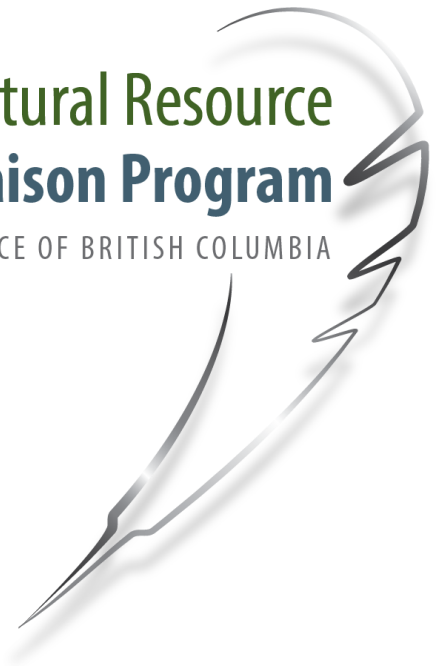


# Natural Resource Aboriginal Liaison Program

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



## Project CC-2016-02 2023-24 Annual Summary Report

August 2024



# Background

In 2014, the BC Energy Regulator (BCER), formally the BC Oil and Gas Commission, and Doig River First Nation (DRFN) piloted a program to build meaningful relationships, provide involvement in compliance monitoring, and address DRFN concerns related to oil and gas resource development through direct interaction between a DRFN member and Commission staff.

The success of this initiative led to Project #CC-2016-02, the First Nation Environmental Monitor (Liaison) Program (the Program), accepted by the BC Oil and Gas and Innovation Society (OGRIS) and implemented by the BCER and the Ministry of Water, Land, Resource Stewardship (formally the Ministry of Forests, Land, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development). The Program provided for expansion to other First Nations as well as inclusion of other government natural resource agencies and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness.

The Program, in addition to its objectives, promotes collaborative Indigenous participation in natural resource compliance and stewardship monitoring and emergency management within their territory. Government regulatory staff are provided opportunity to learn about First Nations community, culture, and traditional knowledge through direct interaction with Liaisons and their communities.

## Current State

The Program has evolved since initiation and is now known provincially as the Natural Resource Aboriginal Liaison Program (ALP), guided by a steering committee consisting of agency and Liaison representatives. In 2023-24, the ALP consisted of 10 agreements for 11 Liaison positions representing 16 First Nations and 24 Indigenous Communities. Two additional Liaisons have been self-funded by participating First Nations, bringing the total to 13 (see Table 2). Government agencies participating in the ALP include 13 agencies in six provincial Ministries, as well as involvement from two non-provincial agencies (See Table 1).

**Table 1 – List of Participating Government Agencies**

Participating Government Agency
BC Ministry of Forests
- Compliance & Enforcement
- BC Wildfire Service
- Fish, Wildlife & Habitat Management
BC Ministry of Energy and Mines
BC Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship
BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation
BC Energy Regulator
BC Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy:
- Conservation Officer Service
- Environmental Assessment Office
- Environmental Protection & Sustainability
Alberta Energy Regulator
Canada Energy Regulator

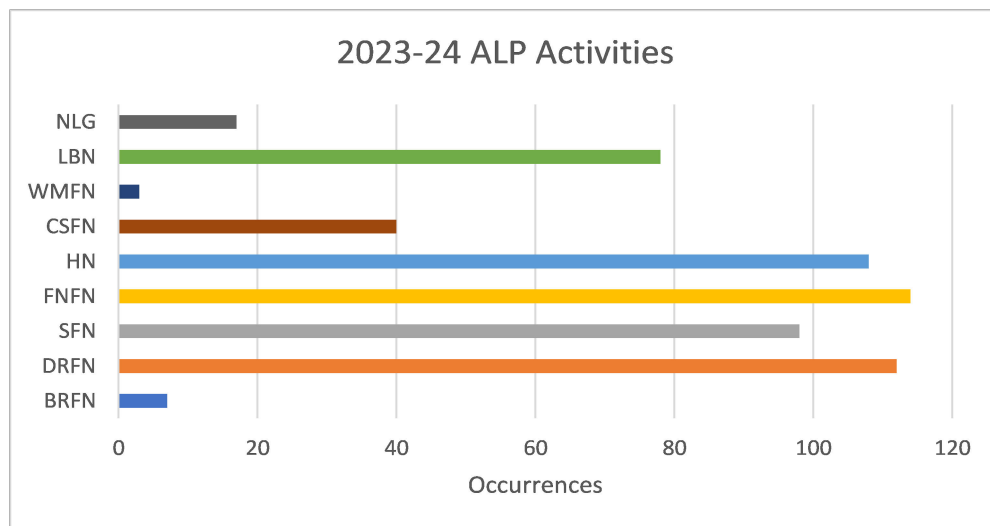
**Table 2 – List of First Nations and ALP Agreements**

10 ALP Agreements	Liaison Positions		First Nations	Communities
	Funded	Self-Funded		
Lake Babine Nation (LBN)	1		Lake Babine Nation	- Fort Babine - Old Fort - Tachet - Donald's Landing - Woyette
Blueberry River First Nations (BRFN)		2	Blueberry River First Nations	Blueberry River
Carrier Sekani First Nations (CSFN) (administered by CSFN Society)	2	1	- Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation (Burns Lake Band) - Nadleh Whut'en - Saik'uz First Nation - Stelat'en First Nation - Takla Lake First Nation - Tl'azt'en Nation - Wet'suwet'en First Nation	- Burns Lakes - Nadleh Reserve (Fort Fraser) - Saik'uz Reserve (South of Vanderhoof) - Stelat'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 (DRFN)	1		Doig River First Nation	Doig River
Fort Nelson First Nation (FNFN)	1		Fort Nelson First Nation	Fort Nelson
Haisla Nation (HN)	1		Haisla Nation	Kitimaat Village
Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG)	1		Nisga'a Lisims Government	- 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 (PRFN)	1		Prophet River First Nation	Prophet River
Saulteau First Nations (SFN)	1		Saulteau First Nations	IR #169, East Moberly Lake
West Moberly First Nations (WMFN)	1		West Moberly First Nations	IR #168, West Moberly Lake

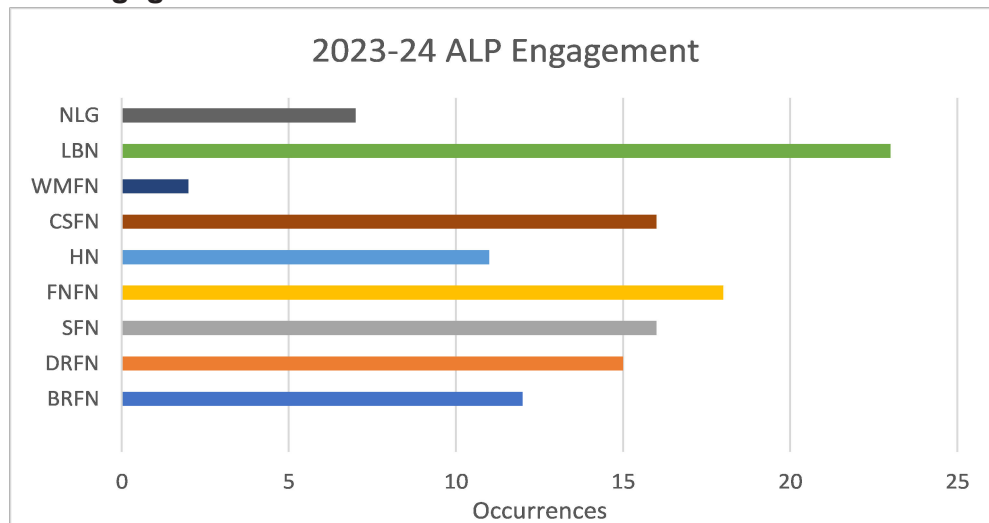
# Key Accomplishments

From April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, Liaisons and agency staff participated in numerous ALP activities, including Natural Resource joint field inspections and training activities (see Figure 1). The graph captures activities the ALP engaged in, such as meetings and working groups with Natural Resource Agencies (see Figure 2). Activity levels were impacted by the severe wildfire season in the North, which resulted in community evacuations and a focus on emergency management and communication. Additionally, there were lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and many unfortunate losses in the communities. Nevertheless, the participating liaisons remained actively engaged in the program and enjoyed many in-person opportunities. The capacity of Liaisons throughout the fiscal year may affect the activity levels of participating First Nations in the ALP.

**Figure 1 – 2023-24 ALP Activities**



**Figure 2 – 2023-24 ALP Engagement**





# 2023-24 Activity Highlights

- The 2023 Fall Semi-Annual Liaison Meeting, hosted by Blueberry River First Nations and the BC Energy Regulator, was a considerable success. It provided an invaluable opportunity to learn about BRFN culture, for many new Liaisons to meet each other, build relationships with Natural Resource Agency partners, and the new BCER ALP team.
- Regional emergency exercises were coordinated by the BC Energy Regulator and Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) in Prince George and Terrace. These exercises saw liaisons work with local government, industry, and government representatives to address emergency scenarios. The 2023 wildfire season has been very busy and has taken a lot of capacity in communities and ministry resources.
- Blueberry River First Nations and Doig River First Nation welcomed new Liaisons, who have been actively engaged in various activities and community initiatives.
- The Fort Nelson First Nation Liaison collaborated with BC Parks on a new initiative to incorporate Indigenous and FNFN content into the signage at Liard Hot Springs, north of Muncho Lake. He also played a crucial role in the Emergency Operations Center, addressing the ever-changing wildfire conditions in Fort Nelson.
- After advocating since 2017, Lake Babine Nation secured funding for their own Land Guardian program. This initiative, led by the Liaison, culminated in the completion of an intensive five-week land guardian training program in 2023-24.
- The BCER ALP team welcomed a new Director of the Aboriginal Liaison Program, who has been instrumental in enhancing engagement and initiatives to support Liaisons.
- Doig River First Nation Liaisons have been actively involved in joint inspections, focusing on wildlife stewardship and cultural activities such as the cabin building program and cultural trails program.
- Saulteau First Nations collaborated closely with the Royal BC Museum and the University of Victoria to preserve and map a dinosaur track site, showcasing a wonderful opportunity for conservation collaboration.
- Many Liaisons are leading initiatives and actively involved in Chronic Wasting Disease of deer and elk testing and monitoring within their communities. They participated in training programs and community engagement sessions to promote this crucial work.

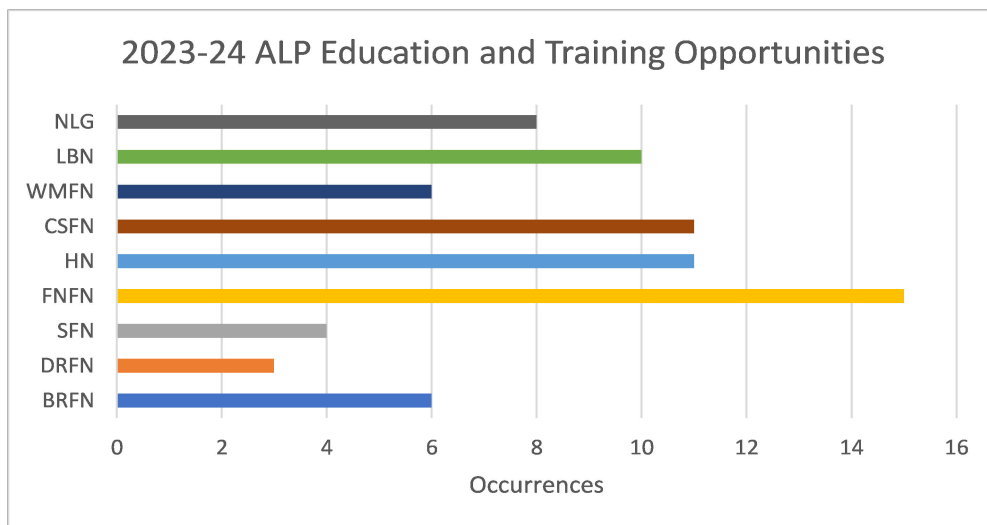


# Progress Towards Objectives

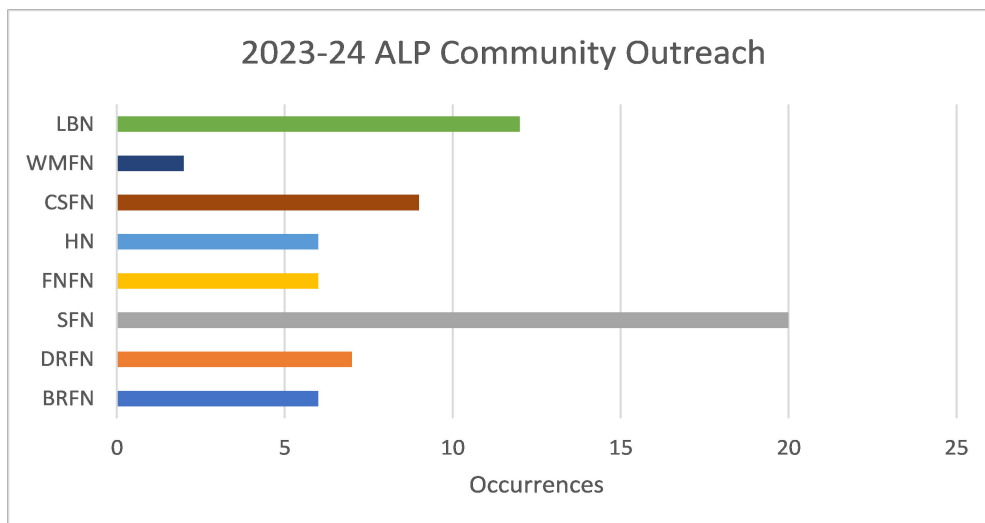
Supporting Liaisons as trusted resources within their communities remains a core focus for the ALP. As of this report, liaisons have participated in 40 training activities, accumulating approximately 500 hours of education and training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of compliance, stewardship, and emergency management. Much of this training was provided and facilitated by various agencies. ALP participants dedicated approximately 488 hours to community engagement, fostering a better understanding of resource development and the protection of water, air, and wildlife values. Figures 3 and 4 summarize the education, training, and community engagement efforts.

A First Nations Engagement survey conducted by the BCER in 2019 emphasized the ALP's cultural sensitivity and highlighted the strong support within Indigenous communities for its continuation and expansion.

**Figure 3 – 2023-24 ALP Education and Training Activities**



**Figure 4 – 2023-24 ALP Community Outreach**





# Plans for 2024-25

The BC Energy Regulator has implemented operational adjustments to enhance engagement between liaisons and agencies. The ALP team is focused on resuming in-person meetings to further strengthen relationships among all participants.

Currently, ALP plans for 2024-25 include:

- **Development of the BC Energy Regulator team:** Enhancing the team's capacity to better support liaisons and the ALP program and creating more opportunities for collaboration.
- **Assisting in community driven initiatives:** Three liaisons are actively involved in food security and distribution initiatives. Continuing these efforts is very important to them, and they take great pride in their work.
- **Providing online training for liaisons:** Providing comprehensive information on available online and in-person training to enhance knowledge for both personal and community interests. This will include informational webinars delivered by agency staff. Additionally, a collection of courses and web links will be hosted on the ALP SharePoint site, along with recorded webinars for future reference.
- **Increasing liaison involvement in emergency management:** Working with EMCR to offer liaisons more opportunities in emergency management and to strengthen their roles within their communities. Training will equip liaisons to be valuable resources during seasonal floods, fires, and other emergencies, supporting their communities, EMCR, and BCWS.
- **Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the program!** Honouring the hard work and dedication of the Liaisons and looking towards the future to further enhance the program for both Liaisons and their communities with our agency partners.





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