



Annual Report

Westbank First Nation 2022/2023



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Mission STATEMENT

WFN will work to promote a healthy and prosperous future to ensure its continued existence as a strong political, social and cultural community.

About WFN

- Westbank First Nation is historically known as **stqəʔtkʷniwt**
- Language: **nsyilxcən**
- One of eight Indigenous communities that comprise the **Okanagan Nation**
- Membership: **898**
- Non-Member residents: **11,000**
- Location: **South Central Interior of British Columbia, Canada**
- Land Base: Five land parcels totalling **5,340 acres**
- **Self-governing** First Nation
- Leadership: **One Chief and four Councillors** (elected by Membership every three years). Next election September 2025

Message from səxʷkʷulm̓ kl ƷəƷəƷat

Way'

I am honoured to serve as WFN's səxʷkʷulm̓ kl ƷəƷəƷat (Director of Operations) since pəckʰtán (March) 7, 2023. My journey with WFN began in 1989, and I've had the privilege of holding various roles until 2002, which makes my return even more meaningful.

My vision is to bring fresh ideas and initiatives that will drive us closer to our short and long-term goals. One of our primary objectives is to enhance services for families and children, securing a promising future for our community.

Active engagement is the cornerstone of our success. I encourage all Members to participate in meetings and Committees. Additionally, I extend a warm invitation to residents, businesses, and stakeholders to share your valuable ideas. Your input is pivotal as we continue to grow and prosper.

Together, we will march forward while preserving our unique values and traditions. Let us work collaboratively to ensure WFN remains a strong and vibrant community!

limləmt,
səxʷkʷulm̓ kl ƷəƷəƷat Dolores Ellingboe

Message from ȳlmix^{wm}

Way' pishqsilx^{wm}

In this 2022/2023 Annual Report, I'm honoured to reflect on Westbank First Nation's progress over the past year.

I want to express my gratitude for your support during the sk'əlwístən (September) 2022 Chief and Council Election. Serving as ȳlmix^{wm} (Chief) once again, alongside dedicated Councillors, Jordan Coble, Andrea Alexander, Angie Derrickson, and Sara Tronson, we are committed to our shared vision for WFN's future.

Our first order of business was reviewing WFN Administration, resulting in significant improvements, including the hiring of our new səx^{wk}ulm̓ kl ȳḡayḡat (Director of Operations), Dolores Ellingboe (see top left photo on next page), whose expertise will drive our community forward.

Throughout the fiscal year, we made progress in law enforcement, IT, Finance, and Development Services, enhancing service delivery, community engagement, and overall capacity.

Notably, the Collaborative Fiscal Policy Update, with increased infrastructure funding, demonstrates our commitment to community prosperity.

The Letter of Understanding with Canada underscores our dedication to UNDRIP and government-to-government relations.

Our land stewardship efforts, cultural initiatives, and community projects reinforce our heritage and sustainability.

Water conservation, affordable housing, education agreements, and prudent financial management have all contributed to our well-being and prosperity.

This Annual Report celebrates our achievements in 2022 and the promising future ahead. We thank our staff, leadership, and community members for their unwavering commitment.

Together, we are forging a brighter future for all.

limləmt,
ȳlmix^{wm} Robert Louie





2022 Chief and Council Election

On sk'əlwístən (September) 15, 2022, 391 of the 703 eligible voting Members cast their votes for the new 2022-2025 yí səx'k'w'ínma?m̓ (Council). ȷlmix'w̓m (Chief) Robert Louie, səx'k'w'ínma?m̓ (Councillors) Jordan Coble, Andrea Alexander, Angie Derrickson and Sara Tronson were all sworn in as the official Chief and Council for WFN 2022-2025 term.

Collaborative Fiscal Policy Update

FTA Infrastructure Funding Increase (Collaborative Self Government Fiscal Policy)

Since siya?tən (June) of 2021, the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs along with the Director of Development Services have been intimately involved in discussions with Canada, and the larger Collaborative Self-Government Fiscal Policy table, with respect to the Infrastructure Maintenance and Replacement Annex that forms part of WFN's Fiscal Transfer Agreement (FTA).

These discussions form part of Phase I negotiations with Canada; and have resulted in Canada amending the amount of money flowing into WFN by replacing the existing "Infrastructure Maintenance and Replacement" annex, with two new components: the "Physical Works Major Maintenance and Replacement" (in the amount of \$1,021,732.00) and the "Operations and Maintenance" (in the amount of \$1,429,071.00) annex.

As a result of this amendment, WFN will see an immediate monetary increase to the FTA amounting to \$2,450,803.00 from \$654,015 (which represented the outdated Infrastructure Maintenance and Replacement annex). This new funding is specifically tied to an Agreed Upon Assets list that is noted as Schedule I to attached FTA, and is the list agreed to by both Canada and WFN.

Reconciliation with Canada: Letter of Understanding between WFN and Canada

In spáqtan (January) 2023, WFN and Canada signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) committing to renew and strengthen their government to government relationship. Canada has fully endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and has committed to implementing UNDRIP with Indigenous Peoples.

Ongoing discussions are focused on developing non-binding term sheets for rights recognition and reconciliation agreements.

Draft Letter of Understanding (LOU) between WFN and British Columbia

A draft LOU, very similar to the WFN LOU with Canada, has been reached between WFN and BC aiming to renew and strengthen the government to government relationship with an emphasis on respect, cooperation, partnership, and recognition of WFN's Rights and Title.

Bylaw Updates

Major updates were made to WFN taxation bylaws and WFN property assessment bylaws to modernize the language and enable the use of more property taxation funding for programs and services for Members and the community.

Law Enforcement Moving Forward Initiative

In sqipc (Spring) of 2023, WFN contracted Nathan Davies, a retired inspector for the BC Sheriffs, to work with WFN Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) on their roles and responsibilities, strengthen relationships with the local RCMP and other partners, and start community engagement centered around WFN LEOs.

Information Technology Assessment

WFN commenced an Information Technology (IT) assessment to review systems, policies and practices, and identify any gaps where changes are required to better leverage technology in the delivery of services to Members and the community. Recommendations were provided and IT staff are working to begin implementation.

Staffing

Restructured Finance Team

A review was undertaken to refine and restructure the Finance Team to strengthen the working relationship of Finance with other departments and build additional leadership capacity to meet the growing demands of WFN's financial administration.

Development Services Increased Capacity

After several years of being short staff, Development Services has been able to bring on new staff in key roles to better serve the community. A review off all positions and processes also continues and includes training, development and succession plan reviews for new and existing staff. The goal is to provide inclusive knowledge transfer within the team to ensure gained knowledge serves the community.

Recruitment and Retention Strategic Planning

WFN Human Resources developed a Recruitment and Retention Strategic Plan with five main goals to be collectively worked on through the fiscal year:

1. Develop a Communication Plan;
2. Develop a Student Recruitment Plan;
3. Develop a formal Retention Plan;
4. Develop an Outreach Plan; and
5. Complete a Succession Plan.

Timelines were set within each fiscal quarter to the end of pæcktán (March) 2024 when the model will be updated.





Additions to Reserve Bridge Hill Land

WFN just received these lands back!

Identified as the Bridge Hill lands, these lands are located off Sneena Road at the second roundabout, heading towards Kelowna (under Highway 97), and are proximate to the IR #10 cemetery. These lands were identified in the sp'íł'əmtən (April) 18, 2005, Agreement between WFN and MOTI, as “any lands (proximate to the Cemetery) that are no longer required for highway purposes, will be supported in the return to WFN”. These lands were originally transferred to MOTI for the construction of the Campbell Road Interchange and Highway 97 upgrades.

Myra Range

The Rangeland Tenure License was acquired in 2015 to be utilized by WFN and its Members. WFN has a long history on the utilization of this range area which totals 34,536 acres in size and borders WFN reserves in Gallagher's Canyon.

One of the strategies of the WFN Title and Rights Department was always to acquire Licenses and Land Tenures from the Province. WFN in future discussions with the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and British Columbia would look to add these to WFN Lands. 'Direct Action' was done with Ellen Lake by setting up a cabin in 2011, and also more recently at Minnow Lake, which is in this Range Tenure.

The Provincial Ministry, along with the Cattleman's Association, are doing work on the bottom part of the range to repair fencing that was destroyed due to a fuel mitigation project that went on three winters ago. Major improvements have been made to the fence lines as well as rebuilding the corrals at the Myra cattle guard at 1km. Discussions with the Ministry continue on other improvements within the Range area and WFN will be renewing the Range Tenure with the Ministry this Fall.

Impact Benefit Agreements

WFN has successfully negotiated multiple Impact Benefit Agreements (IBA) with different organizations and companies throughout the Okanagan region. Most recently, WFN and Kelowna Sand and Gravel completed their third IBA which provides royalties to the Title & Rights Department as well as benefits to WFN Members such as job opportunities, training or apprenticeship arrangements, and discounts on aggregate products. For more information, contact WFN's Referrals Officer, Brayden Holenstein at bholenstein@wfn.ca.

Land



WFN Public Works works to go Fully Electric

WFN Public Works has been replacing gas powered string trimmers and leaf blowers with electric ones. An electric lawn mower has also been purchased with the intent of Public Works going fully electric with tools and equipment next year.

Summer Student Successes

WFN Public Works employed four summer students this year: Ethan Abel, Danny Wilson, Ryland Sundstrom and Rowan Parkes. Troy Lawrence and Samantha Bellingham were also hired on as full time labourers.

Samantha was previously a summer student for Public Works and hiring her full time was a major success for the department and WFN! It is positive growth from the youth and community into a career pathway within the organization. What a wonderful win!

Archaeology

The Archaeology Office was responsible for two large grants that provided support to research moose and moose habitat; a suitable database for referrals, archaeology and Development Services use; and training opportunities for Guardian Watch field technicians.

The archaeology crew members continue to develop their capacity to understand the deeper meaning behind their work. Photo bottom left of archaeology crew member, Zena Eli, in a tool technology workshop.

Water Conservation Efforts/Hose Bib Timers for Members

WFN Utilities continues to advocate for water conservation as a means to decrease the community's overall water usage, especially during the sqipc (spring) and sc?aq^w (summer) months.

As irrigation of lawns and gardens consumes one of the largest amounts of water at residential addresses, WFN changed watering restrictions this year to help support water conservation efforts and offered free hose bib water timers to Members who irrigate with a sprinkler attached directly to a hose bib.

The water usage difference between sc?aq^w (summer) and s?istk (winter) per reserve is: sc?aq^w IR 10 is 1.9M liters a day and s?istk is 543,000 liters per day. sc?aq^w IR 9 is 18.03M liters per day and s?istk is 6.55M liters per day.

CMHC Funding

WFN received \$2.7 Million in funding from CMHC to create affordable rentals for Members.

Community



Paddle Across Okanagan Lake for Truth & Reconciliation

Police officers from the West Kelowna RCMP and students from Constable Neil Bruce Middle School paddled across Okanagan Lake to honour Truth and Reconciliation Day. Using canoes, the group left Kelowna's City Park and made their way to WFN's IR#10 beach where they were greeted by Council, Elders, and invited community members.

An 'Every Child Matters' drum created by the Indigenous Leadership Class to commemorate the Truth and Reconciliation Day was presented to WFN Elders at the event.

The Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line is available 24-hours a day for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their Residential school experience. Non-emergency calls to The Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society can be directed to 1-800-721-0066.

Siyaten Festival

Sncewips hosted a new community event showcasing syilx living culture on siyaʔtən (June) 24, 2023. Highlights of the event were on stage performances, a bingo event, stick games, food and vendors market. This is to become an annual event.

Cultural Competency Training Workshop

Sncewips partnered with WFN Elder Pamela Barnes and other WFN Members to host a four-part series intended to expand knowledge and awareness of colonial issues that affect our Nation, delivered by our Nation Members. Knowledge Keepers taught about syilx worldview, the history of contact, current affairs, and the way forward. This workshop was well received and provided participants with knowledge to begin their journey towards reconciliation. Now to be available annually.

Sncewips Repatriation Work

Staff have been working closely with Kelowna Museum Society to address concerns about items in their collection and have secured a \$50,000 grant from First Peoples' Cultural Council to assist this project. Consultation is in beginning stages with the Royal BC Museum. Staff (Michelle, Deani, Kayt) will also be travelling to Haida Gwaii in sk'əlwístən (September) to learn more about repatriation at the 2023 BCMA Conference.



Local Education Agreement with SD#23

In siyaʔtən (June) 2022, the Local Education Agreement (LEA) with Central Okanagan Public Schools (SD#23) was completed. This LEA is the eighth signed Agreement, reflecting equitable opportunities to respond to the unique needs of WFN students and families.

Scholarship & Bursaries Policy Update

The WFN Scholarship & Bursaries Policy was updated in sp'ił'əmtən (April) 2022 to include six more awards. This more than doubles the total annual scholarship and bursary distribution to WFN Members from \$4,700 to \$10,700.

Youth & Recreation Introduces a Bookclub - Calling My Spirit Back!

Staff purchased and showcased local sylix author Elaine Alec's autobiography book with three book club dinners held via zoom, each briefing four chapters at a time with 22 Members and staff taking part. A celebration wrap-up dinner was held where Elaine attended for a book signing. This book club promoted a sense of belonging in the community as well as culture and traditional teachings.

Member Gym Area at Youth Centre & New Yoga Studio

A multiuse gym area was created for youth, Membership & staff to utilize new and easy to use gym equipment on a daily basis. The yoga program was moved into a portable allowing for less disruption and a beautified and serene space to practice.

WFN Youth & Recreation 10th Annual Charity Golf Tournament

WFN held another incredibly successful Charity Golf Tournament with all proceeds going to Youth programming, special projects and trips. To date over \$245,000 has been raised that fully funds any special youth initiative including adventures they may not have had the ability to do so otherwise.

Benefit of Partnerships

Finance continues to build strong partnerships with external organizations. Through WFN's partnership with the Salvation Army, WFN received a donation of \$20,000 for the Sensisyusten House of Learning's breakfast and hot lunch program.

Member Workshops

A Wills & Estates grant was received which will be used to host at least two Wills and Estates workshops facilitated by a Legal Representative from Porrelli Law.

Membership Services will also be hosting and providing more workshops such as a Family Tree/Genealogy workshop and others that are specific to Elders, youth and Members.





Economic Development Strategic Planning

An assessment of the WFN business community/ inventory and lands was done in order to provide background info for the Strategic Plan.

Some of the findings included:

- WFN currently has an estimated total of over 5,335 residential units, primarily consisting of mobile homes and single-detached units.
- There is an estimated total retail inventory of 1.056M sq ft and 153 thousand sq ft of office space.
- There is approximately 265 thousand sq ft of industrial space.
- By 2040, there is an anticipated shortage of 169 thousand sq ft of office space, 404 thousand sq ft of retail, and 15.5 acres of industrial space.

Next steps in developing the strategic plan will include a gap analysis to identify opportunities, obstacles and challenges which impact businesses currently operating on WFN Lands. This gap analysis will utilize data from the previous report, WFN's CCP, next year's COEDC Business Walk (which WFN's Economic Development Commission takes part in along with staff and if available, Council members), and various other sources.

Once the data has been collected and analyzed, a comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan will be crafted along with promotional packages for use moving forward.

Economy

Surplus Up from Fiscal Year 2022

Consolidated revenues were significantly higher than the prior fiscal year (FY) by \$10.68M, or 19.04% and consolidated expenses decreased by \$3.87M, or -8.16%. This led to a bottom line surplus of \$23.61M, and increase of \$16.55M, or 234.58% over FY2022.

WFN's revenue increases (changes) in FY2023 were largely due to the following:

- ISC Funding: FY2023 \$7.35M compared to FY2022 of \$4.74M
- Interest Income: FY2023 \$3.44M compared to FY2022 of \$798 thousand.
- \$8.565M Lakeridge Lease: details provided below.

In FY2023, WFN accepted a promissory note receivable from Lakeridge Park Residential Corp. equal to \$8.565M in exchange for the renewal of existing leases and sale of future leases in Phase 4 and 5 of the Lakeridge development.

WFN's consolidated operating expenses totaled \$43.52M, \$5.27M less than budgeted at \$48.79M. This is primarily due to the largest single line item within WFN's budget, "Salaries and Benefits", being budgeted at \$19.27M with an actual of \$15.30M due to position vacancies across all WFN departments. Significant steps have been taken in 2023-24 to fill these vacant positions.

WFN Financial Position

Financial assets ended FY2023 at \$146.89M, an increase of \$20.10M or 15.85% from FY2022 of \$126.79M. Financial liabilities ended FY2023 at \$52.72M, a decrease of \$6.83M or -11.47% from the previous year's \$59.55M balance.

WFN saw an increase in overall net financial assets from \$67.24M to \$94.17M. This represents an increase of \$26.93M, or 40.05% over FY2022.

WFN's tangible capital assets, which include all physical assets and infrastructure, decreased slightly in FY2023 from \$92.55M to \$89.43M.

Taxation

WFN's taxation revenue is the largest revenue item with \$17.98M for FY2023 and cumulative total in excess of \$262.72M collected since 1990. WFN contracts with BC Assessment to provide assessment services and values annually. The values for the last three years are as follows:

- 2021 (FY2022): 2.27 billion
- 2022 (FY2023): 2.96 billion
- 2023 (FY2024): 3.45 billion

This overall increase of \$1.18 billion from 2021 represents an increase of 51.98% over the past 3 years.



Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Financial assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	53,858,468	51,382,524
Restricted cash (Note 4)	45,778,097	43,905,462
Restricted Marketable securities (Note 4)	6,847,414	5,241,404
Accounts receivable	12,163,464	8,435,788
Advances to related Nation entities and departments (Note 5)	1,641,449	1,335,620
Note receivable (Note 6)	8,520,300	-
Investments in Nation partnerships (Note 7)	17,846,046	16,257,109
Investment in Nation business entities (Note 7)	235,550	235,550
	146,890,788	126,793,457
Financial Liabilities		
Bank indebtedness (Note 8)	1,925,925	1,593,728
Accounts payable and accruals	10,903,379	11,535,070
Development bonds (Note 9)	4,478,640	10,927,365
Deferred revenue (Note 10)	2,311,926	2,557,844
Deferred development cost charges (Note 11)	22,462,381	22,007,363
Asset retirement obligations (Note 12)	97,718	-
Capital lease obligations (Note 13)	296,676	379,360
Long-term debt (Note 14)	8,430,570	8,735,851
Loan advances (Note 15)	1,817,000	1,817,000
	52,724,215	59,553,581
Net financial assets	94,166,573	67,239,876
Commitments (Note 22)		
Contingent liabilities (Note 23)		
Funds held in trust (Note 24)		
Non-financial assets		
Tangible capital assets (Schedule 1)	89,428,862	92,554,462
Prepaid expenses	197,273	392,162
Inventory	19,503	16,449
Total non-financial assets	89,645,638	92,963,073
Accumulated surplus (Note 12)	183,812,211	160,202,949





Consolidated Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus

For the year ended March 31, 2022

Schedules	2023 Budget (Note 27)	2023	2022
Revenue			
Property taxes	17,499,856	17,978,695	16,115,615
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada	10,382,055	12,046,142	10,438,463
Indigenous Services Canada	3,736,268	7,353,858	4,740,658
Water and sewer	3,524,700	3,273,661	3,246,472
Other government grants	1,382,177	1,377,422	2,411,436
Ministry of Children and Families	920,050	1,110,761	839,808
BC First Nations Gaming Revenue Limited Partnership	200,000	657,864	277,903
BC Ministry of Education	220,000	521,048	368,296
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	263,058	263,996	307,107
BC Housing	--	--	453,984
Residents - long term care facility maintenance	--	--	1,337,560
Lakeridge Lease (Note 6)	--	8,565,000	--
Earnings from investment in Nation partnerships (Note 7)	200,000	2,098,937	3,225,529
Interest income	173,750	3,439,834	798,140
Miscellaneous	346,592	1,695,199	1,283,892
Forestry & Range Consultation and Revenue Sharing	617,411	1,616,281	602,396
First Nation sales tax	1,338,400	1,572,537	1,385,793
Management revenue	--	735,833	436,299
Commercial rent	587,890	547,088	421,796
Social housing rent	393,300	368,775	439,950
Archaeology fees	600,000	368,719	587,893
Daycare centre and education services	318,000	243,151	313,515
Building permits	400,000	182,258	1,121,260
Fortis Operating fee	128,772	175,989	548,569
BC Hydro	163,000	169,469	173,413
Land registration fees	690,000	149,925	228,050
ZED Wind Energy less Revenue Sharing	100,000	110,000	110,000
Licensing revenue	89,000	87,973	83,994
Development processing fees	230,000	61,052	1,536,371
Operations and maintenance	22,600	29,120	30,852
British Columbia Ministry of Health	--	--	2,286,172
Loss on sale of tangible capital assets	--	--	(32,835)
	44,526,879	66,800,587	56,118,351
Annual surplus (deficit)	(6,241,276)	23,609,262	7,056,401
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	160,202,949	160,202,949	153,146,548
Accumulated surplus, end of year	153,961,673	183,812,211	160,202,949

Schedule 2 - Schedule of Consolidated Expenses by Object




For the year ended March 31, 2023

	2023 Budget (Note 27)	2023	2022
Consolidated expenses by object			
Access to lands and resources	80,000	33,707	31,774
Amortization	3,108,599	3,532,562	3,645,986
BC Assessment Authority	158,000	159,840	161,649
Bad debts	151,000	(152,937)	107,396
Bank charges and interest	176,450	206,159	146,518
Basic needs and community services	1,747,037	1,610,065	1,946,097
Contingency expense	876,900	162,893	7,926
Fire protection agreement	2,500,000	2,519,722	2,255,350
Foster home	60,500	56,330	60,082
Grants to Members	678,800	741,111	751,679
Home owner grant	2,500,000	2,511,480	2,475,608
Honorariums	252,345	139,513	114,026
Insurance	249,387	335,972	312,375
Interest on long-term debt	126,637	260,980	216,080
Local education agreement	1,325,000	1,407,115	1,330,832
Materials, supplies and resources	1,522,498	1,125,731	1,174,743
Membership dividends	382,500	384,790	440,300
Office and administration	1,530,152	1,236,137	1,155,163
Office equipment lease	3,700	4,422	--
Professional fees	3,647,631	3,808,841	3,849,287
Rent	151,640	127,692	122,197
Repairs and maintenance	1,248,953	1,568,410	1,335,387
Salaries and benefits	19,270,084	15,300,233	19,630,251
Service agreements	2,321,916	2,428,718	2,272,502
Sewer user fees	1,358,570	1,332,532	1,193,320
Student allowances and tuition	1,097,366	949,311	909,316
Telephone and utilities	684,203	703,418	827,818
Training	432,120	227,168	223,700
Travel and promotion	1,152,838	799,357	693,042
	43,875,671	47,390,404	45,150,232





WESTBANK FIRST NATION

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