



TŜILHQOT'IN NIDLIN



RECLAIMING FAMILY AND CHILDREN JURISDICTION

NEWSLETTER #3 | NOVEMBER 2023

Taking Back Tsilhqot'in Family Jurisdiction

Since time immemorial, the Tsilhqot'in have raised healthy and thriving children and youth grounded in Tsilhqot'in cultural practices, values, approaches, and knowledge. The Tsilhqot'in Nation has always asserted an inherent right to self-government that includes jurisdiction over our families and children.

In September 2020, the Nitis'il ?in-Qi (Council and Chiefs) and the Tsilhqot'in Ts'iqi Dechen Jedilhtan (Women's Council) supported efforts to begin making plans and figuring out how we can take back control of children and family services.

In 2021, Chiefs approved the Tsilhqot'in Transition Strategy to Reclaiming Jurisdiction for Children and Families by Tribal Council Resolution. In January, 2022, the Tsilhqot'in Council of Chiefs passed a resolution reinforcing that communities will collaborate to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services as an Indigenous Governing Body (IGB).

Our jurisdiction work was formalized under the title: "Tsilhqot'in Nidlin" translated to, "we are Tsilhqot'in" to encompass past, present, and future generations.

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Efforts to take back control of children and family services will include:

- 1. Creating a T̄silhqot̄'in Law:** T̄silhqot̄'in ʔEsqax sutsel jenyax (T̄silhqot̄'in children growing up in a good way) that follows existing T̄silhqot̄'in laws and values.
- 2. Developing a new service model:** The model will decide which children and family services are provided and how they will be delivered to each community.

T̄silhqot̄'in Nidlin has established the following guiding principles:

We are guided by T̄silhqot̄'in Dechen Ts'edilhtan (T̄silhqot̄'in Law)



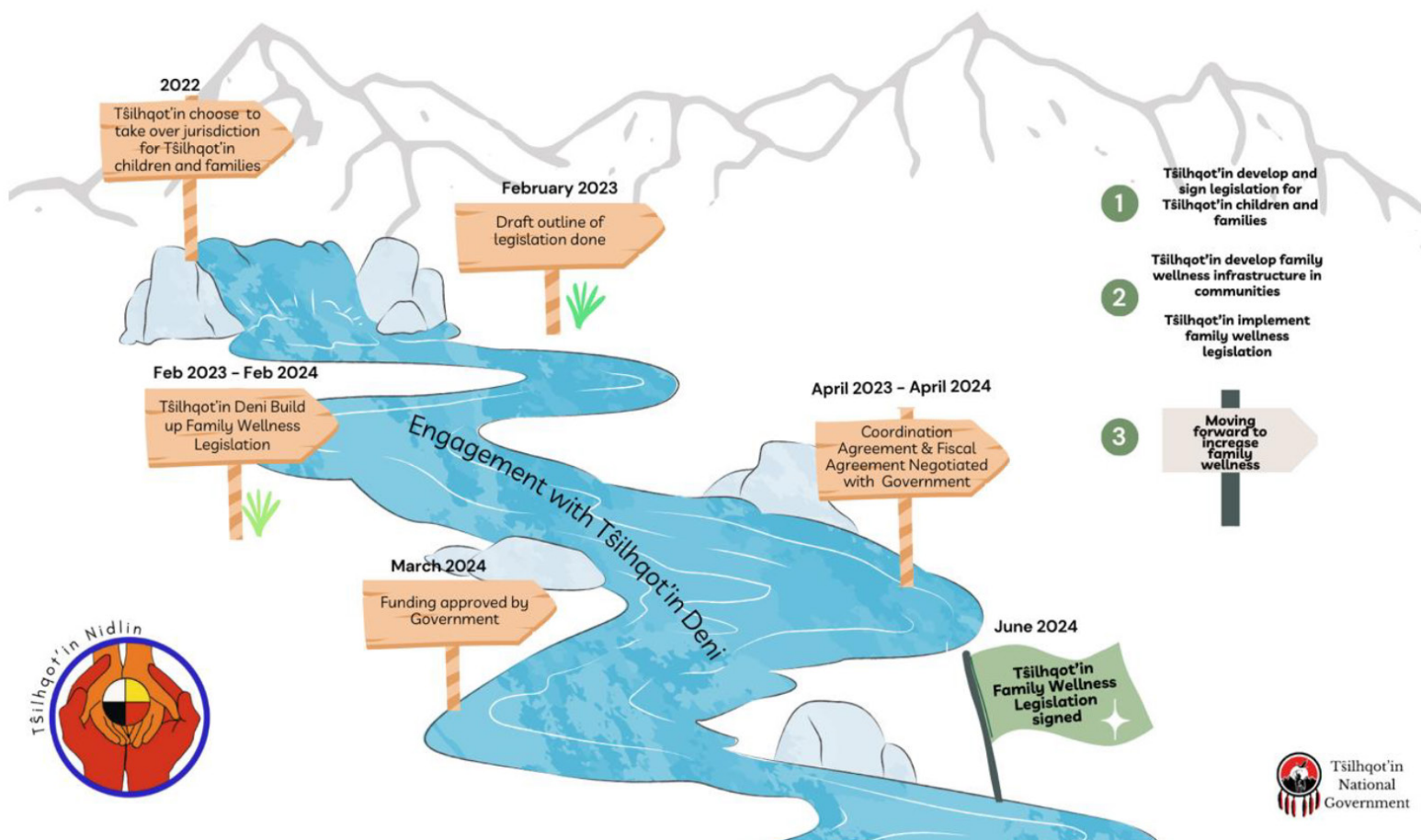
We support our families and communities



Our children are raised by our people, in a good way.



The project timeline below shoes key milestones and overall process timeline:





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We need holistic family planning not just child-focused services.

Our Approach to Engagement

A critical part of the Nidlin Initiative has, and will continue to be, community engagement and collaboration. Our approach to planning is one that is community-led.

Our Engagement and Communications Strategy prioritizes building safety and trust in the process through clear communication, providing good information, and establishing a safe and healing environment for having difficult and sensitive conversations.

We also emphasize choice and providing a variety of communication tools and engagement opportunities, including honouring our language, stories, and ceremonies. We aim to empower our members, particularly those that have lived experience in the child protection system, and our Youth, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers.

Our engagement process is guided by 6 principles:

Respectful Relationships & Healing

Community Ownership

Youth Leadership

Culture, Traditions & Ceremony

Safety & Wellbeing

Transformative Collaboration





To exercise jurisdiction of child and family services, the T̓silhqot̓in Nation is implementing a community-led, collaborative, multi-phased planning process to develop a T̓silhqot̓in Family Law by June 2024. Our engagement will guide the development of the T̓silhqot̓in ʔEsqax sutsel jenyax law (T̓silhqot̓in children growing up in a good way) and how services will be delivered to each community. This idea is the basis for working together to help protect children and families. We continue to honour T̓silhqot̓in culture and traditions and focus on working together so that T̓silhqot̓in children and families can thrive.

Our engagement to date has included interviews with community members, meetings with frontline workers and Nation gatherings.

Our current phase of engagement is focused on:

- Engaging communities on T̓silhqot̓in protocols and laws
- Engaging key knowledge keepers and frontline workers
- Understanding the current system including strengths and challenges
- Gathering ideas and information on how our child and family services will differ
- Discussing case studies related to intervention and protection, including responses, steps, roles and responsibilities
- Deciding new words for our T̓silhqot̓in model

Stay tuned for upcoming engagements!

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We need to support youth across communities and address mental health stigmas.





A Safe T̓ilhqot'in Home

At our Nation Gathering and Unity Gathering, community shared what a safe T̓ilhqot'in home looks like, using the traditional pit house as our visual metaphor.





Our Words for Raising Children

Community members also share T̓ilhqot̓in words that reflect our way of taking care of children and families.



ʔEsqax Jenelhyax (raising children)

Neʔaba Belh (with our father)

Neʔaba Belh Neʔinkwel (mother and father)

Nenijan Sindah (stay here)

Gubexizintan (taking care/watching them)

Na wheln deni heelen (I am an adoptee of community)

Naxwelh deni helin (give / giving to)

ʔEsqi gubats'enilhtin (a child was given to them)

Nanesten (I care for you)

ʔEsqi nezinlhyan (raised the child)

ʔEt'ox (nest)

ʔEʔanx (cave)



We were taught to be proud of our kids, we need to support each other and be strong, we need equality and to uphold the traditions that we lost.



Lack of prevention structures leads to strain on intervention.

Guided by our Traditions

Our approach and processes are guided by our teaching and traditions from the “sacred geometry” of basket weaving. Basketry includes harvesting, processing and weaving roots and bark into baskets as well as using the basket for cooking, storing transporting food, ceremony, and expressing ourselves culturally, particularly as women. Our basketry tells the story of our customs, laws, ways of being and our artistry. They also represent a revitalization of our language, culture, and way of being.

In April 2023, members of our National Government delegation who travelled to New York to visit the United Nations forum on Indigenous issues went to view T̂silhqot̂'in baskets at the Brooklyn Museum that had been housed there since 1905. As we look to repatriating items that have been in the hands of museums and collections around the world.



Our long tradition of basketry is a metaphor for our process and the development of our legislative model as we honour our ancestors and weave our traditions and culture related to family with modern systems to address current challenges.



NIDLIN ENGAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS



TANISLEIGH EVANS

T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nidlin Engagement Lead

Tanisleigh has worked for the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nation for 2 years. Tanisleigh is Cree and grew up in and around the T̓ìlhqot̓'in territory. Tanis has been able to ride into town with Tl'etinqox for the last 7 years. She has worked with the Women's Council in her time at TNG and has been able to get to know and love the T̓ìlhqot̓'in.



LONI SOLOMON

T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nidlin Engagement Coordinator

Loni has worked with the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nidlin team for the last 7 months. Loni is no stranger to the T̓ìlhqot̓'in as she is an on-reserve member of Yunešit̓'in and worked with TNG at the original building. Loni is a mom and a T̓ìlhqot̓'in matriarch in the making, working towards jurisdiction.



ETHAN HUNLIN

T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nidlin Youth Engagement Coordinator

Ethan has worked with the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nation for the last 6 months. Ethan is a T̓ìdelde member and previously worked with youth in his community. Ethan is passionate about youth work and helping people with his Nation. Ethan is currently putting his passion into reclaiming family jurisdiction in the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nation.



KEANNA SAUNDERS

Senior Administrative Assistant

Keanna has worked for the T̓ìlhqot̓'in Nation for 1.5 years, starting as a receptionist and, as of April 2023, the Administrative Assistant with Nidlin. Keanna is First Nations and Métis, originating from Winnipeg, Manitoba. Keanna is a big family person and loves to spend free time with family and animals out in nature. Keanna's future plan in life is to work with kids and is looking forward to making a difference and the future with TNG.