



# Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government

## **Nen Ch'eh Communications and Engagement Strategy**

Draft #3 November 2023

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government Nen Ch'eh Communications and Engagement Strategy ("Nen Ch'eh CES") establishes the communications and engagement process, tools, and workplan for Xeni Gwet'in First Nation Land Management (FNLN) Developmental Process. The goal of CES is to outline an 8-month workplan (from September 2023 to May 2024), by identifying the timelines, objectives, activities, outlets and audiences. XGFNG Chief and Council recognize the significance of engaging community members during this next step in the Nen Ch'eh Developmental Process in order to generate opportunities for education and awareness. These opportunities are steered by the level of community involvement and the effectiveness of communication, both of which also allow the Nen Ch'eh Coordinator to acquire valuable input, direction and support to best inform this community-driven process.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

The *Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management* provides communities the opportunity to manage reserve lands outside of the *Indian Act*. On September 24, 2020, Xeni Gwet'in became a signatory to the *Framework Agreement*, and is currently establishing a land governance framework through developing a Land Code; *Nen Ch'eh, the Land's Way*. If the XGFN Nen Ch'eh is ratified by the community, Xeni Gwet'in will assume full management and jurisdiction over reserve lands and resources.

## 3.0 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this document, CES, is to define, guide and streamline the communications and engagement throughout the Nen Ch'eh Developmental process. High-level CES objectives are as follows:

- Inform Members about the Nen Ch'eh Developmental process and opportunities for involvement;
- Request wisdom-sharing, and input from Members to inform the Developmental process;
- Create an informative space for education and awareness in the community on FNLN initiatives;
- Provide Members with timely, fact-based updates, goals and actions on projects and milestones;
- Promote dialogue and interaction between Members, Chief and Council, and Nenqay personnel;
- Foster community support for FNLN initiatives, capacity building and their long-term implementation.

## 4.0 COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The Nen Ch'eh Coordinator is oriented by the Nenqay Director, the Nenqay Advisory Group, Membership and the Chief and Council to ensure effective communications throughout the Land Code Developmental process.

## 5.0 KEY AUDIENCES

CES consists of a broad range of audiences, all of whom may have differing interests and influence on Nen Ch'eh. It is important to consider the communication needs and requirements of the key audiences in order to more effectively develop and execute the workplan. The following is a list of key audiences; of which is subject to additions:

- Xenigwet'in First Nations Membership (On and Off Reserve, EV and Non-EV)

XG Membership has an important role in the development, approval and operation of Nen Ch'eh. Both Eligible Voters and Non-Eligible Voters (i.e. youth) should engage with feedback, vision and questions throughout the process.

- Xenigwet'in First Nations Chief and Council

XG Chief and Council provides guidance, support, and approval of key documents throughout the Developmental Process of Nen Ch'eh.

- Xenigwet'in First Nations Band Staff and NAG

XG Department heads provide guidance, support, and technical perspectives throughout the Developmental Process of Nen Ch'eh. Nenqay Advisory Group acts as a Board of Directors to best inform and support projects across Nenqay dept.

- Media Outlets

Local or regional media may be contacted to generate discussion and awareness around the Developmental Process.

## 6.0 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS OF NEN CH'EH

Nen Ch'eh is the XGFN Land Code whereby the nation enters into an Individual Agreement with Canada to take back legal land management authority and jurisdiction of reserve lands, which are 'presently under legal jurisdiction of Canada'. Although, the XGFN/TNG Declared Title Area surrounds these small parcels of reserve lands (1260.4 ha total), these 8 reserves were not included in the Title win negotiation. The process of legally returning jurisdiction to XGFN can be convoluted and technical. Effective and simple communication around this process is key, as is outlining the implication Nen Ch'eh should it be passed through a community Ratification Vote.

One key outcome of an operational Nen Ch'eh is the law-making powers gained to create and enforce recognized traditional laws, specific to XGFN. During a community engagement session in June 2023, priority laws were outlined by community members, some of which included: Environmental Protection Law (i.e. Animal Protection and Trespassing Law), Fire Protection Law, Business Permitting Law, Zoning Law, Building Code Law, Development Law, Residential Tenancy Law, Waste Management Laws.

## 7.0 KEY MESSAGES AND IMPLICATIONS

Key messages are high-level communication points from which all subsequent communication is developed. A common understanding of key messages allows the Chief and Council, Lands Advisory Board and the Nen Ch'eh Coordinator to speak with a shared vision. While the key messages do not represent all the messages that will need to be communicated throughout the course of this strategy, they are the most important.

- 7.1 The XGFNG Nen Ch'eh transfers authority and jurisdiction of reserve lands and resources back to XGFN.
- 7.2 The XGFNG Nen Ch'eh does not affect XGFN Indigenous Rights and/or Title Land.
- 7.3 The XGFNG Nen Ch'eh applies to reserve lands only and not our Designated Title Area.
- 7.4 The XGFNG Nen Ch'eh is not a Treaty or comprehensive self-government agreement.
- 7.5 Under the XGFNG Nen Ch'eh, forty-four (44) land management provisions of the Indian Act would no longer apply.
- 7.6 The XGFNG Nen Ch'eh enables greater environmental protection and environmental stewardship in land, water and resource management through building capacity, funding and personnel.
- 7.7 The XGFNG Nen Ch'eh provides for greater community input and decision making in land governance.
- 7.8 The XGFNG Nen Ch'eh provides for timely approvals and decision-making in land governance.
- 7.9 The XGFNG Nen Ch'eh provides an opportunity for XGFN to incorporate cultural values into day-to-day land governance activities.

## 8.0 ASSUMPTIONS

CES includes the following basic assumptions:

- The FNLM Developmental Process is new to XGFN Membership. Members may not understand current land management projects and objectives.
- Members may not use the internet on a regular basis, or access information from the internet. As such, printed copies of Nen Ch'eh drafts will be printed and distributed in the following five buildings in community: ?Eniyud Health Centre, Band Administrative Office and Community Hall, Enterprise Office, Nenqay and Gas Station.
- XGFN Membership population:
  - Total Members: 465
  - Members On-Reserve: 155 - 200
  - Members Off-Reserve: 265 - 310
- XGFN Off-Reserve populations predominately reside in the following areas:
  - Williams Lake
  - Kamloops
  - Prince George
  - Vancouver

## 9.0 CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Issues and considerations of Membership should be identified and responded to early in the Developmental Process. The Strategy identifies the following issues/ considerations that have or may arise from the community.

- Mortgaging – interests and licenses
- Traditional Land Holdings
- Residency and Access Rights
- Aboriginal Rights and Title

## 10.0 COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

An objective of CES is to utilize a variety of communication tools and techniques to ensure updates, invitations, messages and documents are received and understood. The Strategy has incorporated the following tools:

Nen Ch'eh Webpage	The webpage contains background information and relevant supporting documents, the most recent draft of Land Code, the link to the eligible voter submission form and a question/contact portal for discussion and feedback.
Social Media (Facebook)	The Facebook Nenqay page is the main portal for keeping members updated. Updates are shared to the main XGFNG community group as well.
Nenqay Newsletters	Monthly Nenqay Newsletters are published, printed and shared on Facebook. Nenqay Newsletters contain Project information, progress, and employee updates.
Short-term Contracts	Short-term job contracts will become available throughout the developmental process to invite member input, learning opportunities and skill building.
Workshops/Online Briefings	Off-reserve workshops/briefings provide short, educational insight designed to teach participants technical concepts around Nen Ch'eh and receive guidance.
World Café Events	Community World Cafes provide an opportunity for community connection, engagement material sharing and voting important Nen Ch'eh topics.
Specific Group Engagement	Engagement opportunities, NAG Meetings and home visits for specific groups (advisors, youth, Elders, Family Groups, etc.) would provide for a more tailored learning experience and invite more conversation around the Nen Ch'eh process.
Video Production	Producing a Nen Ch'eh video will help to highlight the implications, challenges and opportunity of ratifying a land code and what this means for members wellbeing.
E-voting and Voter Package	Eligible voters will have the option to vote 3 ways; e-voting, mail-in ballot, in-person voting. They will also receive a voter package by email and/or mail which contains all relative information pertaining to the ratification vote.
Direct Telephone Line + Door to Door	The Nen Ch'eh Coordinator direct phone number is provided for those who are interested in reaching out with questions, concerns and for discussion.
Title Transition Table Chief & Council Updates	Monthly internal updates are provided to XGFNG members, external partners, Chief & Council on the state and progress of Nen Ch'eh.
Zoom Meetings for Off-Reserve	Zoom meetings/briefings around Nen Ch'eh will be held for off-reserve members.
Youth Presentations	

Refer to CRP, Community Ratification Process for specific voting parameters.

**11.0 CES WORKPLAN**

The CES workplan will be implemented through a phased approach based on the following process and activities:

Phase/ Timing	Communication Objective	Communication Type
Phase 1: Presenting Information (Ongoing)	Building awareness and understanding, providing background information, and establishing an in-person and on-line presence.	Monthly Newsletters (info + updates) Website Updating Facebook Posts Monthly C & C Briefings NAG Meetings World Café Events
Phase 2: Finalize Document Drafting and Video Production (September 2023 – March 2024)	Finalize the Nen Ch'eh document and formalize with a complete legal review. Invite external individuals out for ESA presentation. Finalize surveying, followed by Land Description Reports. Begin to introduce the ratification process and implication through online portals and video creation. Translate technical documents into digestible work.	Nen Ch'eh Document Environmental Report Land Description Reports Ratification Process Information Packet Video Production
Phase 3: Strengthening Awareness (September 2023 – May 2024)	Facilitating one-on-one dialogue with interested groups/individuals. Informing eligible voting Members about the Community Ratification Process. Providing the necessary documentation and review materials to make an informed vote. Curating opportunity through short-term job contracts. Delivering online workshops/briefings as needed.	Eligible Voter Submission Electronic Voting Acknowledgement Specific Group Engagement/Home Visits Workshops/Online Briefings Direct Phone Calls Short-term job contracts
Phase 4: Ratification Launch and Vote (January 2024 – May 2024)	Ensuring eligible voters have all of the relevant information and firmly understand the voting process.	Info Sessions on Nen Ch'eh and E-voting Voter Packages Mailed/Emailed Vote Dates Executed
Phase 5: Post Vote & Measure of Success (May 2024)	Informing Members of the outcome of the vote and evaluating communication and engagement activities for future initiatives. Begin to invite in law-making procedures and conventions.	Information Package (vote result) Website and Social Media Engagement around success/next steps Law Making Conventions

**WORKPLAN KEY VOTE DATES**

**E-Voting and Phone Voting:** Undecided Dates

**Mail-in Ballot Voting:** Received by post or hand-in by May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**In-Person Voting:** Official Vote Dates on May 8<sup>th</sup> in WL, May 9<sup>th</sup> in XG

**12.0 COMMUNICATION POINT PERSON**

The specific CES roles are outlined below:

<b>Process</b>	<b>Personnel</b>
Eligible Voter Review	C & C Assistant, Verifier, RO. Land Code Coordinator (Public List)
Eligible Voter Data	C & C Assistant, Verifier, RO
Member Mail Out System	Land Code Coordinator, Voting Platform, RO
Signing Authority	Band Administrator, Nenqay Director
Website and Social Media	Land Code Coordinator, Nenqay Director
Engagement Facilitators	Land Code Coordinator, Nenqay Dpt, External Support (LABRC)
NAG Members	Dinah Lulua, Patrick Lulua, Cameron Lulua, Maryann Solomon, Phyllis William, Alex Lulua
Ratification Officer and Translator	Joyce Charleyboy
Land Code Video Creation	Land Code Coordinator, Nenqay Director, Rivervoices
External Resources (technical staff)	Jeremy Bonhomme (LABRC), Puneet Sandhu (ISC), Luke Forbes (LABRC), Mike Farnsworth (Keystone Environmental)

**Point Person Information**

Band Administrator – Dalton Baptiste, [dalton.baptiste@xeni-gwetin.ca](mailto:dalton.baptiste@xeni-gwetin.ca)

C & C Assistant – Not Assigned

Land Code Coordinator – Niki Cesta, [nicole.cesta@xeni-gwetin.ca](mailto:nicole.cesta@xeni-gwetin.ca)

NAG Members – As listed above

Nenqay Director – Michelle Myers, [michelle.myers@xeni-gwetin.ca](mailto:michelle.myers@xeni-gwetin.ca)

Voting Platform – Simply Voting, <https://www.simplyvoting.com/>

Verifier – Al Gross, [agross@telus.net](mailto:agross@telus.net)

Ratification Officer – Joyce Charleyboy, [charleyboyjoyce@gmail.com](mailto:charleyboyjoyce@gmail.com)

Rivervoices – Jeremy Williams, [jeremy@rivervoices.ca](mailto:jeremy@rivervoices.ca)