



**HEALTHY  
WATERSHEDS**  
INITIATIVE



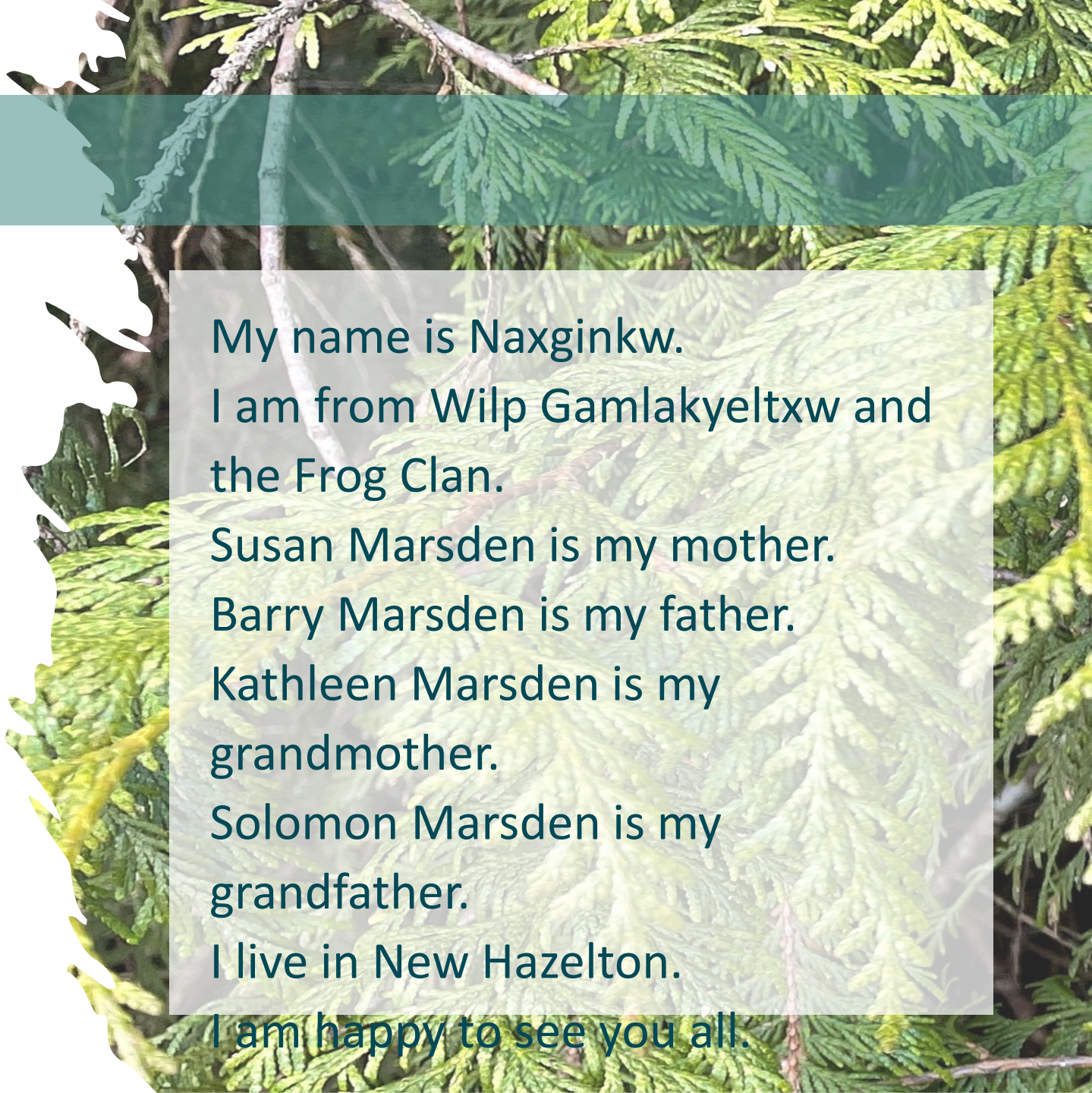
**HLIMOO**  
SUSTAINABLE  
SOLUTIONS

# Centering Indigenous Rights in Watershed Work



# Introducing Myself

Naxginkw hl'wes.  
Wilps Gamlakyeltxw win'sa  
witxwi'y.  
Lax Ganeda hl pdeega'y.  
Susan Marsden hl wes nox'y.  
Barry Marsden/Miingymgin hl  
wes nigwoodi'y.  
Kathleen Marsden/Skawah hl  
wes nits'iitsi'y.  
Solomon  
Marsden/Gamlakyeltxw hl wes  
niye'y.  
New Hazelton/Wilp Spookxw  
Lax'yip win joga'y.  
Luu ammhl goodi'y nuun

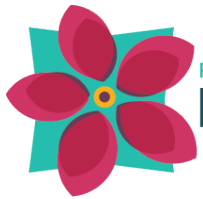


My name is Naxginkw.  
I am from Wilp Gamlakyeltxw and  
the Frog Clan.  
Susan Marsden is my mother.  
Barry Marsden is my father.  
Kathleen Marsden is my  
grandmother.  
Solomon Marsden is my  
grandfather.  
I live in New Hazelton.  
I am happy to see you all.

*Advancing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*



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REAL ESTATE  
**Foundation**  
OF BC



**Watersheds BC**



**StrongerBC**

# What Does it Mean to Centre Indigenous Rights?

- Prioritizing Indigenous-led projects
- Sharing decision-making power
- Collecting meaningful data
- Accountability through project reporting, peer learning
- Honouring spiritual connections to watersheds
- Respecting self-determination, uniqueness of all First Nations, Indigenous groups
- Inescapable connection between Indigenous rights and watershed health
- Expanded time horizons, intergenerational thinking

An aerial photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a winding road cuts through a dense forest of evergreen trees. The valley opens up towards a large lake in the middle ground, surrounded by steep, forested mountains. In the background, more mountain ranges are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

# Applying UNDRIP

- UNDRIP is not new – 16 years since adopted at UN General Assembly
- Provincial, federal legislation only Crown interpretation (e.g. DRIPA)
- Each Indigenous nation knows best how to apply, uphold in their own territory
- Articles are standards & touchpoints
- Key concepts:
  - Free, Prior, Informed Consent
  - Redress
  - Rights to Land
  - Right to Self-Determination
  - Rights to culture, language, spirituality – all connected to healthy lands, waters

A vertical strip of three photographs showing a rocky stream flowing through a dense forest. The top photo shows a rocky bank with a small stream. The middle photo shows a rocky bank with a small stream. The bottom photo shows a rocky bank with a small stream.

# What Are the Barriers/Challenges to Advancing UNDRIP?

- Readiness of non-Indigenous organizations, governments
- Colonial permitting systems for restoration
- Regional disparities
- Funding that is bound by fiscal years
- Latent and manifest racism
- Urgency of climate change, restoration priorities
- Lack of recognition as distinct skill, knowledge set required for watershed projects

# Restoring Rights, Food Sovereignty



Semiahmoo First Nation has traditionally harvested shellfish in Boundary Bay as one of their main food sources since time out of mind. Their name means "lowering to feed," which was derived from digging clams and oysters to feed their families.

Semiahmoo people have not been able to harvest shellfish for over sixty years. Harvest has been prohibited since the 1960s due to contaminated water, causing Semiahmoo First Nation to lose access to this food source.

*Water Quality Restoration and Monitoring in Boundary Bay* is a partnership between the Semiahmoo First Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, and A Rocha Canada, with a long term goal of enabling the Nations to resume the harvest of shellfish. Activities include identifying contamination sources through water monitoring, convening a roundtable, and developing a water quality action plan. It is a cross border partnership.



*Chief Harley Chappell, Semiahmoo First Nation*

# Indigenous-Led Salmon Habitat Restoration



The project was completely led, run and completed by Ahousaht First Nations, with some support from a local NGO. Using Ahousaht Indigenous Knowledge, the project focused on restoring traditional spawning grounds of chum and coho salmon which is vital to Ahousaht food security and culture on Anderson Creek. This site was selected with direct input from elders and community members wanting the closest stream to the community of Ahousaht to be restored in order to build better food security and provide a place for community members to traditional harvest fish close to the community.— *Ahousaht Nation, Anderson Creek Restoration*







# Overcoming Tokenism



It is difficult to advance UNDRIP when dealing with Caucasian people who are uneducated or do not care to understand UNDRIP...our team is dedicated to educating others on an on-going basis. This has not always been an easy task and often find ourselves overwhelmed by the ignorance of some...

At times, [our partner] said we were partners but when the work needed to be done, they have so many bureaucratic barriers. They were not honouring the UNDRIP principles and that became a massive barrier to completing the work plan...

In one breath they say yes, but in the other they say no. Just expressing this here makes us nervous, as we don't want to lose access or jeopardize any good relationships with our primary partner.

-Indigenous-led project



# Evaluating our Progress

- Relevant UNDRIP Articles for Healthy Watersheds Initiative
- Best practices for funders
- Linkages to Provincial legislation (DRIPA)
- Multi-pronged, adaptive, whole-of-organization approach
- Project insights and learnings
- ILAC Direction, future funding
- Staff self-evaluations
- Decolonizing Practices

THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON  
THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

HEALTHY WATERSHEDS INITIATIVE  
EVALUATION FRAMEWORK & REPORT

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Senior Indigenous Advisor

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# Ripple Effects of HWI UNDRIP Work



## New Fellowship to Help Advance UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in BC

Jul 27, 2022



Tara Marsden. Photo: Ryan Dickie

REFBC Launches New Fellowship With Hlimoo Sustainable Solutions



# Looking Ahead: Future Funding



- +Indigenous-led work
- Enhanced Partnerships
- Readiness Funding
- UNDRIP & Decolonizing Training
- Regional Equity
- Inter-generational Learning
- Multi-Year Funding
- +Projects @ Drainage/Watershed Scale



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# T'oooyaks'y Niism

*Photo Credits: VoVo Productions, Winterhawk Studios, Tara Marsden*

I thank you all