

JUNE 2022

NEWSLETTER

Monday, 6 June 2022.



WSÁNEĆ
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



Introduction

The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council is **working on a number of items** to help **advocate for WSÁNEĆ interests** with all levels of government. This work is in accordance with its mandate to promote the interests of the WSÁNEĆ Nation.



Each team member at WLC has **different assignments** they are working on—ranging from travelling on the water to monitor the Southern Resident Killer Whales, to sitting down and **pressuring government officials** to finally implement Douglas Treaty Rights. The WLC leadership wanted to make sure this **information was sent to the community.**

Here, you will find a short summary of each project.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Discussions with the Federal and Provincial Governments

Strengthening Cultural Connections with Land & Sea

Marine & Land Use Planning

Responding to Projects in WSÁNEĆ Territory

Marine Guardians



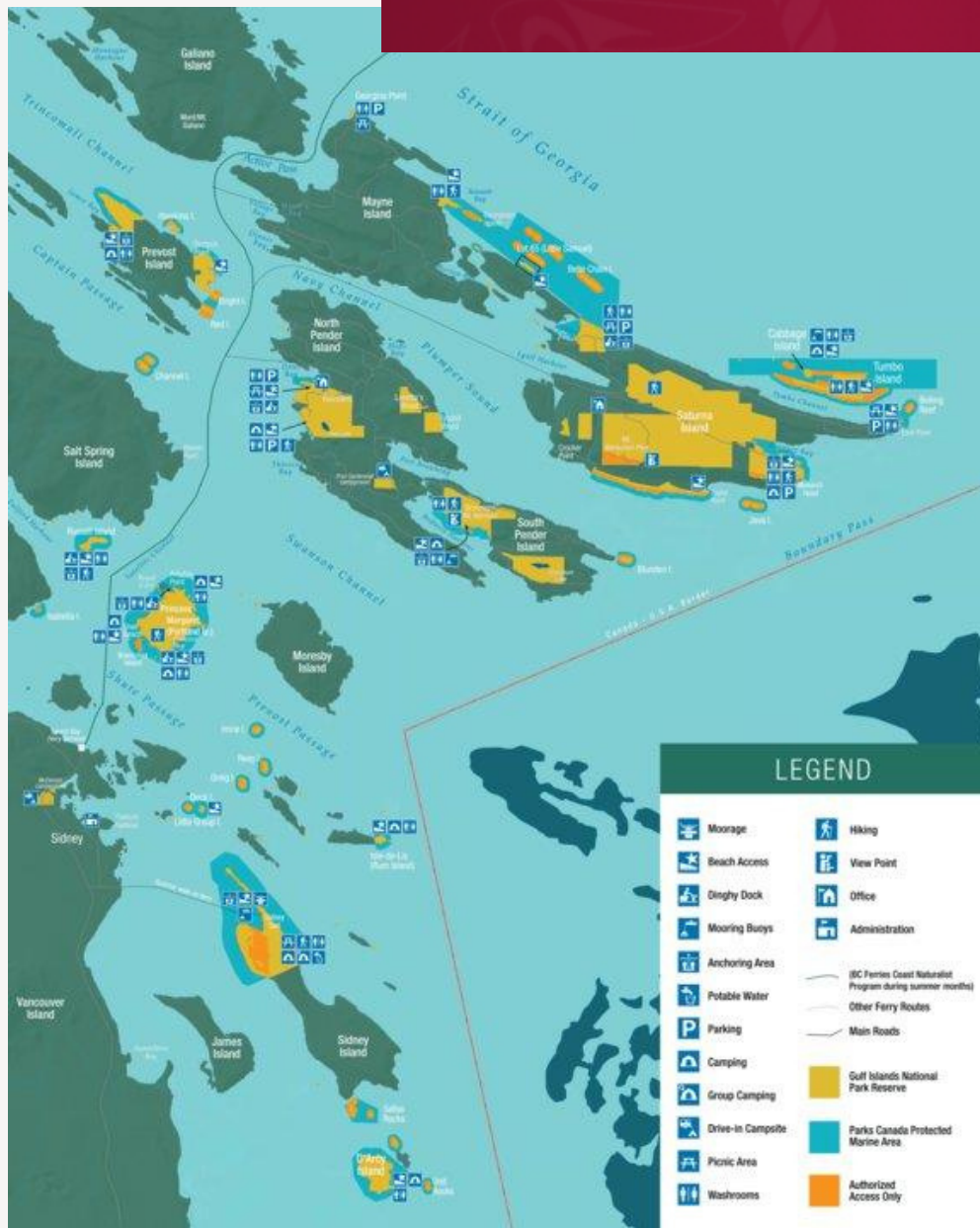
Shown Below

In yellow, the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve

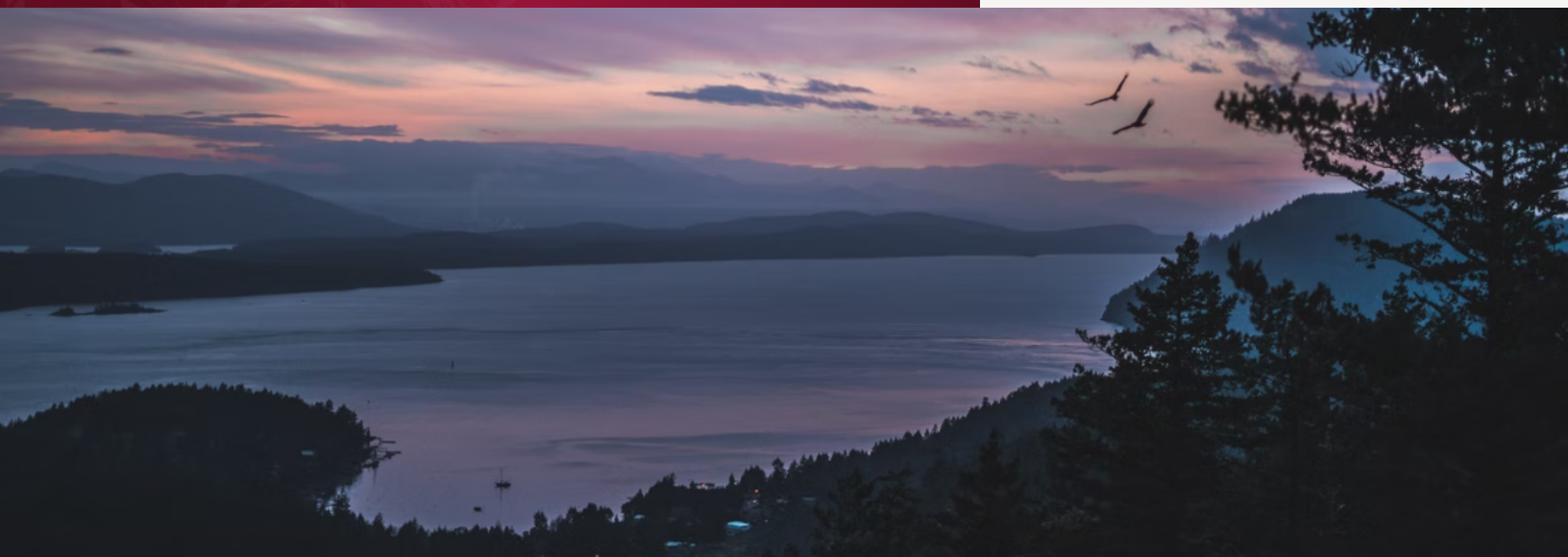
Discussions with the Federal and Provincial Governments

The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council (the WLC) has heard that community members are concerned about current and historical Federal and Provincial Government actions. These issues, as agreed upon by all parties, have been categorized into the following topics:

- Initiating discussions with the **Gulf Island National Park Reserve** (as discussed below)
- Initiating discussions with **Transport Canada and the Victoria International Airport** (as discussed below)
- Implementing Douglas Treaty rights, including **fishing and hunting rights** throughout WSÁNEĆ Territory
- **Acquiring lands taken from WSÁNEĆ people** and ensuring access for all WSÁNEĆ people
- **Providing support for WSÁNEĆ education, culture, and language** (in collaboration with the WSÁNEĆ School Board)
- Ensuring all major industry and resource extraction in WSÁNEĆ territory **shares revenue with WSÁNEĆ people**



To tackle these issues, the Chiefs and staff meet regularly with the Federal and Provincial Governments. At these meetings, the goal is to seek compensation for past wrongs, make sure WSÁNEĆ people are involved in decision-making moving forward, and implement WSÁNEĆ rights.



Two important topics that the WLC has made significant progress on are related to the Victoria International Airport and the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

Specific topics of interest have been identified for discussion with the Victoria International Airport and Canada, these include land acquisition, **leases on airport lands for economic development**, compensation for infringements of

Douglas Treaties, shared decision-making, revenue sharing, additional remediation efforts for streams and wetlands, and increased WSÁNEĆ presence at the airport.

The WLC is discussing all of these issues with both **Transport Canada (who owns the land) and the Victoria Airport Authority (who operates the airport)**.

Once complete, agreements with these parties will outline **a variety of benefits** that will be shared amongst the WSÁNEĆ First Nations.

Similarly, The WLC is also in discussions with the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve to increase WSÁNEĆ decision making within the park **through an interim co-management agreement**.

This agreement would **ensure that WSÁNEĆ leaders and community members were involved in the high-level operation of the park** as well as the on-the-ground protection of environmental and archaeological features.

Under this agreement, the park, with WSÁNEĆ guidance, would **use WSÁNEĆ SKÁLS (laws) to inform this work**. In addition, the WLC is advocating for **increased presence on the land** through opportunities for hunting, fishing and harvesting. Additionally, the WLC is looking to **preserve cultural heritage**, pursue economic opportunities (including tourism), explore land acquisition opportunities, and guarantee **additional training and employment** for WSÁNEĆ people. Each of these items are actively being discussed with Parks Canada.



Shown Above

WSÁNEĆ Places in Relation to the Victoria International Airport



Strengthening Cultural Connections with Land & Sea

The WLC discussions with the Provincial and Federal Governments have translated to increased on-the-land opportunities for WSÁNEĆ people.

The WLC has been successful in **increasing community access** to the territory through various hunting & fishing initiatives..

The WLC works closely with Parks Canada to ensure that WSÁNEĆ people are involved in **hunting at Sidney Island, the clam garden work throughout the Gulf Islands, and prescribed burns** on several islets to combat invasive species and bring back garry oak ecosystems.

Further, the PAL & CORE courses to promote WSÁNEĆ hunting knowledge have been well attended, and, currently, there is a waitlist for weekday (day and evening) courses as well as **Bow Hunting Courses**.

Recently, the WLC has added a youth **Knowledge Weaver (Hannah Morris)** to the team to supplement WSÁNEĆ Youth Engagement and the annual reef net project, and to get more youth out on the lands and sea. More details on this will follow.

The WLC is also working to **increase WSÁNEĆ presence throughout the territory** by renaming parks and reclaiming traditional territory names. ŁÁU, WELNEW/ John Dean park and SMONEĆTEN (the former MacDonald campground) have been restored to their proper names, and others are in the works.

Shown Below

Elizabeth Hermsen and David Elliott practice safe firearm handling



Featured Image

WSÁNEĆ community members who completed the WLC facilitated PAL training on Oct 30/31st weekend.





Marine & Land Use Planning

Without the voices of our community members captured, documented, and presented to the Federal and Provincial Governments, it's more difficult to implement our Douglas treaty rights, and to honour our sacred connections and responsibilities to take care of our marine relatives.

Over the past several years, community engagement sessions; online and in-person have been conducted to ensure the **voices of community members are heard by the leadership of the WLC and at the tables of institutions** that operate within WSÁNEĆ territory. Each piece of feedback is documented and incorporated into a draft Marine & Land Use plan which will **guide activity in the region and reduce colonial impacts** in territorial waters. Discussions with the WSÁNEĆ community on topics such as health, food, connections with land and sea, language and others have been instrumental in creating this draft plan.

Now that it's safe to do so, a **door-to-door campaign** is occurring to get feedback on the data that has been captured, ensuring it accurately represents the voices of WSÁNEĆ community.

"My name is Shauna Johnson, my family ties with Tsawout are with the Pelkey family. My late mother is Roberta Pelkey, and my grandparents are Rita and late Keith Willis. On my father's side, my dad is Terry Johnson from Metlakatla Alaska, and my grandparents are the late Georgia and Henry Johnson."

Leading the engagement is Shauna Johnson, WLC Marine Use Planner who has a degree in environmental science and a master's degree in Indigenous community planning.



Shauna will be out and about in the community in the coming months (April 2022 – June 2022, may go longer), going door to door to ask for input on the new Marine Use Plan. If you have anything you would like to share or any concerns, please let us know!

Shown to the right

A notice for Door to door feedback requests on Marine Use plan happening this Spring and Summer

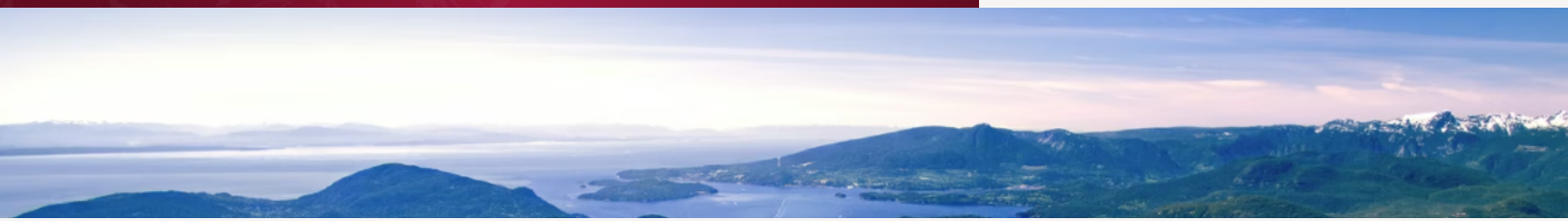


*Have any questions?
Contact us or visit our
website at
<https://wsanec.com/>*

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Responding to Projects in WSÁNEĆ Territory

Currently, the provincial and federal governments send “referrals” to each WSÁNEĆ First Nation when they plan a project or policy that might impact WSÁNEĆ rights.

A referral is the Provincial and Federal government’s way of consulting and often consists of an informational letter with a request to respond within 30 days.

There are many issues with this referrals process. One is that other levels of government (municipalities, the CRD, and Islands Trust) are not required to consult in the same way. As a result, WSÁNEĆ people do not have a say over the majority of activities in WSÁNEĆ territory, including many projects where environmentally and archaeologically sensitive sites are involved.

To tackle this, and to work toward the language in the 1987 Saanich Indian Territorial Declaration, the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council created the WSÁNEĆ Referrals Office. This office is a place where the WSÁNEĆ First Nations work together on certain projects that are of interest to all WSÁNEĆ people (as opposed to just one First Nation).

Also, through the creation of relationship agreements (like those already signed

with the District of Saanich and the CRD), this office works to ensure that **all levels of government meaningfully consult with WSÁNEĆ.**

Some of the first tasks for the WSÁNEĆ Referrals Office include drafting policies to guide **how the WSÁNEĆ First Nations work together**, and creating a Geographic Information System (GIS) and a Traditional Knowledge (TK) Database.

When responding to referrals, the WSÁNEĆ referrals office will work to address WSÁNEĆ interests, including: protection of rights, environmental considerations, jobs and training, economic benefits, and the protection of cultural heritage

Many projects **require the use of WSÁNEĆ Cultural Workers** on site to monitor excavation and development projects.

Archaeological policies will ensure that WSÁNEĆ Cultural Monitors are used, and that WSÁNEĆ people and cultural heritage are **treated fairly and with respect.**

The WSÁNEĆ Referrals Office has been working with **Elder WSÁNEĆ Cultural Monitors to seek guidance on these policies.**

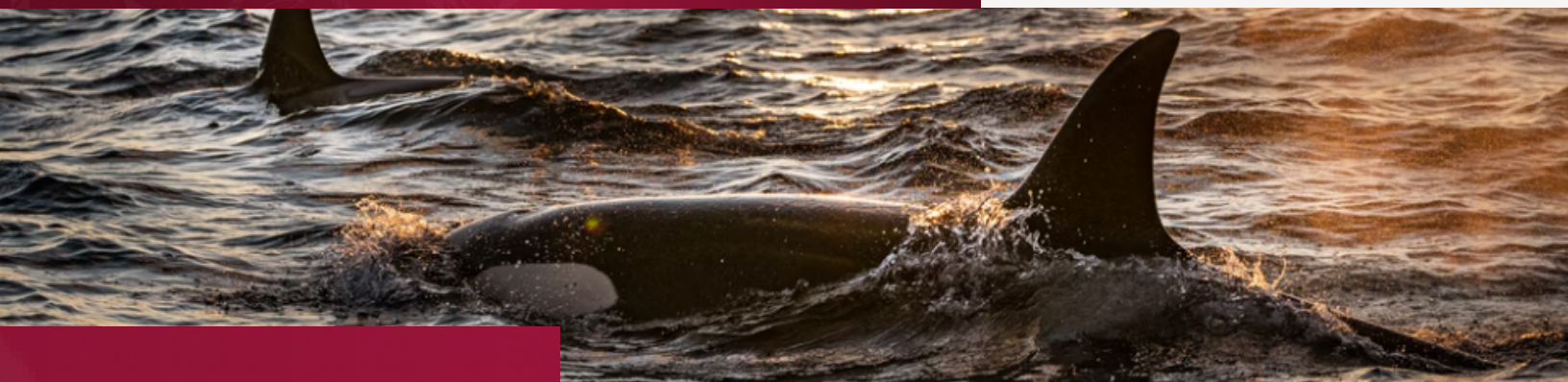
All in all, the WSÁNEĆ Referrals Office will help **coordinate the limited resources** of the WSÁNEĆ First Nations. It will ensure **all levels of government are held accountable.** And, it will increase the power of WSÁNEĆ by utilizing a collective WSÁNEĆ voice.



Figure 5: from left to right, microblades: DcRu-15:8, 148, 120, 121.

Shown Above

Ancient WSÁNEĆ artifacts uncovered during work done for the CRD Wastewater Treatment Plant Project



Shown Below

Photos taken on recent Marine Guardians expedition near the Maine, Saturna and Samuel Islands.

Marine Guardians

Governmental, commercial and tourist activity on the Salish Sea has created a critical situation for the endangered KELLŌLEMEĆEN / killer whales and their habitat.

The recent establishment of the QENTOL, YEN / WSÁNEĆ Marine Guardians Program is the beginning of **a multi-year initiative** to ensure WSÁNEĆ involvement in the protection and monitoring of the killer whales.

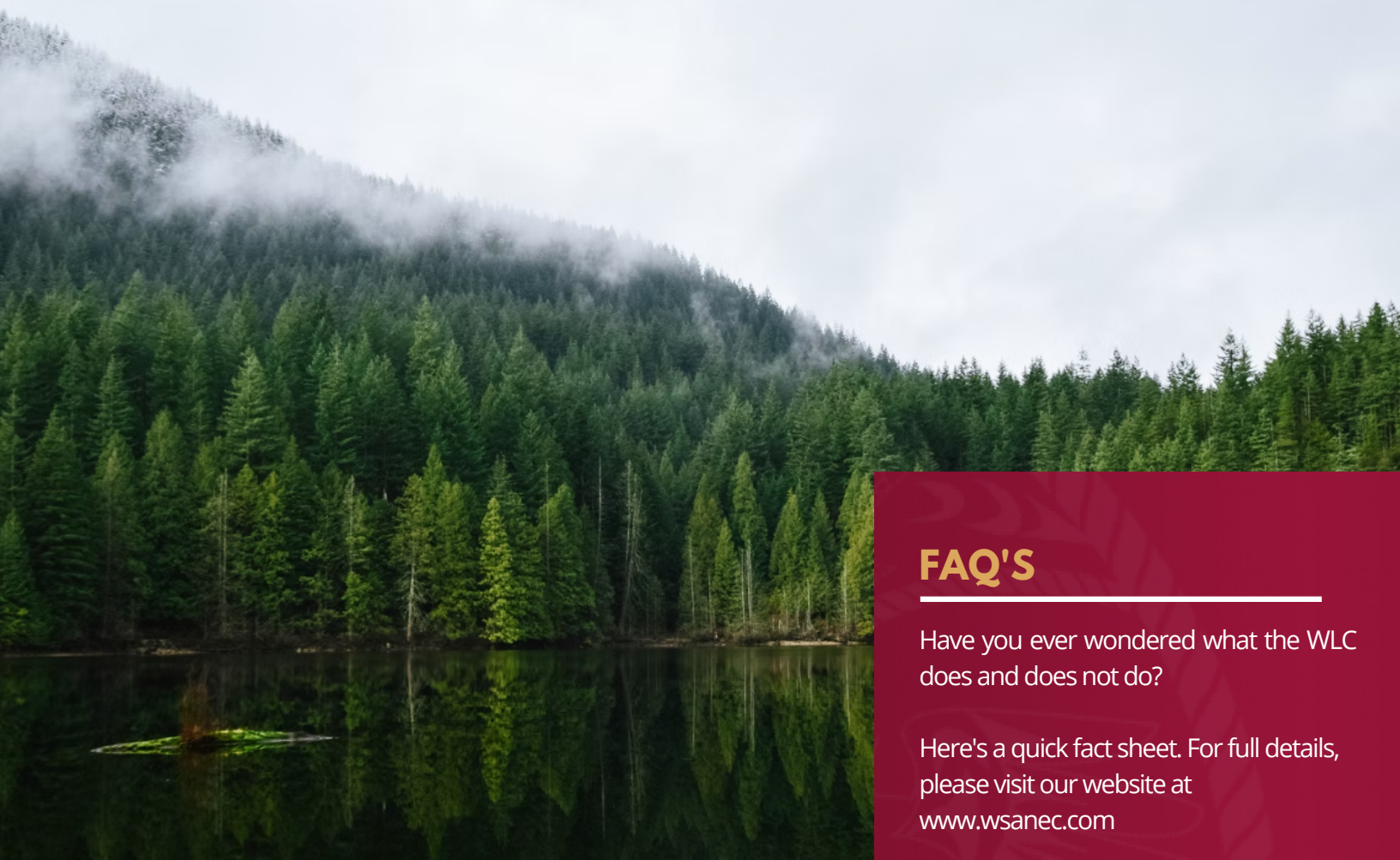
In partnership with the Federal Government, and guided by a committee of knowledge holders, the QENTOL, YEN/ WSÁNEĆ Marine Guardians Program is **on a mission to protect the habitats and food supply of the killer whales, and improve scientific capacity and technical employment within the WSÁNEĆ community**, all while reinstating the cultural connection to the KELLŌLEMEĆEN whales.

The QENTOL, YEN / WSÁNEĆ Marine Guardians Program in the process of **acquiring a boat, setting up monitoring stations and hiring staff to actively patrol various locations in the Salish Seas**. This program will provide jobs and training and will help get WSÁNEĆ people out on the water, actively monitoring the seas.



Shown Above

The population of sea lions and other animals competing for salmon impacts the availability of prey for the KELLŌLEMEĆEN /SRKW.



FAQ'S

Have you ever wondered what the WLC does and does not do?

Here's a quick fact sheet. For full details, please visit our website at www.wsanec.com

DOES:

- Promote WSÁNEĆ unity and work on issues that affect WSÁNEĆ territory
- Advocate for inherent WSÁNEĆ responsibilities and Douglas Treaty rights
- Manage projects brought to the WLC by WSÁNEĆ Communities' Leadership
- Distribute compensation and opportunities equitably among WSÁNEĆ Communities
- Ensure cultural considerations are at the forefront of all work
- Actively solicit involvement from all WSÁNEĆ community members
- Create more opportunities for WSÁNEĆ community members

The WLC works to enhance recognition of, and respect for, WSÁNEĆ Douglas Treaty rights and WSÁNEĆ Aboriginal rights and title. For more information visit our website at wsanec.com

DOES NOT:

- Have authority over WSÁNEĆ Band operations and their internal decisions such as housing and infrastructure
- Work on issues that are under the domain of individual WSÁNEĆ Communities
- Decide unilaterally what projects to work on or how to resolve them
- Take money from WSÁNEĆ Communities or community members
- Make a profit

