



GWA'SALA-'NAKWAXDA'XW  
**NATIONS**  
TREATY OFFICE

Pathway to  
Self-Governance



Treaty, Indian Act and Other Options

# Nusəns Sax

## *"Our Ways"*

**Cover Photos: (L-R)**

Ba'as Welcome Poles

Hereditary Chief Thomas Henderson Sr. and community members at a Groundbreaking ceremony for the Gukwdzi (Bighouse)

Youth Performing Yayuma (play Potlatch) at the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw School

## What is Self-Governance?

Self-governance means making decisions as First Nations without permissions or interference by the federal or provincial governments or laws. It is when First Nations have the authority to pass laws and manage citizenship, and our lands and programs in accordance with our own culture and traditions and with our own vision for the future.

Some of the decisions a self-governing Nation can make are:

- Working with our members and hereditary leaders to develop and pass our own laws.
- Having own funding and revenue sources and deciding how to spend and invest them for the benefit of our members.
- Making our own decisions on programs, services, lands, resources, infrastructure, housing, etc.
- Managing and protecting our lands and resources according to our needs, laws and culture.

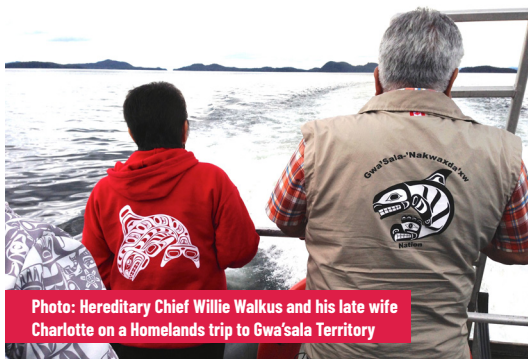


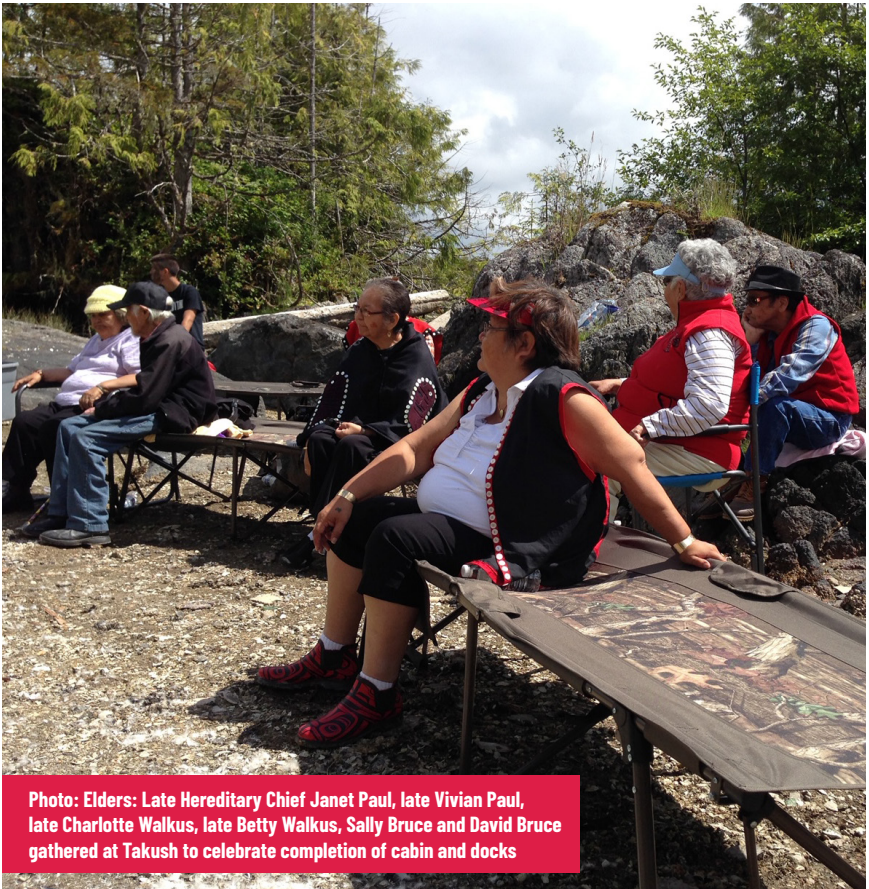
Photo: Hereditary Chief Willie Walkus and his late wife Charlotte on a Homelands trip to Gwa'sala Territory



Photo: Wes Walkus, skipper, on way to Homelands

**Self-governance restores some of the authority that First Nations had prior to the anti-Potlatch laws and other federal and provincial laws that pushed us out of ownership and decision-making.**

It is the key to deciding what is right for the community without being forced down a certain path by federal and provincial laws, policies, programs and funding. With self-governance, our Nations can create a governance structure that supports our **own economic, social and cultural development.**



**Photo: Elders: Late Hereditary Chief Janet Paul, late Vivian Paul, late Charlotte Walkus, late Betty Walkus, Sally Bruce and David Bruce gathered at Takush to celebrate completion of cabin and docks**



There are many steps, options and ways to achieve self-government. The Gwa'sala - 'Nakwaxda'xw Nations (GNN) have already taken many steps along the path to self-government. Moving forward, the GNN Treaty team will look to members to help prioritize the next steps identified below:

## **The Indian Act**

GNN are taking a number of steps to get out from under the *Indian Act* where many aspects of life and governance are controlled by the federal government.

## **Planning**

Creating plans like a Comprehensive Community Plan, Land Use Plans, housing and village plans among others.

## **Single Issues**


Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, Gwa'sala- 'Nakwaxda'xw Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreement, Gaming Revenue-sharing Financial Administration Law, Land Code, Child and Family Policy, Fisheries Reconciliation and others.

## **Homeland Planning and Implementation**

Plans to build things like docks, cabins, healing retreats, camps and eventually cooking facilities, showers and other conveniences.

## **Reclaiming Culture and Language**

Building our *Gukwdzi* (Bighouse), developing language plans for the whole community, school, and Yayuma (play Potlatch).



What we've  
accomplished is just  
the beginning.

Photo: Improved access to our Homelands of Giga'ak (Takush)



Photo: Kwa'ilas Hotel



Photo: Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw carving shed



Photo: Children and Family Health Centre



Photo: Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw water taxi



Photo: Elementary School



## **Economic Development**

Taking back control of lands and resources while creating revenues and jobs. It includes opportunities for the shellfish business, Kwa'ililas, and addresses needs to work on more forestry and fisheries.

## **Exercising Aboriginal Rights and Title**

Determining which laws to make and pass, deciding on resuming the commercial fisheries, taking back areas of the territory and preventing logging or extraction by others, building cabins and additional Gukwdzi and occupying the Homelands as well as much more.

## **Litigation on Aboriginal Rights or Title**

Researching, analyzing and planning options for asserting and exercising Aboriginal Rights and Title, and considering strategies and priorities.

## **Capacity-building and Early Implementation of Treaty**

Creating the framework and process for when the Treaty is implemented. Beginning to build capacity, do training and preparation, start taking over more parts of governance (for example, child and family services).

## **Self-Government Agreement or Treaty**

Continuing to negotiate agreement between the GNN, British Columbia and Canada that outlines land title, legal jurisdiction, and rights and responsibilities between the parties, sets out government funding for our programs and services, includes a plan and funding for reclaiming and returning to the Homelands.

## Summary of the Options to Achieve Self-Governance

The top row shows the different ways or Options for Self-Governance. The left column asks key Governance questions (Issues) and which Options are likely to help move these forward.

ISSUES ↓ OPTIONS →	Under the Indian Act (status quo)	By Negotiation on Single Issues
Can we achieve full self-government?	<b>X</b> (delegated & controlled by Canada)	Some: self-govt. agreement.; fish agreement with some management
Can we receive funding for the process?	Program funding but no negotiation funding.	Some
Can we receive funding to implement our goals, rights, and plans?	Some	Some
Will we have the ability to control or have ownership of more lands and resources?	<b>X</b>	Some
Will there be support for capacity-building?	Limited funding available	Some
Can we generate revenues and jobs?	<b>X</b>	Some
Will we retain Aboriginal Rights and Title?	✓	✓

What other elements do we need to consider in this comparison?

By Reclaiming Culture/ Exercising Our Rights	By Litigating Aboriginal Rights or Title Case	Under Treaty
<b>X</b> No: but can make good progress	<b>X</b> No: Can confirm some gov. rights but not easy	✓
Only if done in cooperation with govts.	Usually not; costs millions	✓ (no more loans)
<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	✓
Can gain more control	✓ (if we win)	✓
<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	✓
Some	✓ (if we win)	✓
✓	✓ (if we win) <b>X</b> (if we lose)	✓ (some trade-offs)

This booklet was created in collaboration with Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations' Treaty staff and consultants along with 50th Parallel Public Relations. Acknowledgement and appreciation to Sharlene Frank and Murray Browne for their writing contributions.

