

Ts'uubaa-asatx (Formerly known as Lake Cowichan First Nation) has resided along the shores of Cowichan Lake and utilized the bounty surrounding them since time immemorial. The governance model was and continues to be that of a hereditary based model. During contact Ts'uubaa-asatx suffered through disease, warring, residential school, and blatant racism; however through each deterrent they persevered and prove to this day to be a resilient nation.

About a decade ago, the late Chief Sha-e-lum (Cyril Livingstone) led the process to begin developing their economic development and was successful in receiving planning funds to begin this process. The planning began with a simple statement: "Put Lake Cowichan First Nation on the map". This was interpreted in a variety of ways which included not only figuratively updating our maps, but also engaging local government and businesses to begin recognizing who we are and what distinguished us from others. The end result of that first year was an economic development plan and an overall strategic plan and direction to continue to complete the building blocks necessary to focus the nation. To have a hereditary chief relay such information highlights the role of such a figurehead and the outlook for the greater good of the community before the individual. This humbleness resonated within senior administration as well as key consultants that began the implementation of the strategic plan and economic development plan.

Some of the first documents to create looked at forming a working and cordial relationship with the two levels of local government that surrounded the Ts'uubaa-asatx community. These documents have been taken seriously by all parties and continue to allow great dialogue, communication, and partnership opportunities that would not normally exist without such documents outlining our shared principles. Following these was a complete overhaul of our internal governance policies (Personnel, Finance, Housing, etc.) and the creation of a Land Use Plan. The latter became a major document that Ts'uubaa-asatx utilized in discussions with the various industry that surrounded their traditional territory. It became the document that was used to begin discussions, to discuss polarizing topics, as well as to look for creative solutions that would benefit both parties. The idea of sharing information was pioneered for Ts'uubaa-asatx by our hereditary chief and through this example other relationships, documents, jurisdictions, partnerships, etc. have been able to flourish.

With governance, relationships, policies, etc. all in balance, Ts'uubaa-asatx undertook a Comprehensive Community Planning Process that identified:

- the strengths of the nation;
- the aspirations of the community;
- the opportunities that were available;
- the protected areas for the community;
- the areas of focus as determined by the community

This plan once adopted by leadership and the community has become the document that guides all decisions as the nation proceeds along its uncharted territory of realizing the economic potential that their lands and future lands yield.

In order to gain greater independence and control over decisions that would affect future development and financial decisions Ts'uubaa-asatx entered into discussions with government to enter into both the First Nation Land Management Act as well as the First Nations Financial Management Act. Leadership and community overwhelmingly approved both and now Ts'uubaa-asatx is a Land Code operational

nation. These two instruments have allowed for Ts'uubaa-asatx to further define their economic development potential and begin to make decisions at the speed of business and form long-lasting relationships that will create socio-economic opportunities for their residents that were either lacking or not available just a short time ago. Ts'uubaa-asatx has been able to construct over 2 million dollars of critical infrastructure (extension of water and sewer line, creation of waterfront walkway with viewing pier, repaving of road, and a booster station), invest in the community (new washroom facilities, community longhouse, traditional dugout canoe, and a new community dock), and now begin to invest in economic development (Kayak and SUP Rentals, 25 unit residential subdivision for lease, 80+ recreational units for lease, creation of a 6 acre industrial park, as well as the creation of an RV park on neighboring lands). Further complementing Ts'uubaa-asatx's economic vision, is the potential of adding an additional 200 acres of Crown land through concluding negotiations with the Provincial government. In preparation of these transfers, Ts'uubaa-asatx has already completed a highest and best use study and are ready to proceed once transferred over.

There is a sense of opportunity that is prevalent within the community along with a renewed sense of pride that has also been reflected in the re-investment in their culture and traditional teachings. All of this has recently shone a light on Ts'uubaa-asatx and now they have an opportunity to be a catalyst to the regional growth opportunity throughout their traditional territory.