



Aboriginal Liaison Program

Annual Report 2024/25



Photo 1: 2024 Spring Semi-Annual Gathering hosted by Nisga'a Nation. Attendees gathered at the Kitsault dockyard after an impressive tour of an 80's mining town lost in time.

Background

The Aboriginal Liaison Program (ALP) was initiated in 2014 as a pilot partnership between the BC Energy Regulator (BCER) and Doig River First Nation. The program aimed to support meaningful relationships that informed compliance monitoring and addressed community concerns related to oil and gas infrastructure development. Direct engagement enhanced communication and transparency in alignment with the priorities of Doig River First Nation. The success of this initiative led to the launch of Project #CC-2016-02 with the support of the BC Oil & Gas Research Innovation Society, allowing for program expansion to multiple First Nations across northern British Columbia, increasing collaborative partnership opportunities.

The ALP is administered by the BCER, with a staff dedicated to support Program activity across the province. Funding for the Program is acquired annually through the BC government, most recently through the Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship. In 2021, the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) became a funding partner, supporting increased participation in federally regulated activities across the north. The 2024/25 program year marks 10 years of successful collaboration for the Aboriginal Liaison Program.

Through ALP funding, First Nations hire a Liaison to directly address community priorities throughout the life cycle of natural resource development and emergency management activities. The ALP enhances communication between natural agency partners, First Nations, industry, and surrounding communities. Program activities include independent monitoring, joint inspections, collaborative road checks, technical training, knowledge exchange, and opportunities to further support Nation to Nation relationships.

The ALP is supported by participation from the following government partners:

Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Ministry of Environment and Parks

Ministry of Forests

Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals

Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

Canada Energy Regulator

BC Energy Regulator

Annual Activity Report: ALP Liaison and Agency Engagement

Overview

Throughout the reporting period, ALP personnel engaged in a broad range of initiatives, including joint field inspections with program partners, independent monitoring, environmental management, emergency preparedness, professional development, technical training and various cultural community activities. Overall engagement levels remained strong throughout the program year, with particular emphasis on collaborative meetings, increased program communication, and gathering program insight from Liaisons directly.

The ALP continued to strengthen regional collaboration through regular working group meetings that bring together First Nations Liaison representatives and natural resource agency staff responsible for regulatory oversight and emergency management. These sessions provide comprehensive updates on regional resource activity, offering a cumulative view of projects underway and those being proposed. The working groups support information sharing, coordinated oversight, and strengthened relationships among partners. In addition to regional meetings, the ALP supported two semi-annual gatherings hosted in First Nation communities. These multi-day events included presentations from Liaisons and government partners highlighting past achievements and upcoming collaborative initiatives. Hosting gatherings within

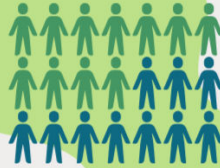
community settings provided valuable opportunities for cultural engagement, knowledge exchange, and deeper relationship-building, further enhancing mutual understanding and partnership effectiveness.

2024 - 2025 At a Glance

Take a look at some key accomplishments within the Aboriginal Liaison Program over the past year

Liaison Positions

Liaison roles continue to be filled, with a new representative from Saik'uz First Nation joining the ALP in February of 2025.



First Nations Participation

Work is underway to support filling two available Liaison positions in the Program's most northern region. A region heavily impacted by recent wildfire activity.

75%

50%

Mentorship

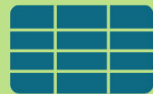
Approximately 50% of Liaisons have been active in the Program for over 5 years. This dynamic creates opportunity for increased mentorship and collaboration in the onboarding of new ALP Liaisons.

Community Engagement

Collectively, Liaisons dedicated approximately 290 days to community engagement related to resource projects and the protection of water, air, and wildlife values.

Enhanced Engagement

Training and development for Liaisons continued to increase throughout the 2024/25 year with 189 days dedicated to training.



10 Years of Program Success

Since 2014, the ALP has continued enhancing collaboration between First Nations, government agencies, and industry in the Natural Resource sector across northern BC.

Field Inspections and Regulatory Collaboration

ALP Liaisons conducted numerous site visits and inspections in partnership with industry representatives and regulatory agencies.

Participating agencies included the BCER, Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals (MINES), Ministry of Environment and Parks (ENV), and Ministry of Forests Natural Resource Officer Service (NROs). Activities included helicopter patrols, wildlife surveys, site visits, mine site tours, and pipeline inspections. These joint efforts strengthened inter-agency coordination and enhanced oversight of resource development activities within participating Nations' territories.

Ongoing collaboration with government partners remained a key component of program delivery. ALP Liaisons also worked closely with CleanBC, Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), CER, Ministry of Forests (MoF), and the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservations Alliance (UFFCA). Representatives participated in various advisory boards and working group tables to ensure Indigenous perspectives and community priorities were incorporated into environmental governance and resource management processes. Liaisons were included in regulatory updates and technical information bulletins from various agencies.

Environmental Monitoring Initiatives

Environmental stewardship remained a central component of ALP engagement during the reporting period. Monitoring activities included the establishment of various baseline studies, fish sampling, water quality testing, invasive species management, wildlife surveys, restoration audits, and shoreline protection projects. These initiatives contributed to data collection, ecological assessment, and the preservation of culturally and environmentally significant areas. Collaboration with partner agencies supported knowledge exchange and strengthened environmental management practices.

A special focus was maintained on the surveillance of chronic wasting disease in British Columbia with frequent updates and information sharing from the Wildlife Branch or the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.

Liaisons conducted extensive environmental monitoring and fieldwork, including wildlife surveys, grizzly snare sampling (91 stations), fish and water quality assessments, soil and algae sampling, sonar surveys, temperature logging, shoreline protection, trail and creek reconnaissance, and camera trap programs. They advanced species-at-risk initiatives, invasive species management, medicinal plant research, moose enhancement, and expanded the Feral Pig Initiative across Treaty 8. Ongoing oversight supported various forestry operations, reclamation, and water treatment monitoring at both active and legacy sites.

ALP representatives participated in regional and national conferences to enhance capacity building and knowledge sharing. Events attended included the Healing the Land Conference, the Ecological Resilience Conference, and in-community Zero Waste initiatives. Participation in these forums facilitated the exchange of best practices, strengthened professional networks, and supported the integration of innovative environmental strategies into program operations.

“If our Haisla members have concerns, they are addressed promptly through our Haisla Communications Department. As ALP Liaison for Haisla, I am involved in the process of gathering information and pursuant correspondence.” – Haisla NRS Environmental Liaison

Emergency Preparedness and Safety Training

Emergency and safety training were prioritized during the reporting period given the intense nature of wildfire activity across the province and continued drought throughout most of BC’s north.

Information sessions were provided to Liaisons regarding wildfire mapping, community preparedness, and wildfire recovery management – including managing burn area access with increased public interest related to mushroom harvesting. Liaisons were also provided with direct access to Emergency Management online

or in-person training to support possible Emergency Operation Centers or Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre deployments.

ALP Liaisons completed various training in swift water rescue, drone operations, dangerous animal awareness and more. These initiatives enhanced field safety, improved response capabilities, and supported the effective execution of monitoring and inspection activities in diverse and potentially hazardous environments.

Cultural and Community Engagement

ALP Liaisons actively supported cultural and community-led programming. Activities included trail clearing, medicinal plant training, community meetings, food share programs, youth conferences, and seasonal cultural events such as ice fishing and Salmon Fest. Cultural engagement further promoted intergenerational knowledge transfer, land-based learning, and community well-being. Participation in these activities reinforced the integration of environmental stewardship with cultural values and practices.

Program Participation

The ALP is currently extended to select First Nations across northern BC. The program is divided into three key geographical regions including the northwest, central, and northeast –each supported through a central administrative team facilitated by the BCER.

ALP agreements support Liaison activity across northern B.C. communities, rooted in the priorities and interests of the communities they directly represent. Agreements are extended to support both funded and self-funded positions, ensuring adequate supports, confidentiality and personnel expectations are maintained across the program.

Each participating First Nation develops an ALP structure that best supports their unique governance, values, and priorities. Liaison employment is fully directed by participating First Nations on a full-time and annual basis. Liaisons must meet employment qualifications outlined by the First Nation and program agreement terms. Each Liaison is responsible to uphold the Liaison Code of Conduct and participate in regular program meetings for their region. The First Nation maintains responsibility for the day-to-day work scheduling, safety training, and ensuring safe work practices. Currently, Liaison positions are available in both Fort Nelson First Nation and Prophet River First Nation.

The ALP administration staff works closely with partner First Nations to provide support for recruitment and retention of Liaison positions. Below is a list of the ALP’s participating First Nation partners for 2024-2025 and the 24 communities they may support (see Table 1).

Table 1 – List of Participating First Nations and ALP Agreements for Fiscal Year 2024/25

ALP Agreements	Liaison Positions		First Nations	Communities
	Program Funded	Self-Funded		
Lake Babine Nation	1		Lake Babine Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fort Babine - Old Fort - Tachet - Donald's Landing - Woyette
Blueberry River First Nations		2	Blueberry River First Nations	Blueberry River
Carrier Sekani First Nations – Carrier Sekani First Nation Society	2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation (Burns Lake Band) - Nadleh Whut'en - Saik'uz First Nation - Stellat'en First Nation - Tl'azt'en Nation - Takla Nation - Nak'azdli Whut'en 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burns Lakes - Nadleh Reserve (Fort Fraser) - Saik'uz Reserve (South of Vanderhoof) - Stellat'en Reserve (Fraser Lake) - Takla Lake Reserve (Takla Landing) - Tachie Reserve (Stewart Lake) - Palling Indian Reserve No. 1 - IR #1 (Fort St. James)
Doig River First Nation	1	1	Doig River First Nation	Doig River
Fort Nelson First Nation	1		Fort Nelson First Nation	Fort Nelson
Haisla Nation	1		Haisla Nation	Kitimaat Village
Nisga'a Lisims Government	1	5	Nisga'a Lisims Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gingolx (Seafood Capital of the Nass) - Gitwinksihlkw (Place of Lizards) - Laxgalts'ap (Where River Meets Sea) - Gitlaxt'aamiks (Capital of Nisga'a Nation)
Prophet River First Nation	1		Prophet River First Nation	Prophet River
Saulteau First Nations	1		Saulteau First Nations	IR #169, East Moberly Lake
West Moberly First Nations	1		West Moberly First Nations	IR #168, West Moberly Lake
Program Totals	10 Liaisons	8 Liaisons	16 First Nations	24 Communities

Looking Ahead

In 2024, the ALP celebrated its 10th year of successful collaboration. This milestone signified the importance of legislative and policy advancements that support First Nations continued involvement in the protection, oversight, and management of natural resources in British Columbia. Throughout the program year, the administration team focused on identifying key areas of past program successes and opportunities to enhance future outcomes.

In addition to the program's key semi-annual gatherings, a consulting firm further supported continued engagement with program practitioners by facilitating a special multi-day session hosted in Vancouver, BC. The session included opportunities for direct engagement with ALP Liaisons and funding partners to better understand individual needs, enhance relationships, and create alignment for future program delivery. Outcomes from the session, including current and future implementation opportunities are outlined in the following sections.

Mandate Driven Partnerships

Liaisons remained focused on the continuation of mandate driven partnerships to ensure clarity in program commitments and delivery in accordance with protocol and individual governance structures.

Funding Stability

Continuity and stabilization of funding commitments was identified as key to advancing funding certainty. Liaisons indicated an interest in diversifying program funding sources to align with individual economic reconciliation objectives and Nation-building initiatives. Another interest was to ensure full-cost coverage of Liaison roles and related program expenses, rather than the cost recovery model currently utilized.

Enhanced Joint Inspections

Joint inspections between Liaisons, agency partners, and industry remain a core aspect of the ALP. Liaisons develop annual workplans identifying core areas of focus based on their experience, interests, and priorities of the First Nation. At times, inspection activities are limited to active projects in the region and construction phases. Joint inspection activities generally occur with individual Liaisons, creating space for sharing viewpoints and end enhancing outcomes. Agency partners routinely engage Liaisons regarding upcoming activities; however, some opportunities do become available on short notice and participation may be limited. Optimization of joint inspection planning was identified as an opportunity to enhance collaboration and communication across the program.

Expanded Training

Capacity development remained a top priority to support First Nations in advancing their individual ALP's. Liaisons highlighted the value of accessing agency training opportunities and information sharing sessions that support enhanced and up-to-date knowledge on current topics of interest. Additionally, Liaisons recommended the program maintain a registry of relevant courses that can be updated and shared regularly.

Mentorship & Succession Planning

Liaisons shared the importance of dedicating sustained funding, time and structural support to mentorship and succession planning across ALP roles to ensure long-term continuity and organizational resilience. Emphasizing Nations should lead the development of mentorship and succession strategies grounded in their own mandates and governance systems, with flexible support from program administrators and funding contributors as needed. All planning efforts should incorporate seven generations visioning to promote intergenerational sustainability. Mentorship must be recognized not only as an individual leadership development tool but also as a broader community capacity building strategy essential to strengthening self-determination.

Communications

Recommendations included strengthening communications at multiple levels to enhance coordination, transparency and relationship-building across the program. At the agency level, Liaisons supported the development of a comprehensive communications strategy to strengthen relationships with provincial and federal partners to improve agency attendance and opportunities and refresh the steering committee and regional working groups in consultation with all roles. Liaisons indicated support for updating manuals and processes to clarify meeting structures and participation expectations. Additionally, Liaisons supported regular check-ins between program administrators and supervisors to define roles and responsibilities.

While enhancing communication across the program is key, external communication is also imperative to further support the Liaisons role in community.

Highlighting a Year of Achievement

The ALP had an incredible year filled with excitement for future program outcomes and reflection on collaborative efforts that have build the program of today. The year highlighted 10 years of commitment from program partners with celebrations at each gathering. Here are some images of program activities that occurred through the year.



Photo 2: 2024 Spring Semi-Annual Liaison Meeting hosted by Nisga'a Nation. This photo is from presentation day in the Nisga'a Lisims Government chambers.



Photo 3: A group stop visiting Gingolx Village as part of cultural day for the Semi-Annual Liaison Meeting.



Photo 4: A traditional smoked seal soup dinner held in the Nisga'a Museum entrance.



Photo 5: 2024 Fall Semi-Annual Liaison Meeting hosted by Saulteau First Nations. This photo was taken at Carbon Lake, an important cultural area for Saulteau members.



Photo 6: Willow Creek Mine restoration tour as part of the Saulteau Semi-Annual Liaison Meeting.



Photo 7: A visit to view the dinosaur tracks located in Saulteau First Nations territory.

Photo 8: 2024 Fall Semi-Annual Liaison Meeting presentation day.

