



...these stories, this language, these ways, and this land are the only
valuables we can give you, but life is in them for those who know
how to ask and how to learn...

(Cajete, 1994).

President's Report – October 07, 2025

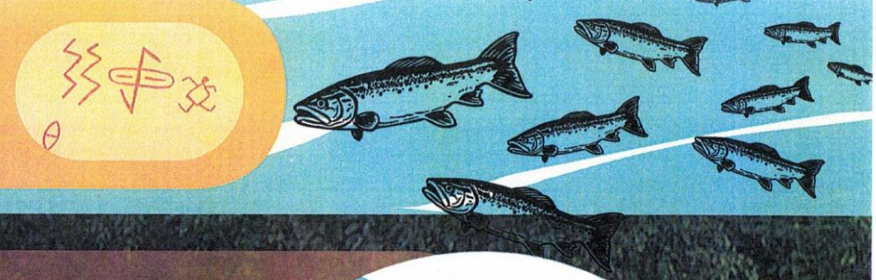
- Happenings around NVIT
- Stuwix Naturalization Project
- Board Indigenizing of Policy



STUWI(x) Naturalization Project

Merritt, British Columbia

Flood Mitigation



Stuwi(x) Naturalization Project

This project aims to create a naturalization strategy for the lands at the Coldwater and Nicola River junction, focusing on mitigation to protect the community, infrastructure, and natural habitats.

The key objectives of this project include:

- Reducing flood risks
- Enhancing riparian and in-stream habitats
- Returning the river to its natural state

Phase 1 - Property Acquisition:

The purchase of some or all floodplain properties identified in the project area.

Phase 2 - Steering Committee:

Community partner collaboration, creating a naturalized plan over an 18 month period.

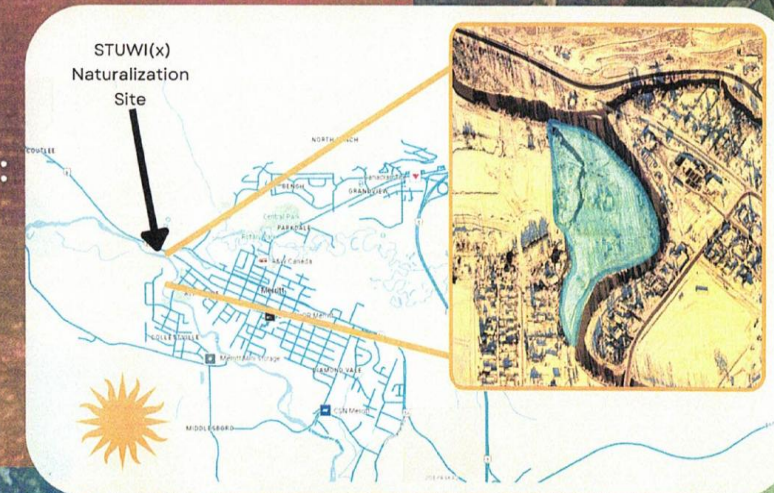
Phase 3 - Design and Removal of Manmade Elements:

The removal of structures, utilities, and non-natural to the region species.

Phase 4 - Construction and Implementation:

Using Plan designed by Steering Committee, rewilding of area to be carried out.

The City of Merritt gratefully acknowledges the B.C. Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness for its contribution to this project and for its ongoing support of the City's Flood Mitigation Plan.



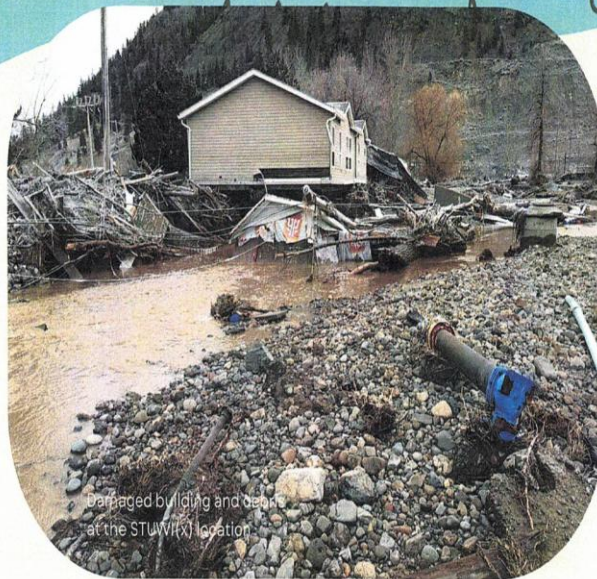
STUWI(x) Naturalization Project Merritt, British Columbia Land and Community

Phase 1 & 2



Phase 1 - Property Acquisition:

In the first phase, the focus is on acquiring properties within the floodplain that are essential for the overall restoration of the area. By securing these key locations, the project can begin to create the foundation for future phases aimed at returning the land to its natural state, improving flood resilience, and ensuring long-term environmental sustainability.

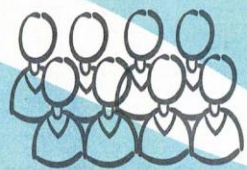
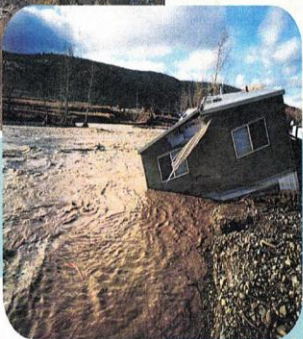


Damaged by flooding and debris at the STUWI(x) location



Phase 2 - Steering Committee

Community partners come together to develop a naturalized floodplain design. This collaborative effort ensures that the restoration plan reflects the needs & values of the community, with input from Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and field experts. The goal is to create a sustainable design that balances ecological restoration with flood protection.



STUWI(x) Naturalization Project Merritt, British Columbia Community Designed

Phase 3



Phase 3

Design and Removal of Manmade Elements

This phase involves clearing the floodplain of existing man-made elements, including structures, utilities, and invasive species. Removing these obstacles sets the stage for natural restoration efforts. This step is critical for creating a space where native vegetation & natural processes can thrive, contributing to flood mitigation and ecosystem revitalization.



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Communities Engaged



Steering Committee

The project is guided by a Steering Committee, comprised of up to 7 decision-making members, plus a chair and a moderator. The decision-makers are tasked with guiding the end use of the naturalized area.

STUWI(x) Confluence

01. Time Immemorial

The Nl̓x̌wpmx and Syilx Nations have stewarded the confluence of the Coldwater and Nicola Rivers, fostering ecological harmony and cultural practices for countless generations.



02. Pre-Columbian era

Before European contact, the area thrived as a central trade hub, rich in biodiversity, supporting complex social structures, spiritual practices, and sustainable land management.



03. Colonization

European arrival disrupted Indigenous stewardship; the river was modified for agriculture and settlement, altering the ecosystem and limiting traditional land use and access.



04. Agriculture

In the 20th century, settlers forcibly redirected and narrowed the rivers to support farming, leading to ecological damage and reduced riparian habitat, impacting both rivers' health.



05. River Reclaims

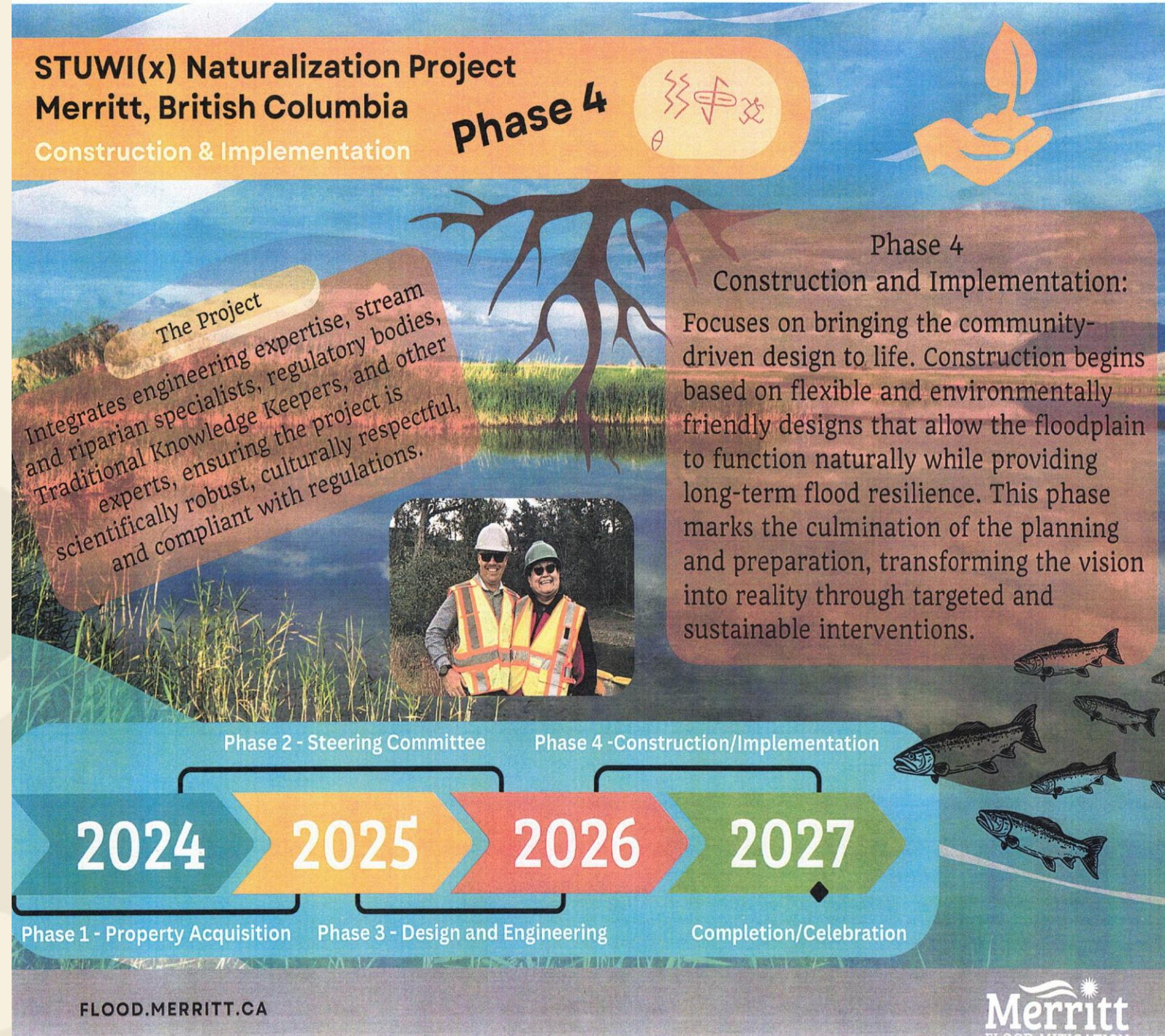
Following the 2021 Atmospheric River flooding, efforts have begun to restore the Coldwater river to a natural state, prioritizing environmental health, flood resilience, and Indigenous stewardship in Merritt.



Next Steps:

An MOU with the City of Merritt

ENRT Program plan for future years for inclusion into curricula



Board Policy Work

To Indigenize or not Indigenize...

Sec II. Governance

1. Board Bylaws

1.0 Interpretation

1.1 Formalities

1.2 The Board

1.3 Code of Conduct and Ethical Conduct

1.4 Meetings

1.5 Board Policy

What it is

Operational, not aspirational
Indigenous governance integration
dual-authority governance model grounded in Indigenous law
and public-sector fiduciary duty

This rendition...

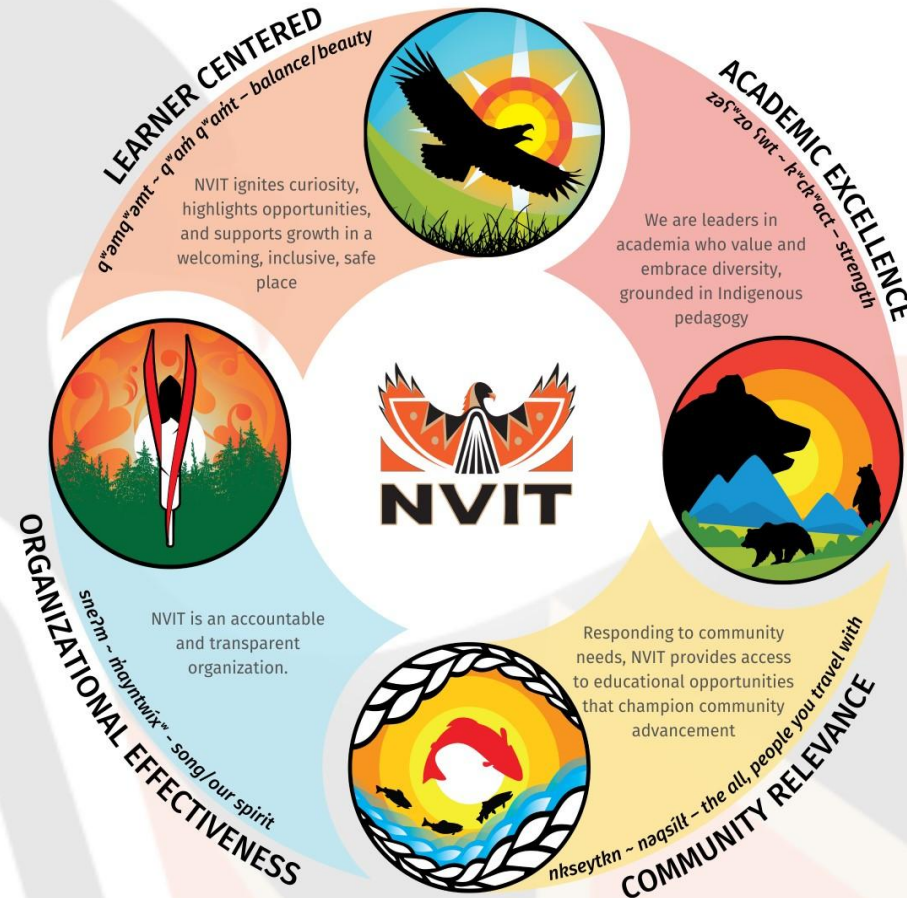
Keeps the Board's legal authority intact
Introduces Elder teachings as a legitimate interpretive authority
Requires executives to govern *through* Indigenous law, not alongside it

Why it's *not* Indigenization

"Indigenization" usually means:

- Adding Indigenous content to existing Western structures
- Including language, ceremony, symbols, or perspectives
- Adjusting *around* the dominant governance framework

NICOLA VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



VISION

ýehetłl ~ ǵstcawt

Our spirit, essence, emotions, and intelligence are good.

MISSION

słǵáméyt ~ naḱ'úla?mnt

We commit ourselves to sharing our traditional ways.

