

## Environmental Stewardship Initiative

March 31, 2018

### **Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

On January 26, 2016 representatives of the Province of British Columbia (Province) Gitksan, Gitanyow, Office of the Wet'suwet'en, Wet'suwet'en First Nation, and Lake Babine Nation reached agreement and endorsed the Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework Agreement (Framework). Since that time, Skin Tyee, Nee-Tahi-Buhn, Witset First Nation (formerly Moricetown Band), and Hagwilget Village also endorsed the Framework.

This Framework describes the understanding reached between the Province and the Gitksan, Gitanyow, Office of the Wet'suwet'en, Wet'suwet'en First Nation, Lake Babine Nation, Skin Tyee, Nee-Tahi-Buhn, Witset First Nation (formerly Moricetown Band), and Hagwilget Village (Skeena First Nations)(collectively referred to as the Parties) to continue the Framework as amended here. The Parties agree to continue to work to collaboratively design and implement a Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum (SSAF) and Nation-specific Indigenous Stewardship Projects (ISPs) that directly support the objectives and elements of the SSAF<sup>1</sup>. The SSAF and ISPs would align with the on-going development of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) and constitute the ESI Demonstration Project for the Skeena region. A diagram of the relationship between the SSAF and ISPs can be found in Appendix B.

The SSAF and ISPs will be implemented through the ESI. The Skeena Regional Stewardship Forum (RSF) will be further developed by Skeena First Nations, the Province and proponents of industrial development in parallel to the development and implementation of the SSAF. The SSAF and ISPs will operate in a manner consistent with ESI principles as set out in the Governance Working Group Terms of Reference (November 3, 2015) and the approved Funding Guidelines (December, 2015) or as updated by the Governance Working Group from time to time.

ESI is a collaborative government to government initiative between the Province and First Nations intended to generate a positive environmental stewardship legacy through projects related to:

- ecosystem assessment and monitoring;
- ecosystem restoration and enhancement;
- ecosystem research and knowledge exchange; and
- stewardship education and training.

#### **2. COMMON INTERESTS**

The Parties share the following interests:

- a) the SSAF and ISPs in the Skeena region should consider, and where possible, increase

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<sup>1</sup> List of acronyms is provided in Appendix A of this Framework.

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- synergies between the Parties' perspectives on western and indigenous perspectives and work to recognize and reconcile the Provincial and First Nations perspectives on sustainability;
- b) the collaborative design and implementation of the SSAF and ISPs in the Skeena region is of mutual benefit to the Parties;
  - c) the development of the SSAF and ISPs may build on other initiatives including, but not limited to, the provincial cumulative effects framework, provincial multiple resource value assessment and Skeena First Nation initiatives.
  - d) the SSAF is intended to generate trusted information to enhance the collective understanding and stewardship of the land base;
  - e) each Skeena First Nation has different capacity needs that can be supported through the design and implementation of ISPs;
  - f) the Parties wish to seize the opportunity of the ESI, recognizing that there are enhanced opportunities and benefits of delivering the SSAF and ISPs that might be unavailable outside of the ESI; and
  - g) the Parties wish to work together to better understand the condition of five collaboratively identified values: fish and fish habitat, moose, grizzly bear, medicinal plants, and wetlands.

### **3. SSAF OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the SSAF are for the Parties to collaboratively:

- a) design and implement projects that are aligned with the objectives of the ESI;
- b) generate trusted, relevant, accessible information regarding the condition of values to inform the management and stewardship of natural resources;
- c) inform and be informed by the ISPs;
- d) use the results of the SSAF to inform future Provincial and Skeena First Nations' natural resource decisions;
- e) build capacity for Skeena First Nations to lead in natural resource initiatives; and
- f) build capacity for Skeena First Nations to participate in natural resource initiatives.

### **4. SSAF ELEMENTS**

The elements of the SSAF are for the Parties to collaboratively:

- a) identify resource values, indicators and appropriate study areas;
- b) review existing information, standards and protocols and identify key linkages to build on synergies and avoid duplication;
- c) use, modify and/or build on monitoring protocols used for existing Provincial/First Nations multiple resource value assessments, as well as other existing monitoring protocols or methods as agreed to by the Parties;
- d) monitor the condition, status and trends of the resource values either directly or via indicators, in a manner consistent with agreed-upon standards and protocols;
- e) analyze data to assess the current condition and historic trend of the resource values including the development of targets/thresholds;
- f) develop a collaborative "state of the values" report on the results of the SSAF;
- g) where appropriate, develop and report management response recommendations such as research, inventory, projects and best management practices to advance the Parties' common interests; and
- h) build the capacity of the Parties through:
  - o the development and implementation of monitoring protocols, information management, quality assurance and reporting systems;

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- use of GIS, aerial photo and on the ground monitoring tools;
- capacity sharing between Parties, where possible;
- training and education;
- transparent sharing of the ISPs and SSAF results and lessons learned; and
- building on internal and external strategic linkages.

### **5. SSAF IMPLEMENTATION**

To implement the SSAF, the Parties will establish a Project Team that:

- a) includes the representatives of each of the Skeena First Nations and three representatives from the Province with expertise to advance the work;
- b) is responsible for implementing the SSAF in a manner consistent with this Framework, the Interim Governance Working Group Terms of Reference, the approved Funding Guidelines and other operating procedures developed by the Project Team or through ESI;
- c) uses consensus to make decisions that relate to the SSAF and ISPs. In the event that the Parties cannot reach consensus, then the Parties will seek to understand the different perspectives and may use other processes agreed to by the Parties to reach consensus; and
- d) resource development proponents will be invited to participate in specific project(s), as determined by the Project Team. These proponents must bring capacity to support the SSAF but will not participate in decision-making.

### **6. PROJECT TEAM**

The Project Team will collaboratively:

- a) review and endorse ISPs to ensure that the ISPs meet the criteria set out in section 8(d);
- b) develop any operational procedures needed for the operation of the Project Team;
- c) develop and implement a work plan, including a budget and a communication plan, to carry out the SSAF;
- d) ensure that their respective leadership and communities are informed and supportive of the SSAF;
- e) prepare status updates for use by the Parties on the status of the implementation of the SSAF, at a frequency determined by the Project Team;
- f) prepare annual reports that include preliminary and final results and any recommendations;
- g) report out on the status of the budget to the Parties and the Ministry responsible for the ESI budget at a frequency determined by the Project Team; and
- h) endorse the formation of committees to support the objectives of the Project Team, including the Science and Technical Committee.

### **7. SSAF BUDGET**

The Parties agree that the ESI will be used to pay for the costs of developing and implementing the SSAF as defined in the work plan and budget, including:

- a) travel costs incurred by the Skeena First Nations representatives to participate in the Project Team and endorsed committees;
- b) participation by the Skeena First Nations in training and development activities, as determined by the Project Team;
- c) support for community engagement activities; and

## **Environmental Stewardship Initiative**

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- d) any third party support to develop and implement the SSAF, as determined by the Project Team.

### **8. ISP IMPLEMENTATION**

Each Skeena First Nation may make proposals that meet their unique capacity needs through the design and implementation of an ISP. ISP proposals and budgets will be developed collaboratively by the Province and the Skeena First Nations in accordance with the following:

- a) ISPs are intended to advance the individual capacity needs of the Skeena First Nations while complementing the SSAF;
- b) ISPs should recognize the individual capacities of the Skeena First Nations and the need to enhance this capacity;
- c) ESI funds will support the ISPs through a separate contribution agreement between the Province and the Skeena First Nation; and
- d) an ISP must meet the following criteria:
  - o demonstrably support the objectives and elements of the SSAF (section 2, section 3 and section 4 of this Agreement);
  - o align with the approved workplan and budget;
  - o follow agreed-upon standards and protocols for collection and analysis of results so that they can be integrated into the SSAF. Where standards and protocols do not exist, the Parties will work to collaboratively develop them;
  - o provide regular updates to the Project Team on the status of implementation, preliminary and final results as defined by the individual contribution agreements;
  - o Receive and consider guidance on ISPs from the SSAF; and
  - o not duplicate other initiatives.

### **9. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

The Parties intend:

- a) to make this Framework available to other resource development proponents, First Nations and levels of government;
- b) to include other Skeena First Nations, as defined in Appendix C, or provincial ministries in the Project Team where:
  - o the First Nation or provincial ministries endorses the terms set out in this Framework in writing as per section 10; and
  - o designates a representative.
- c) that any Skeena First Nation can withdraw their participation from the Project Team by providing notice to the other Parties in writing and the Project Team will continue provided there is participation by the Province and at least four Skeena First Nations listed in Appendix C;
- d) that this Framework can be cancelled or amended at any time through mutual written agreement; and
- e) that the SSAF and ISPs will be carried out until March 31, 2021 unless extended by mutual agreement from the effective date and that this Framework will be in place over the course of this term.

### **10. ENDORSEMENT**

The Parties have indicated their support and endorsement of this amended Framework in writing (attached in Appendix D).

**Environmental Stewardship Initiative**  
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The effective date of this document is the date on which the Ministers of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and Energy, Mines, and Petroleum Resources sign a letter of support confirming the effective date.

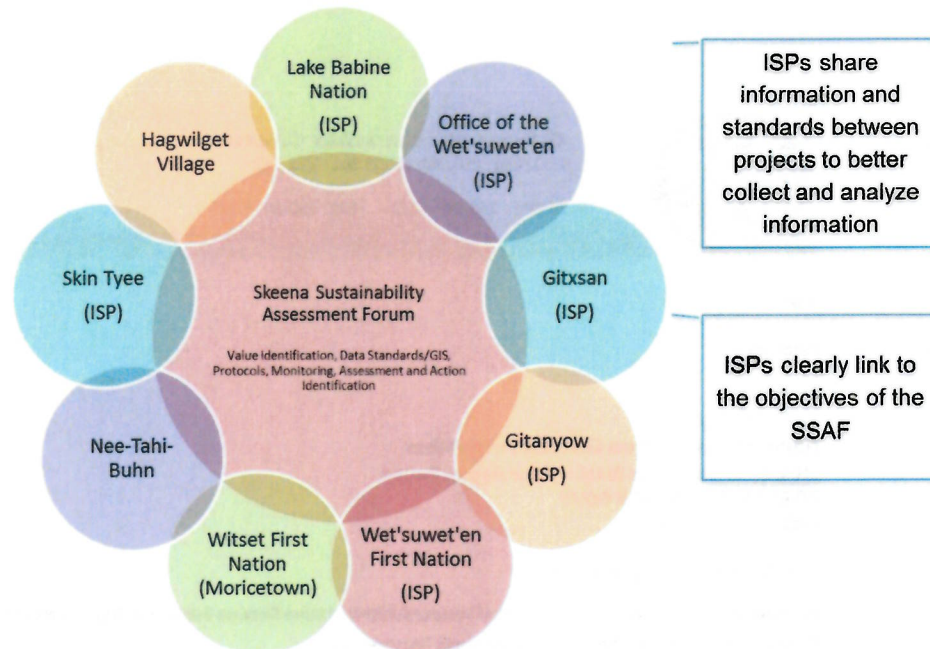
**Environmental Stewardship Initiative**  
March 31, 2018

**Appendix A – List of Acronyms**

SSAF	Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum
ISP	Indigenous Stewardship Project
ESI	Environmental Stewardship Initiative
RSF	Regional Stewardship Forum
GIS	Geographic Information System

Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
March 31, 2018

**Appendix B: Diagram of the relationship between the Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum (SSAF) and the Indigenous Stewardship Projects (ISPs)**



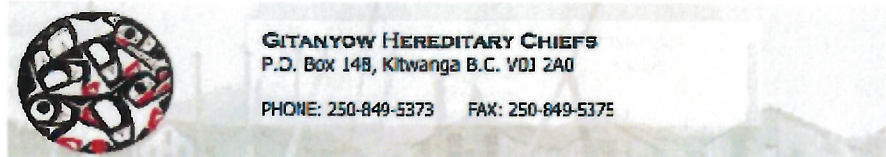
**Appendix C: Skeena First Nations**

Skeena First Nations that are invited to participate in the Project Team include:

- Gitxsan;
- Gitanyow;
- Office of the Wet'suwet'en;
- Witset First Nation (formerly Moricetown Band);
- Hagwilget Village;
- Wet'suwet'en First Nation;
- Lake Babine Nation;
- Skin Tyee; and
- Nee-Tahi-Buhn.

Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
March 31, 2018

Appendix D: Documentation of the Parties' Support and Endorsement



*March 2, 2018*

Attention:

Alanya Smith  
Assistant Negotiator  
Major Projects and Cross Government Initiatives  
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
PO BOX 9100 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9B1

By email: [Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca)

**Re: Endorsement of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework**

To Alanya Smith,

This letter confirms that the Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs Office (Huwilp Society) endorses the amended Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework (SSAF) dated March 31, 2018 (received February 26, 2018).

The Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs confirm participation and support of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and is looking forward to continuing to work collaboratively in the Skeena region.

Sincerely,



Glen Williams/Malii

President & Chief Negotiator



Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
March 31, 2018



March 7, 2018

**GITKSAN TREATY SOCIETY**  
**OFFICE OF THE GITKSAN HEREDITARY CHIEFS**

Attention:

Alanya Smith  
Assistant Negotiator  
Major Projects and Cross Government Initiatives  
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
PO BOX 9100 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9B1

By email: [Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca)

**Re: Endorsement of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework**

To Alanya Smith,

This letter confirms that Gitksan Treaty Society endorses the amended Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework (SSAF) dated March 31, 2018.

Gitksan Treaty Society confirms participation and support of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and is looking forward to continuing to work collaboratively in the Skeena region.

Sincerely,

Luitkudziiwus  
Goxlon Sebastlan  
Executive Director GTS

Gwiiyeehl  
Brian Williams  
Negotiator GTS

**Environmental Stewardship Initiative**  
March 31, 2018



March 2, 2018

Attention:

Alanya Smith  
Assistant Negotiator  
Major Projects and Cross Government Initiatives  
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
PO BOX 9100 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9B1

By email: Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca

**Re: Endorsement of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework**

To Alanya Smith,

This letters confirms that Skin Tyee Nation endorses the amended Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework (SSAF) dated March 2018.

Adele Gooding, on behalf of Skin Tyee Nation confirms participation and support of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and is looking forward to continuing to work collaboratively in the Skeena region.

Sincerely,



Chief Rene Skin

SKNI TYEE NATION

Skin Tyee Nation 6914 Campbell Rd PO Box 131 Southbank, BC V0J 2P0  
250-694-3517 Phone 250-694-3268 Fax

Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
March 31, 2018

**Postal Address:**  
205 Beaver Road, Suite 1  
Smithers, BC  
V0J 2N1



**Location Address:**  
3873 – 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Smithers, BC  
Canada

**Telephone:** (250) 847-3630

**Facsimile:** (250) 847-5381

[www.wetsuweten.com](http://www.wetsuweten.com)

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March 9, 2018

Alanya Smith  
Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation  
PO BOX 9100 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria BC  
V8W 9B1

Dear Alanya Smith,

**RE: Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum Framework Endorsement**

This letter is to provide the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation notification the Wetsuwet'en Treaty Office Society has approved and support the amended Skeena Sustainability Assessment Form Framework 2018.

We reaffirm that David deWit is our official representative

Sincerely,



Debbie Pierre,  
Executive Director

*"We are proud, progressive Wet'suwet'en, dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of our culture, traditions and territories, working as one for the betterment of all."*

Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
March 31, 2018



## Lake Babine Nation

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225 SUS AVENUE  
P.O. BOX 379  
BURNS LAKE, BC V0J 1E6

TEL: 250-692-4700  
FAX: 250-692-4750

March 12, 2018

**ALANYA SMITH**  
**ASSISTANT NEGOTIATOR**  
**MAJOR PROJECTS AND CROSS GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES**  
**MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATIONS**  
PO Box 9100 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8W 9B1

Dear Ms. Smith:

**RE: ENDORSEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE**

This letter confirms that Lake Babine Nation Chief and Council endorses the amended Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework (SSAF) Dated March 12, 2018.

Lake Babine Nation confirms participation and support of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and is looking forward to continue to work collaboratively in the Skeena Region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wilf Adam', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

**MR. WILF ADAM**  
CHIEF

WA:rij

Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
March 31, 2018



**Nee Tahí Buhn Indian Band**

47805 Olson Rd. Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E4  
P: 250.694.3494 F: 250.694.3492

March 15, 2018

Attention:

Alanya Smith  
Assistant Negotiator  
Major Projects and Cross Government Initiatives  
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
PO BOX 9100 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9B1

By email: Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca

Re: Endorsement of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Skeena Sustainability  
Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework

To Alanya Smith,

This letter confirms that Nee Tahí Buhn endorses the amended Skeena Sustainability  
Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework (SSAF) dated March 15,  
2018

Nee Tahí Buhn confirms participation and support of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
and is looking forward to continuing to work collaboratively in the Skeena region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Cody Reid", written over a horizontal line.

Deputy Chief Cody Reid  
Nee Tahí Buhn

Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
March 31, 2018



WITSET FIRST NATION

Victor Jim ext 23  
Chief Councillor  
[victor.jim@mtbcouncil.ca](mailto:victor.jim@mtbcouncil.ca)  
☎ (250) 847 2133  
📞 1(800) 881 1218  
☎ (250) 847 9291

March 20, 2018

Attention:  
Alanya Smith  
Assistant Negotiator  
Major Projects and Cross Government Initiatives  
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
PO BOX 9100 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9B1  
By email: [Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca)

**Re: Endorsement of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework**

To Alanya Smith,

This letters confirms that Witset First Nation endorses the amended Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework (SSAF) dated March 31, 2018.

Witset First Nation confirms participation and support of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and is looking forward to continuing to work collaboratively in the Skeena region.

Sincerely,

Chief Victor Jim,  
Witset First Nation

*"Serving our community with pride, providing services and programs to enhance the development of our Nation"*

#3 - 205 Beaver Road, Smithers, BC V0J 2N1



Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
March 31, 2018



WET'SUWET'EN FIRST NATION  
(Formerly Broman Lake Band)  
P.O. Box 760, Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0



Phone: (250) 698-7307

Fax: (250) 698-7480

Email: [BromanCouncillor@gmail.com](mailto:BromanCouncillor@gmail.com)

March 21, 2018

Attention:  
Alanya Smith  
Assistant Negotiator  
Major Projects and Cross Government Initiatives  
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
PO BOX 9100 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9B1  
By email: [Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca)


**Re: Endorsement of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework**

To Alanya Smith,

This letter confirms that Wet'suwet'en First Nation endorses the amended Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework (SSAF) dated March 19, 2018.

Wet'suwet'en First Nation confirms participation and support of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and is looking forward to continuing to work collaboratively in the Skeena region.

Respectfully,  
WET'SUWET'EN FIRST NATION

  
RUBY OGEN  
Broman Lake Councilor

**Hagwilget Village Council**  
**P.O. Box 460**  
**New Hazelton, BC V0J 2J0**  
**Phone: (250) 842-6258 Fax: (250) 842-6924**

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March 23, 2018

Alanya Smith, Assistant Negotiator,  
Major Projects and Cross Government Initiatives  
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Re: ESI Endorsement Letter

This letter is to acknowledge the endorsement of Jesse Stoeppler to represent the Hagwilget Village Council with this agreement.

We also confirm the legal name of Hagwilget Village Council and Hagwilget Village.

The legal name is Hagwilget Village Council. The address is above our letter head.

The contact name will be Jesse Stoeppler. His email is [jesse@hagwilget.com](mailto:jesse@hagwilget.com). Chief Dora Wilson is the contact name for the agreement.

Jesse will share email correspondence with Chief Wilson.

The telephone number for our office is above. (250-842-6258)

We don't have an electronic file transfer. Payment can be sent by mail.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Dora Wilson, Chief Hagwilget Village Council

Cc Hagwilget Village Council



# SIMGIGET'M GITWANGAK SOCIETY

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November 10, 2018

Alanya Smith  
Assistant Negotiator  
Major Projects and Cross Government Initiatives  
Ministry Of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
PO Box 9100 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 981

Sent via Email: Alanya.Smith@gov.bc.ca

**RE: Endorsement of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework.**

Dear Alanya,

This letter confirms that the Simigiet'm Gitwangak Society endorses the amended Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework (SSAF) dated March 31, 2018.

The Simigiet'm Gitwangak Society confirms participation and support of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and is looking forward to continuing to work collaboratively in the Skeena Region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dinimget'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Dinimget** (Art Mathews)  
President, Simigiet'm Gitwangak Society



March 21, 2018

Reference: 44285

**Re: Endorsement of the Renewed Environmental Stewardship Initiative Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework**

To the First Nations participating in the Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework:

This letter confirms the Provincial endorsement of the amended version of the Skeena Sustainability Assessment Forum and Indigenous Stewardship Projects Framework, dated March 31, 2018.

We are pleased to continue to support this important collaboration between the Gitxsan, Gitanyow, Office of the Wet'suwet'en, Wet'suwet'en First Nation, Lake Babine Nation, Skin Tyee, Nee-Tahi-Buhn, Witsset First Nation, and Hagwilget Village (Skeena First Nations) and the Province on natural resource stewardship projects under the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Helmer, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development at 250-896-8224 or by email at [Lisa.Helmer@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Lisa.Helmer@gov.bc.ca).

Yours truly,

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**Minister Scott Fraser**  
**Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation**

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**Minister Doug Donaldson**  
**Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development**

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**Minister Michelle Mungall**  
**Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources**