NORTHERN SHUSWAP TRIBAL COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2025–2026

Building Capacity • Strengthening Relationships • Advancing Priorities

Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

The 2025–2026 fiscal year was a period of continued transition, rebuilding, and organizational development for the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC). Throughout the year, NSTC continued to support its member communities while working through financial system transitions, staffing changes, program pressures, and the need to strengthen relationships and service delivery across the communities.

A significant focus during the year was stabilizing core operations and rebuilding capacity within several departments. This included moving forward with the transition to SAGE 300, addressing outstanding financial reporting and audit requirements, rebuilding the Fisheries program, strengthening Aboriginal Victims Services, and continuing work related to Children and Families' Jurisdiction.

The year also highlighted the importance of ensuring that NSTC programs are connected to the needs and priorities of the communities they serve. Moving forward, NSTC will continue to focus on strengthening communication with member communities, clarifying priorities, supporting staff, and ensuring that available resources are used effectively and strategically.

1. Finance and Organizational Operations

Financial administration and organizational stability remained significant priorities throughout the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

NSTC continued its transition from SAGE Intacct to SAGE 300. The transition created challenges, including errors identified in the payroll data migration for one reporting period. Finance staff worked with the software programming side to identify and correct the issue.

The delay in finalizing the 2025–2026 financial year affected the organization's ability to produce accurate financial statements and post subsequent fiscal-year information. Once the transition issues were resolved, the remaining data could be entered and posted, interdepartmental transfers completed, and the year prepared for audit.

The organization also experienced periods of reduced capacity within the Finance Department, including the Finance Manager's medical leave.

A Term Finance Assistant was hired to assist with data entry and help Finance become current in SAGE 300. Support was also received from finance staff from SXFN, including assistance with learning how to produce reports required by departments.

By the end of the reporting period, the SAGE 300 system was ready for payroll.

WLFN Request and Historical Surplus

NSTC continued to address the outstanding matter relating to the request from Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) concerning surplus operating funds following its departure from Tribal Council in September 2022.

Historical information was reviewed regarding the treatment of communities leaving the Tribal Council, including previous practices and the return of shares held in the Inter-Nation Development Corporation (INDC). Historical practice indicated that payouts were not made when organizations left the Tribal Council.

An interim CAO report reviewed the matter in relation to the Non-profit Societies Act and concluded that NSTC does not legally hold funds specifically for an individual Nation and therefore does not owe funds to a Nation leaving the NSTC Society.

Further work remained necessary to confirm the formal removal of WLFN from the Society and to review the related INDC documentation.

NSTC also sought assistance from its previous auditor to trace the historical growth of approximately $1.5 million in operational surplus in order to provide greater transparency and understanding regarding the source and history of these funds.

It was clarified that the approximately $800,000 in TRM clawback funds is separate from the $1.5 million operational surplus.

Organizational Priorities

The year reinforced the importance of reviewing NSTC's organizational structure and ensuring that staffing levels and positions align with current priorities and available resources.

A broader restructuring process was being considered, resulting in limited new hiring during the year. The Skills Development Coordinator position was identified as a potential position for recruitment, subject to clarification of Treaty priorities.

2. Human Resources and Staffing

NSTC experienced several staffing changes during the year as the organization continued to assess its operational and program needs.

Krista Phillips left her position as Treaty Administrative Assistant. Donna Dixon joined the Treaty Department as Communications Coordinator.

Brenda Phillips' position as Children and Families Transition Manager was terminated without cause on May 2, 2025, due to funding limitations. ISC provided $550,000 in funding for the fiscal year and advised that Tribal Council funding was not included.

The organization also experienced changes and capacity pressures within Finance, including the temporary appointment of a Finance Assistant and the Finance Manager's leave.

These staffing changes occurred within a broader context of organizational restructuring and the need to align staffing with available funding, program responsibilities, and NSTC's strategic priorities.

3. Aboriginal Victims Services

Aboriginal Victims Services (AVS) continued providing support to individuals accessing services, with court support remaining a primary area of activity.

During the reporting period, NSTC identified the need for AVS to move toward a more proactive community-based approach. Efforts were encouraged to increase awareness of the program, strengthen relationships with the communities served, and provide resources and services directly within the communities.

Walk-in client numbers increased during the reporting period, indicating continued demand for services.

The program also received a combined $140,000 in year-end funding to support healing programs. NSTC encouraged community staff to participate in the development and utilization of these resources, with the goal of supporting healing and contributing to efforts to address violence within the communities.

Going forward, a priority will be increasing community engagement and ensuring that AVS resources are accessible and responsive to community needs.

4. Fisheries

The Fisheries Department continued its rebuilding process during the 2025–2026 fiscal year following a period of significant staffing vacancies.

Andrew Meshue was recruited to return to NSTC and assist in rebuilding the department and bringing reporting and workplan activities back on track. DFO staff and Gord Sterritt provided support with reporting requirements and workplan development.

NSTC had been approximately two years behind in reporting due to the previous staffing vacancy. Rebuilding the department therefore involved addressing outstanding reporting requirements while also moving forward with current program responsibilities.

The Fisheries Department also worked to prepare for the fishing season and participated in provincial fisheries meetings.

The department operated under significant financial constraints. A previously available emergency operations fund of approximately $300,000 had been depleted, resulting in a very tight operating budget.

Community Engagement

A priority for the Fisheries Department has been strengthening relationships and awareness within the three member communities.

Staff were encouraged to attend Council meetings and provide information to new Councils regarding the purpose and responsibilities of the Fisheries Agreement and the services provided on behalf of the communities.

Work also continued between the Fisheries and Treaty departments to ensure that fisheries information required for Treaty work was being identified and incorporated.

The rebuilding of the department provided an opportunity to strengthen internal processes, reporting, community relationships, and the connection between fisheries work and the broader Treaty mandate.

5. Children and Families' Jurisdiction

Children and Families' Jurisdiction remained an important area of work during the fiscal year, while also presenting significant operational and funding challenges.

Although a workplan was established, there was no lead hired within NSTC, XFN, or SXFN during the earlier part of the work. As a result, approximately $400,000 remained unspent, including approximately $250,000 associated with a committed contract.

Work was undertaken to clarify contractor responsibilities and deliverables. Ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined remains important because participating communities need to ensure that their own budgets appropriately account for the areas of work identified within the jurisdiction initiative.

Funding

ISC funding of $550,000 for the 2025–2026 fiscal year was approved at year-end. The funding was carried forward for use within the applicable funding period.

NSTC continued working with the participating communities to resolve outstanding consultant contracts and establish greater clarity regarding the work to be completed.

The Children and Families' Jurisdiction work continues to require coordinated planning between NSTC and the participating communities, clear accountability for deliverables, and alignment between available funding and community priorities.

6. Treaty and Jurisdiction Priorities

Treaty work remained a central consideration in NSTC's organizational planning and staffing decisions throughout the year.

The organization recognized the importance of ensuring that new positions, programs, and resources are aligned with Treaty priorities. This was particularly relevant as NSTC considered organizational restructuring and future recruitment.

Work across departments, including Fisheries and Children and Families' Jurisdiction, continued to support broader Treaty objectives.

Strengthening coordination between Treaty staff and program areas will remain important as NSTC continues to advance its mandate and ensure that program information, community priorities, and technical work support the overall Treaty process.

7. Community Connection and Service Delivery

An ongoing theme throughout the fiscal year was the need to strengthen NSTC's connection with the three member communities.

Departments were encouraged to move beyond primarily office-based service delivery and increase their presence within communities. This included attending Council meetings, providing program updates, increasing awareness of available services, and developing stronger relationships with community leadership and staff.

This approach recognizes that effective Tribal Council services depend not only on program administration, but also on meaningful relationships and communication with the communities being served.

Community engagement will continue to be a priority across NSTC departments.

8. Key Challenges During 2025–2026

- The transition from SAGE Intacct to SAGE 300 and associated financial reporting delays.
- Outstanding audit and financial reporting requirements.
- Staffing vacancies and periods of reduced departmental capacity.
- The need to review and restructure the organization's staffing model.
- Funding limitations affecting Children and Families' Jurisdiction.

- Significant reporting backlogs within Fisheries.
- A depleted emergency Fisheries operations fund.
- The need for greater clarity around consultant contracts and deliverables.
- The need to strengthen community awareness and engagement with NSTC programs.
- The ongoing WLFN surplus-funds matter and associated historical documentation.
- The need to ensure staffing and program decisions remain aligned with Treaty priorities.

9. Looking Ahead

Financial Stabilization

Continue strengthening financial systems, complete outstanding year-end processes and audits, and establish reliable financial reporting to support informed organizational decision-making.

Organizational Development

Continue reviewing NSTC's organizational structure and staffing requirements to ensure resources are aligned with current responsibilities, available funding, and strategic priorities.

Treaty Alignment

Ensure that departmental activities and future staffing decisions support the Treaty mandate and that program areas are effectively connected to Treaty work.

Community Engagement

Increase direct engagement with the three member communities and improve awareness of NSTC programs, services, agreements, and available resources.

Program Accountability

Strengthen workplans, clarify roles and responsibilities, establish clear deliverables, and ensure that program funding is effectively utilized within required timelines.

Fisheries Rebuilding

Continue rebuilding the Fisheries Department, addressing outstanding reporting requirements, strengthening community relationships, and supporting fisheries information required for Treaty work.

Children and Families' Jurisdiction

Continue coordinated work with the participating communities to advance jurisdictional planning, clarify contractual responsibilities, and effectively utilize available funding.

Aboriginal Victims Services

Continue developing a more proactive and community-based service model, including healing initiatives and increased community awareness of available supports.

Conclusion

The 2025–2026 fiscal year was characterized by transition, rebuilding, and a continued effort to strengthen the foundation of the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council.

While NSTC faced financial, staffing, funding, and program challenges, work continued across key areas of the organization. The rebuilding of Fisheries, continued development of Children and Families' Jurisdiction, strengthening of Aboriginal Victims Services, progress toward improved financial systems, and increased focus on community engagement all contributed to the organization's ongoing development.

The year also reinforced the importance of clear accountability, strong financial management, effective communication, and alignment between NSTC's operational activities and Treaty priorities.

As NSTC moves forward, the focus will remain on building organizational capacity, strengthening relationships with member communities, supporting effective programs and services, and ensuring that the work of the Tribal Council continues to reflect the priorities and needs of the communities it serves.

Draft prepared for the 2025–2026 fiscal year. Current source material provided covers reporting and planning information from 2025; additional 2025–2026 year-end results should be added before finalizing.