.

More than 150 children and their caregivers took part in 4 different sessions, giving staff time to reset the eggs between each session. Every child received a gift bag regardless of how many eggs they collected. Special 'golden' eggs were also placed in the park and additional prizes were provided to the kids who found them.

Members Deano and Wendy Chapman were on hand with their Pappa Dog hot dog cart to help feed those attending.

We look forward to hosting this event next year and will use lessons learned this year to make it an even bigger event.



## Carving - Welcome Figures

Welcome Figures at Stó:lō Service Agency



Sq'ewá:lxw First Nation has been adding cultural components to the administration building over the past several years, and 2025 will see a new project underway in July and August.

George Price, who carved our Totem Pole during the summer of 2023, will be back for another 2 months as he carves Welcome Figures for the administration building.

George was extremely popular with visitors during the Totem Pole carving and his works are regularly featured at the Ruby Creek Art Gallery.

As well, this summer, we will be mounting the canoe that was carved last summer by Stan Greene. That will be placed near the gazebo and the totem pole in the parking area.



Canoe at Sq'ewá:lxw, carved by Stan Greene



## Tiny Home Available to Members

Have You Considered Moving to Sq'ewá:lxw?

We aim to provide a relaxing getaway in our cozy, 528 sq. ft. tiny home, nestled in our community. While close to town, the location offers a peaceful and private retreat.

This is your opportunity to see what it is like to "live" at Ruby Creek. Here is an opportunity to have your own experience.

During your stay, we encourage you to visit the Syéxw Chó:leqw Adventure Park, nearby lakes, rivers, and trails, where you can enjoy hiking, swimming, paddleboarding, or simply relaxing by the water.

- Our two-bedroom tiny home offers a cozy and unique experience, with space to sleep up to 6 people.
- The outdoor space includes a covered porch, ample parking, and a beautiful view of the local mountains.
- We have provided basic amenities, including coffee and tea, for your convenience. You also have full access to our washer and dryer for any laundry needs. The kitchen is equipped with cookware, utensils, and appliances. Our home also has high-speed internet access.
- Available on a first-come first-serve basis.
- Book the space a minimum of 48 hours in advance.
- Stays are a minimum of 3 nights.
- Maximum stay is 10 days.
- If using on the weekend, the keys must be picked up by 5:00 pm Thursday or alternate arrangements must be made in advance. Sq'ewá:lxw staff are not on-site Friday to Sunday.
- For higher demand times (such as the Annual Gathering), we will take names of those wishing to use the home and use a random draw method to determine occupancy.
- A \$500 damage deposit is required (by credit card or cheque). Costs for repairing any damage will be deducted from the deposit.
- Check out time is 12:00 pm.
- Please note that well-behaved pets are welcome but must be kept on a leash when outdoors.

