



Gitsegukla Huwilp

800 Gitsegukla Avenue Gitsegukla, BC V0J 2J3

To: First Nations governments and organizations, the Province of British Columbia, the Chief Forester, forest landscape planning staff, and supporters of landscape-level wildlife protection in northwestern British Columbia

From: Gitsegukla Huwilp

Re: Petition for recognition and implementation of the Regionally Important Wildlife (RIW) instrument for the American Goshawk, recently known as Northern Goshawk, within forest management and Forest Landscape Plan processes in the Skeena Natural Resource Region and Haida Gwaii

Date: June 24, 2026

Dear Hereditary Chiefs, House leaders, Elders, community members, allied First Nations, local governments, scientists, conservation organizations, and public supporters,

Local experts and scientists have been monitoring the American Goshawk in the Skeena Natural Resource Region for 30 years. This monitoring shows a 80-95% decline in occupancy of known breeding areas, linked to clearcut harvest within their territories. Professionals and government decision makers so far have had 125 meetings in the region in recent years involving American Goshawk management. Yet, the massive decline in goshawk population occurred in the region. Parallel monitoring on Haida Gwaii shows the American Goshawk population is now on the brink of extinction. Consequently, American Goshawk could be wiped out from the Skeena Natural Resource Region if population management plans aren't improved.

The ancestral territories of 33 First Nations are in the Skeena Natural Resource Region. Goshawks, the national bird of the Haida, have protection for nests on Haida Gwaii, but not their hunting areas. So, we included Haida Gwaii in the petition. What is more, the goshawk appears on the crest for one of the wilps among the Gitsegukla Huwilp. Therefore, the Gitsegukla Huwilp wants to join hands with other Gitxsan Huwilp, other First Nations and the public to ensure the survival of goshawk.

As a result, this petition respectfully calls for the immediate recognition and application of the Regionally Important Wildlife (RIW) tool under British Columbia's Identified Wildlife Management Strategy for the American Goshawk, recently known as Northern Goshawk, across the Skeena Natural Resource Region. The map for the region appears below in the section called "What we request." [1][2]

In addition, the petition proposes a work plan for next steps to be taken in the appendix. It builds on a formal request made in 2019.



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This request is both lawful and necessary. British Columbia's Identified Wildlife Management Strategy states that Regionally Important Wildlife (RIW) includes species considered important to a region of British Columbia, that rely on habitats not otherwise protected under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, and that may be adversely impacted by forest or range practices. The same provincial policy explains that identified wildlife may be managed not only through Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs) and General Wildlife Measures (GWMs), but also through other management practices specified in strategic or landscape-level plans.[1]

The Province has also stated that Forest Landscape Plans are intended to establish clear outcomes for forest resource values, replace forest stewardship plans over time, and be completed in partnership with First Nations and in collaboration with forest licensees. The Province further states that Forest Landscape Plans must be developed in consultation and cooperation with First Nations whose rights may be affected, and that this framework aligns with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the principles of UNDRIP.[3]

For these reasons, the Gitsegukla Huwilp of the Gitksan and all supporters of this initiative urge British Columbia to ensure that RIW recognition for the American Goshawk becomes an explicit, enforceable part of forest management planning, legal spatial planning, and long-term landscape direction under current and future Forest Landscape Plans in the Skeena Natural Resource Region.[3][1]

Why this petition is needed

Despite multiple applications for the Regionally Important Wildlife (RIW) instrument for goshawks in the Skeena Natural Resource Region since 2015, the British Columbia government has refused to act on them and has instead insisted on a new protocol. Meanwhile, American goshawk populations in the area have been declining rapidly.

There was an attempt in January 2019 to gain recognition for the special legal protection. At the time, a formal request was made by a joint Decision Note from Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRO) Regional Executive Director. There has been no response to this formal request while the goshawk have been heading for extirpation in the Skeena Natural Resource Region.

There is no legal protection for American Goshawk in BC forests. In a volume-based tenure system, any structure purposely left for goshawk can be legally harvested by a third party. For example, in the Gitsegukla Huwilp traditional territory there are examples of a single nest tree standing in a clearcut. There are some "gentlemen's agreements" in the forests for protection of



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wildlife habitat but no-one will go to jail if an agreement is broken. So there are no consequences for bad actors. That's why the current approach for goshawk is so ineffective.

The *Forests and Range Practices Act* has a weak and inadequate Category of Species At Risk, listing only 30 animal species while the B.C. Conservation Data Centre (CDC) shows over 2000 species are at risk. Plant communities also face thousands of threats, with the Category of Species At Risk limited to 45. Choosing the American Goshawk as an "umbrella species" helps protect some of the remaining old-growth ecosystems and all the species connected to them in forest landscape management, benefiting species at risk for the Gitsegukla Huwilp and elsewhere in the Skeena Natural Resource Region.

A recent review of the mainland *atricapillus* subspecies updated the CDC record. Local experts consulted following the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) standard recommended Red-listing the species, but the BC Government changed it to a Blue listing. This setback hinders the Gitsegukla Huwilp's intentions to manage territories based on Gitsegukla goshawks and decades of work by Anne Hetherington, Mike Buirs, and Frank Doyle in protecting the Skeena goshawks. Despite the IUCN standard still considering the subspecies Red-listed, the situation has worsened since 2017. We request the correct status assessment of the Red-listing based on recent committee findings that complies with the IUCN science-based standard methodology.

In addition, it's important to ensure that goshawk is managed in a management area, as grizzly bears, as part of the RIW status under the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS). General Wildlife Measures (GWMs) are required for forest landscapes, not just a patchwork of WHAs.

The Northern Goshawk is already recognized in British Columbia's wildlife and forest policy framework as a species requiring special management attention in some contexts, and the IWMS was specifically created to address impacts of forest and range activities on Crown land. Provincial sources state that identified wildlife tools exist because some important species rely on habitats not otherwise adequately protected by ordinary forest management rules.[4][1]

The legal and planning gap is especially important in landscape-level forest planning. Forest Landscape Plans are now the province's primary mechanism for setting strategic, area-wide outcomes for forests, and they are meant to bridge the gap between broad strategic land-use direction and operational, site-level planning. If RIW for goshawk is not embedded at this stage,



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critical nesting, post-fledging, foraging, movement, and recruitment habitats may remain vulnerable to fragmentation, cumulative disturbance, and loss over the long term.[5][1][3]

What we request

The undersigned petitioners call on the Province of British Columbia and all responsible decision-makers to:

- We ask for the correct status assessment of the Red-listing, based on recent committee findings that follow the IUCN's science-based standard methodology.
- Formally recognize the American Goshawk / Northern Goshawk as Regionally Important Wildlife for the Skeena Natural Resource Region where forest practices threaten habitat values not otherwise protected under existing rules.[1]
- Apply that recognition within all relevant Forest Landscape Plans, forest management plans, legal spatial plans, cumulative-effects assessments, and long-term stewardship frameworks affecting the Skeena Natural Resource Region and Haida Gwaii.[3][1]
- Map, maintain and restore local viable populations, restore limiting habitats for goshawk, including mature and older forest conditions needed for nesting, post-fledging use, prey support, and functional connectivity across the landscape.[5][1]
- Use enforceable spatial measures, including RIW wildlife habitat areas, general wildlife measures, recruitment areas, retention targets, and other landscape-level safeguards where appropriate under existing law and policy.[6][1]
- Ensure that First Nations knowledge, title, rights, stewardship laws, and place-based priorities are central to the design, implementation, monitoring, and amendment of these measures under Forest Landscape Plans.[3]
- Establish management areas, similar to those for grizzly bears, as part of the RIW status under the IWMS.
- Establish long-term implementation and particularly effectiveness monitoring, transparent reporting, and adaptive management so that protection remains effective over the approximate 10-year life of a Forest Landscape Plan (FLP) and beyond.[7][3]

Grounds for support

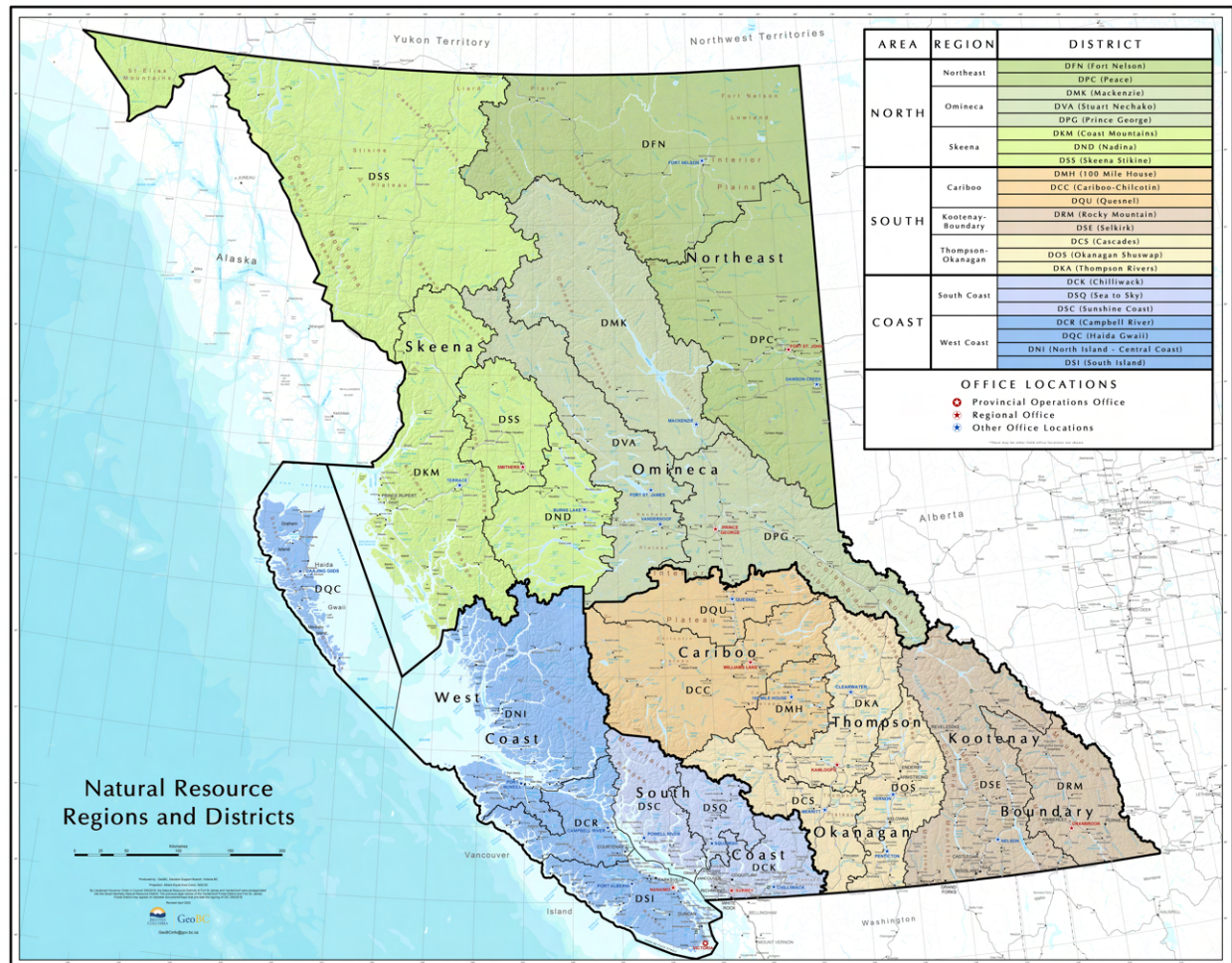
This petition is supported on legal, ecological, and governance grounds.

1. Legal basis. The IWMS expressly includes a Regionally Important Wildlife category under FRPA authorities, and it expressly allows identified wildlife to be managed through strategic or



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Map produced by GeoBC showing the Skeena Natural Resource Region which extends to the Yukon Border along the Alaska Panhandle and Haida Gwaii (revised April 2022)

landscape-level plans in addition to WHAs and GWMs.[1]. The petition could ensure that these plans align with the Delgamuukw/Gisdaywa Decision (1997) which recognizes the Wilp as the primary planning unit for the Gitxsan. What is more, it provides a way to advance relations and honourable interactions for reconciliation of the Gitsegukla Huwilp Ayookxw and the legislative regime of British Columbia. This petition intends to enhance the efforts of the Gitsegukla Huwilp (all the wilps together make its huwilp) to establish its Gwelx ye'enst for the protection and restoration of its territories. The petition could produce similar results for Nisga'a and Tsimshian



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in the region. What is more, the Wet'suwet'en share similar cultural principles and organization so they could share in the petition benefits too.

2. Planning basis. The Province states that FLPs establish outcomes for forest values, operate at the landscape level, and must be developed in consultation and cooperation with affected First Nations.[3]
3. Regional basis. The Skeena Natural Resource Region legally includes the Bulkley-Cassiar, Kalum, Kispiox, Lakes, Morice, and North Coast forest districts, making a region-wide RIW approach both coherent and administratively practical.[2]
4. Ecological basis. Scientific and management literature for Northern Goshawk emphasizes the importance of breeding-area protection and broader habitat conditions, and warns that habitat loss and fragmentation are continuing threats.[8][5]
5. Public-interest basis. Goshawk functions as a high-order forest predator and indicator of old-forest ecosystem condition, so protecting its habitat also supports broader biodiversity, resilience, and forest stewardship objectives.[9][5]

Next steps:

Please see the appendix.

Petition statement for signatures

The undersigned support the Gitsegukla Huwilp of the Gitxsan in calling on the Province of British Columbia to recognize and implement Regionally Important Wildlife protection for the American Goshawk, recently known as Northern Goshawk, in all relevant forest management, legal spatial planning, and long-term Forest Landscape Plan processes for Haida Gwaii, the Skeena Natural Resource Region, including the Bulkley-Cassiar, Kalum, Kispiox, Lakes, Morice, and North Coast Forest Districts.[2][1][3]

The undersigned further call for these protections to be designed and implemented in full consultation and cooperation with affected First Nations, and in a manner consistent with Indigenous rights, land title, stewardship responsibilities, and long-term ecosystem health.[3]

The Gitsegukla Huwilp is the leader for this petition. Thus, it has been done under the letterhead of the Gitsegukla Huwilp to indicate its authenticity. Furthermore, Larry Joseph will manage the petition for the leader of the Huwilp, Simoogit Hanamuxw, who was the first to sign this petition.



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Yours Sincerely,

Simoogit Hanamuxw and
Larry Joseph

Signature section for the petition at the end of the document. Formal petitions for the BC Government require an original signature on paper.

[Alternatively go to the Jotform online petition form by clicking/tapping this link:](#)

(tip: it's easiest to sign the petition using a smartphone so open this email with your smartphone then tap the link shown above)

| Name | Nation / Organization / Community | Title or Role | Contact | Signature | Date |



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APPENDIX:

- [1] Identified Wildlife Management Strategy <https://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/frpa/iwms/>
- [2] [PDF] FOREST REGIONS AND DISTRICTS REGULATION - FAOLEX <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/bc26015.pdf>
- [3] Forest landscape plans - Province of British Columbia <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/forest-landscape-plans>
- [4] [PDF] Implementation Plan for the Recovery of Northern Goshawk https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/species-ecosystems-at-risk/recovery-planning/implementation_plan_for_the_recovery_of_northern_goshawk.pdf
- [5] A Scientific Basis for Managing Northern Goshawk Breeding Areas https://www.hcwildlife.ca/uploads/8/4/9/1/84917238/jem_vol_15_no_2.pdf
- [6] [PDF] ORDER – WILDLIFE HABITAT AREAS Northern Goshawk (Accipiter ... https://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/wha/NOGO_2-671_various_to_2-678.pdf
- [7] [PDF] Forest Landscape Plans: An Information Bulletin - Gov.bc.ca https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/forest-landscape-plans/flp_info_bulletin_for_pilots.pdf
- [8] [PDF] Best Management Practices for Coastal Northern Goshawks ... https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/bc-timber-sales/ems-sfm-certification/business-area/strait-of-georgia/tsg-northern_goshawk_bmp.pdf
- [9] Northern goshawk (Accipiter gentilis laingi): COSEWIC ... <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry/cosewic-assessments-status-reports/northern-goshawk-2013.html>
- [10] Bulkley-Morice Forest Landscape Planning Project - Gov.bc.ca <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/forest-landscape-plans/bulkley-morice-flp>
- [11] [PDF] Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis https://www.env.gov.bc.ca/esd/distdata/species_and_ecosystems_at_risk/for_NOGO%20RT/Coastal%20NoGo%20Habitat%20Model%20Report%20Final%20Draft%20March%202008.pdf
- [12] 2 0 10 https://www.hcwildlife.ca/uploads/8/4/9/1/84917238/stuart-smith_et_al_2012_bmp.pdf
- [13] Helping Goshawks - Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project <https://www.coastwildlife.ca/goshawks>
- [14] Northern Goshawk (accipiter Gentilis Laingi) Post-fledging Areas on Vancouver Island, British Columbia <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2724&context=jrr>
- [15] Tree Farm Licence 37 Forest Landscape Planning Pilot Project <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/forest-landscape-plans/tfl-37-forest-landscape-planning-pilot-project>



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- [16] [PDF] SIR55 - Management of Habitat for Species at Risk under FRPA <https://www.bcfpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SIR55-SAR-Habitat.pdf>
- [17] Inside the Province's New Plans for BC's Forests | The Tyee <https://thetyee.ca/News/2025/02/28/Inside-New-Plans-BC-Forests/>
- [18] Recovery Strategy for the Northern Goshawk laingi subspecies ... <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry/recovery-strategies/northern-goshawk-laingi-proposed-2017.html>
- [19] Forest Practices Board's Feedback on Draft Forest Landscape Plan ... <https://www.bcfpb.ca/release-publications/releases/forest-practices-boards-feedback-on-draft-forest-landscape-plan-and-forest-operations-plan-for-tfl-37/>
- [20] [PDF] FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT MAP - Gov.bc.ca https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/timber-pricing/coast-timber-pricing/coast-appraisal-data-submissions/tfl_tsa_district_map.pdf
- [21] District Map | North Coast Regional District <https://www.ncrdbc.com/about-us/district-map>
- [22] Prince Rupert, North Coast Regional District, British ... - Google <https://www.google.com/maps/search/Prince%20Rupert,%20North%20Coast%20Regional%20District,%20British%20Columbia,%20Canada>
- [23] Old growth strategic review process - Province of British Columbia <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/old-growth-forests/strategic-review-of-old-growth-forest-management>
- [24] Bulkley-Morice Forest Landscape Plan - govTogetherBC - Gov.bc.ca <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/bulkley-morice-flp/>
- [25] Five years on, B.C. fails to deliver Old Growth Strategic Review ... <https://www.wildernesscommittee.org/news/bc-fails-deliver-OGSR-paradigm-shift>
- [26] North Coast Region British Columbia Canada | Trade and Invest BC <https://www.britishcolumbia.ca/about-british-columbia-canada/regions/north-coast/>
- [27] [PDF] Old Growth Strategic Review - B.C. Wildlife Federation <https://bcwf.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Old-Growth-Forest-Strategy-.pdf>
- [28] [PDF] ECOSYSTEMS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA <https://sherwoods-forests.com/Downloads/BGC-zones-of-British-Columbia.pdf>

Next Steps:

Next steps after the “WORKSHOP: Forestry - No clear-cut future?”:

The Regionally Important Wildlife (RIW) is an essential legal, spatial tool to retain or rehabilitate certain wildlife habitats, plant species and structure that standard harvest practices cannot meet, and to level the playing field for operating in special management zones for biodiversity and non-timber values. Having initiated the conversation in the Kalum Public



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Implementation Committee forum on partial-cut harvest, it is important to evolve these areas, in a collaborative approach to adaptive management, to develop and test to make operational and "current practice". This will level the playing field and support light-touch harvest where and when needed and accommodate needs of small-scale operators with skills, equipment, training required. If we want to maintain goshawks and the range of species they represent, we need better tools and different skills.

Next Steps:

Meet with the First Nations and the gov't agencies involved and interested public and groups to minimize problems and welcome ideas and expertise.

Using current expertise, collaborate on options for a Goshawk Sensitive Area with an area-based Community Forest partner to explore options for developing a four-zone Goshawk Sensitive Area, which identifies areas for conservation, special management through selective harvest, to maintain habitat, and different harvest, thinning or other treatments to maintain structural values. Break down the components of a pilot project to test, and collaborate on through webinars or other Communities of Practice

Develop a regional pilot project in an area-based Community Forest to implement options for a four-zone Goshawk Sensitive Area and Tactical Plan. Assess all impacts and gains in a transparent, multi-value evaluation, over a rotation or more.

Training and evaluations from multiple perspectives. Work with Cumulative Effects and Biodiversity planning, including Watershed Integrity and an Old-growth strategy, forest health and other aspects identified.

Extend learning to more areas, based on a Regional Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, First Nations and Gitsegukla Huwilp and their specific Cultural Values and Regional Goshawk Population Stabilization. In like fashion, it would be an opportunity for Western Science professionals, community members in the region, to learn about the forest governance of First Nations and the Gitsegukla Huwilp.

A science-based, coordinated plan for monitoring at implementation and most importantly, effectiveness monitoring.

Background information

a) Comparison of standard Wildlife Habitat Areas vs RIW generated Wildlife Areas, and



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b) Frequently asked questions is needed to provide spatial, legal support in a volume-based tenure.

- The Terrace Workshop is a first step and some of the follow up recommended is collaboratively drafting a Goshawk Sensitive Area (GSA) for Wetziinkwa as a pilot, including a basic Tactical plan outline, based on 4 zone GSA/s. Document the steps and take screen shots for training. Use this as template for other GSAs, based around FN areas. There could be a training webinar. (possibly funded by SIP)

Discussions included: Patchworks, goal of zero/low timber impact through co-location and thinning, PC etc; full-cost, transparent accounting and local jobs. Anticipating fears from licensees and gov't is key, and being prepared to deal with them proactively (e.g. jobs, no cc, AAC impact). It would be helpful for a successful outcome of this petition for RIW if it was supported by gov/licensees.



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Signature section for the Petition Letter: Request to Recognize Regionally Important Wildlife for Northern Goshawk in Forest Landscape Planning for the Skeena Natural Resource Region and Haida Gwaii

Name	Nation/organization/ community	Title or Role	Contact	Signature	Date