Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly

What We Heard

3299 River Ranch Road Property

Over the last few weeks, the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly has been meeting with members to listen, learn, and gather guidance for the feasibility studies now underway. These conversations are an important first step in understanding what matters most to nɬeʔképmx and how future projects can reflect community values, priorities, and long-term vision.

WHAT WE DID

Between November 17–26, the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly, supported by Steel River Group, hosted nine in-person engagement sessions across the eight Participating Bands and in Merritt. Each five-hour session created space for members to learn about the feasibility study for the 3299 River Ranch Road Property, ask questions, and share their experiences and ideas.

Members were invited to complete three project surveys, including one focused on the Resort Property. The stories, concerns, and priorities shared during these sessions form the foundation of this What We Heard summary for the 3299 River Ranch Road Property.

329 Surveys Completed

ABOUT THE PROJECT

CNA has acquired a 15.4-acre property in Merritt that offers strong potential for future community-led uses. The land includes two zoning areas: 4.3 acres of C3 regional commercial land and 11.1 acres of R8 high-density residential land, giving CNA flexibility to explore a mix of cultural, community, educational, and business opportunities.

As plans are explored, the focus is on options that align with nɬeʔképmx values and reflect what members want to see on this site. This work is part of a broader commitment to shaping a space that genuinely responds to community voices and long-term priorities.

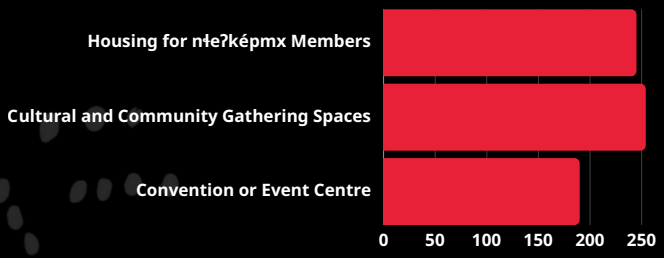
KEY THEMES

Housing is the top priority.
People want more safe and affordable homes for families, youth, and those facing hard living situations.

Cultural and community space is important.
Members want a longhouse-inspired or wellness space that supports gathering, learning, and cultural identity.

A convention centre is also needed.
Members described a community-run venue that can be rented for celebrations, meetings, feasts, training, and other events, designed to serve both families and the wider community.

"When you think about the 3299 River Ranch Road property, what should be its main purpose or focus?"



"What benefits should CNA members gain from development of this land?"

Affordable housing opportunities
Members want safe, attainable homes for families, youth, and elders. In the feasibility study, we will assess how the site can support housing options that fit community needs, and we will ensure housing remains a core consideration in land-use planning and financial modeling.

Job creation and training programs
Many members want development to bring employment, skills training, and long-term economic opportunity. In the study, we will evaluate which development options create meaningful jobs for nɬeʔképmx people and how training pathways can be built into construction, operations, and long-term management.

Spaces for youth, elders, culture, or wellness
Members emphasized culturally grounded spaces that bring people together and support well-being. The feasibility work will include program needs, space requirements, and design considerations that reflect youth programming, elder involvement, cultural use, and wellness activities.

Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly

Top Housing Priorities (R8)

Affordable rental housing
The strongest need identified by members, supporting those facing high housing costs or unstable living situations.

Elders' housing
Safe, accessible homes that allow elders to live comfortably and stay connected to community.

Townhomes or small family units
Practical homes for young families an returning members who need stable, family-oriented housing.

Who the housing should serve:
Results showed strong support for prioritizing nɬeʔképmx members who want to return to Merritt, members experiencing housing need, and CNA students or trainees who require stable housing while they study or train.

Top Commercial Priorites (C3)

Museum or Cultural Display Space
Members supported space to share nɬeʔképmx history, art, and teachings, creating a visible cultural presence along the highway.

Café, Restaurant, or Food Service
This option received strong interest as a small, welcoming place to gather, eat, and showcase local or traditional foods.

Cultural Tourism or Artisan Marketplace
Many supported a marketplace for local artists and craftspeople, strengthening cultural tourism and providing opportunities for economic activity.

Community Perspective on Partnerships
Most members support partnerships when they align with CNA values and create clear community benefits. Many prefer a cautious, case-by-case approach, and a smaller group wants the development to remain fully CNA-owned to keep long-term control.

CONCERNS WE HEARD

Environmental Impacts and Stewardship Concerns

Many members shared worries about how development could affect the land, including wildlife, water, vegetation, and overall ecological balance. Fire risk came up often as well, especially given the landscape and recent climate patterns. Members want to be sure that any future use of this site respects the land, protects what is already there, and reflects the stewardship values that guide nɬeʔképmx communities.

Cultural Integrity and Appropriate Use of the Land

A large number of members spoke about the need to protect cultural identity and ensure the property is used in a way that aligns with nɬeʔképmx values. Some shared concerns about the land being pushed toward commercial uses that do not reflect community priorities or cultural presence. Members want to feel confident that this place will continue to represent who they are, support cultural connection, and honour the principles that guide CNA.

Traffic, Safety, and Infrastructure Pressures

Members also raised practical concerns about how development could affect traffic, safe access, parking, and overall infrastructure capacity. With the site's visibility and highway location, many pointed out the need for careful planning so the area remains safe and manageable as activity grows. The message was clear: development should fit the realities of the land and support safe movement for everyone.

NEXT STEPS

Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly is beginning a feasibility study for the 3299 River Ranch Road property. This study helps determine what is possible on the land before any decisions are made.

Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly will review community input, examine zoning and environmental conditions, and develop early concept options based on what members shared. Once this work is complete, CNA will share the concept options with members and leadership in the full feasibility study.

The study keeps the process exploratory, and community voices will continue to guide the direction.

Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly

What We Heard

n?iyecin e ?iswe+ Resort Property (Surrey Lake)

Over the last few weeks, the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly has been meeting with members to listen, learn, and gather guidance for the feasibility studies now underway. These conversations are an important first step in understanding what matters most to n+e?képmx.

WHAT WE DID

340 Surveys Completed

Between November 17–26, the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly, supported by Steel River Group, hosted nine in-person engagement sessions across the eight Participating Bands and in Merritt. Each five-hour session created space for members to learn about the feasibility study for the n?iyecin e ?iswe+ Resort Property, ask questions, and share their experiences and ideas.

Members were invited to complete three project surveys, including one focused on the Resort Property. The stories, concerns, and priorities shared during these sessions form the foundation of this What We Heard summary for the n?iyecin e ?iswe+ Resort Property.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly is carrying out a feasibility study to understand the future potential of the n?iyecin e ?iswe+ Resort Property at Surrey Lake. This 9.22-acre off-grid site, purchased in 2024, includes a main house, several cabins, a washhouse, solar-diesel power systems, wells, storage buildings, lake access, and open recreation areas. The study looks at the condition of these existing features, as well as the environmental, cultural, and regulatory considerations that guide responsible land use.

The purpose of this work is to learn what the land can support, where there may be opportunities, and what members feel is most meaningful for this place. The Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly is exploring a wide range of possibilities, from seasonal gatherings and cultural programming to other uses identified by community. Throughout this process, no decisions have been made about development. The focus is on listening, gathering facts, and ensuring any future direction honours n+e?képmx values, teachings, and long-term community well-being.

KEY THEMES

From all the feedback shared, members were clear about the types of uses that feel right for the n?iyecin e ?iswe+ Resort Property. The strongest support was for uses that keep the site connected to culture, land, family, and community well-being.

Cultural and Community Connection
Members want this place to support cultural practices, gatherings, and teachings. People spoke about the importance of a space that reflects n+e?képmx identity and strengthens community connection.

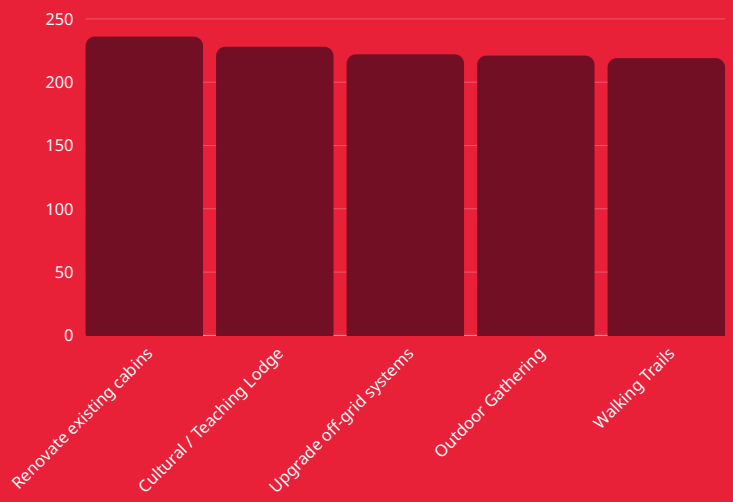
Youth and Elder Camps
There is strong support for programs that bring youth and Elders together for learning, sharing stories, and building relationships on the land.

Land-Based Activities
Hunting, fishing, harvesting, and spending time on the land remain important to many members. People want to continue these activities in a safe, respectful way.

Healing and Wellness
Many members see the property as a good place for healing, through nature, culture, and time away from daily pressures.

Seasonal Family Use
Members want opportunities for families to enjoy the lake and land together, in a way that keeps the property natural and welcoming.

Members highlighted a few key upgrades that would make the property safer, more welcoming, and better suited for cultural and family use. The top infrastructure priorities are:



Membership also highlighted several other needs, including a shared kitchen and dining space, improved washroom facilities, additional cabins or camping areas, and interest in traditional spaces such as a Sweat Lodge. Many members also emphasized keeping the site rustic and small, with upgrades that support comfort without overdeveloping the land.

Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS FROM MEMBERS

- **Keep it natural and protect the lake.** Water quality and wildlife protection were the most frequently selected priorities.
- **Improve what exists before building new.** Members want upgraded cabins, better utilities, safety improvements, and clean spaces.
- **Stay off-grid and sustainable.** Most members like the solar-diesel system and want energy, water, and waste systems that are safe and environmentally responsible.
- **Build spaces for learning.** Strong support for environmental education, cultural workshops, traditional knowledge programs, and youth stewardship.
- **Balance community use with selective visitors.** Many members are open to limited, well-managed public access—as long as the site remains primarily for nɬeʔképmx people.
- **Members see themselves using it.** Most plan to visit one to several times a year, and many are open to volunteering or helping with stewardship activities.
- **Comfort matters, but keep it rustic.** Members prefer a simple, welcoming site that is functional but not overdeveloped.

CONCERNS WE HEARD

Protecting the Land and Lake

Strong concern about environmental impacts to water, wildlife, and the natural landscape.

Overdevelopment

Worry that the site could become too commercial or lose its natural, quiet character.

Who the Property is for

Clear split between members who want it for members only and those open to limited, carefully managed public access.

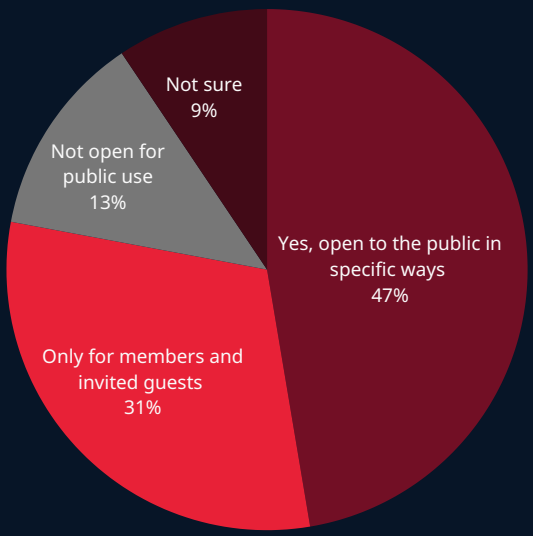
Safety and Behaviour

Desire to prevent alcohol, drugs, and unsafe activity to keep the site family-friendly.

Infrastructure capacity

Questions about what the off-grid systems can support and the cost of maintaining upgrades.

"Do you think the property should be open to visitors, partners, or the public in some capacity?"



NEXT STEPS

The Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly will now bring together what we heard from members with the technical work underway on the nʔiyecin e ʔiswɬ Resort Property. Over the coming weeks, the project team will review the site's infrastructure, environmental conditions, cultural considerations, and zoning requirements alongside the community priorities shared through the surveys and engagement sessions.

Using this information, the Assembly will develop a set of feasible options for how the property could be used in the future. These options will be shared back with leadership and membership through the completed feasibility study before any decisions are made. The goal is to ensure the path forward reflects nɬeʔképmx values, protects the land and lake, and supports the long-term well-being of members and future generations.

Ashcroft Indian Band · Coldwater Indian Band · Siska Indian Band

Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly

What We Heard

Indigenous Family Inclusive Treatment and Healing Centre

Over the last few weeks, the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly has been meeting with members to listen, learn, and gather guidance for the feasibility studies now underway. These conversations are an important first step in understanding what matters most to nɬeʔképmx and how future projects can reflect community values, priorities, and long-term vision.

WHAT WE DID

332 Surveys Completed

Between November 17–26, the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly, supported by Steel River Group, hosted nine in-person engagement sessions across the eight Participating Bands and in Merritt. Each five-hour session created space for members to learn about the feasibility study for the potential of a Indigenous Treatment and Healing Centre, ask questions, and share their experiences and ideas.

Members were invited to complete three project surveys, including one focused on the potential of a Indigenous Treatment and Healing Centre. The stories, concerns, and priorities shared during these sessions form the foundation of this What We Heard summary.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly is assessing the potential development of a Treatment Centre to support healing, recovery, and culturally guided wellness for members. Because this work is at an early stage, the priority has been to listen to the community and understand what people feel is most important for the Centre's purpose, programming, and location.

Engagement sessions and surveys were held to gather member perspectives on how a Treatment Centre should operate, the cultural principles it must uphold, and the conditions that would make the site safe, accessible, and meaningful. Members also shared thoughts on possible locations within the territory and the factors that should guide that decision.

KEY THEMES

Core Healing Services

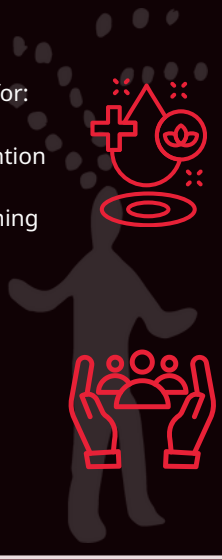
Members most often identified the need for:

- Trauma-informed counselling
- Addictions treatment & relapse prevention
- Peer support / healing circles
- Mental health and wellness programming

Family Supports

Most frequently selected family needs:

- Childcare
- Youth and family programming
- Family visiting and gathering spaces
- Parenting supports



Cultural Foundations

The highest-rated priorities across all cultural and healing questions included:

- Land-based healing (access to lakes, forests, trails)
- Space for ceremony (sweatlodge, prayer room, teachings)
- Teachings and support from Elders
- Cultural activities and language spaces

Healing Environment

Top-selected design elements members want the Centre to include:

- Quiet, natural surroundings
- Culturally expressive design
- Calming, private spaces

Preferred Locations

Most frequently selected locations were:

1. **Merritt-area territory (outside town)**
   – Central, accessible, but must not be in town.
2. **Lake-based natural areas (e.g., Gwen Lake, Surrey Lake)**
   – Quiet, secluded, ideal for land-based healing.
3. **Remote or on-reserve locations**
   – Provide cultural safety, privacy, and connection to territory.

Locations Members Do Not Want

Top rejected areas were:

- Inside Merritt town (including downtown)
- Major cities (e.g., Vancouver)
- High-traffic or unsafe areas

Overall: Members want the Centre on the land, in a natural setting, outside populated areas, and within nɬeʔképmx territory.

Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly

ADDTIONAL INSIGHTS FROM MEMBERS

What Worked Well

The questionnaire asked people who had previous healing or treatment experience to share what worked well for them. Their answers highlighted three main themes.

Family and Community Support

People felt more successful when they had encouragement, check ins, and a sense of connection.

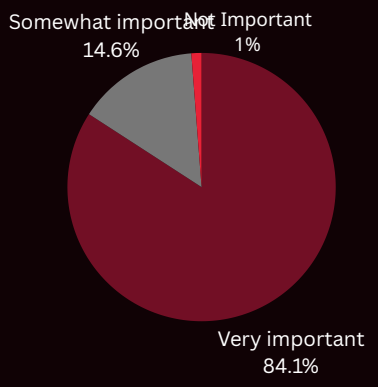
Cultural Practices

Sweat lodge, talking circles, elder guidance, and land-based activities helped people feel grounded and understood.

Being Away from Negative Environments

A calm and safe setting made it easier to focus on healing and break unhealthy patterns.

"How important do you think it is to have an Indigenous treatment and healing centre in our territory that is grounded in nɬeʔképmx values?"



How nɬeʔképmx Could Help Guide This Work

The question asked how nɬeʔképmx could help decide whether a Family Inclusive Indigenous Treatment and Healing Centre is the right path. Three main themes emerged.

Cultural and Elder Guidance

Elders and knowledge keepers should help guide decisions so the work reflects nɬeʔképmx teachings.

Community Input and Participation

Community members can shape ideas through gatherings, surveys, and discussions.

Family Voices

Families should be included since the centre would support them alongside individuals.

CONCERNS WE HEARD

Transportation

Long travel distances, limited transit, and high fuel costs make it difficult for people to reach treatment. A local centre would ease this burden.

Wait Times

Delays in intake, detox placement, and program admission interrupt readiness for healing. Faster and clearer access pathways are needed.

Location Barriers

Most services are far from nɬeʔképmx communities and do not reflect local realities. A regional centre would remove distance-based obstacles and strengthen cultural connection.

Cost

Related expenses, such as travel, child care, and time away from work, limit people's ability to attend treatment. Supports must respond to the full cost of healing.

After Care

People need sustained support once they return home. Lack of follow up and community connection increases the risk of relapse, highlighting the need for structured after care.

NEXT STEPS

Over the next phase, the project team will focus on identifying potential locations for the centre and reviewing each option through nɬeʔképmx values, community priorities, cultural considerations, and practical needs.

Based on this information, CNA will outline a viable location and development options for the community to consider. These options will be shared with leadership and membership through the final feasibility Study. The intention is to ensure the chosen path supports wellness, protects the land, and reflects the long-term vision of nɬeʔképmx people.

Ashcroft Indian Band · Coldwater Indian Band · Siska Indian Band