

2020 Repatriation Grants Report

May 1, 2022



BC MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

BC Museums Association
675 Belleville Street
Victoria, BC V8W 9W2
www.museum.bc.ca

2020 Repatriation Grants

Final Report – May 1, 2022

Cover Image By Sarah Jim

The cover image was created by Sarah Jim, an emerging artist of mixed ancestry. Sarah is a member of the W̱SÁNEĆ nation from the Tseycum village. Sarah explains the elements used in the image; “The moon and stars are ubiquitous entities that hold so much meaning for many. A moon in transition symbolizes the act of repatriation; communities are becoming whole again by receiving what truly belongs to them. The surrounding plants represent good medicine for this phase in life and stars are meant to give good wishes and represent ancestors.”

Report Prepared By:

- Ryan Hunt, BCMA Executive Director, executivedirector@museum.bc.ca
- Leia Patterson, BCMA Engagement Coordinator, engagement@museum.bc.ca
- Abigail Buckwalter-Ingram, BCMA Development & Membership Manager, development@museum.bc.ca

Special Thanks:

The BCMA would like to thank 2020 Repatriation Grant Working Group for their input developing the granting application and in adjudicating the submissions.

- Chepximiya Siyam’ Chief Janice George
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Acknowledgement

The BC Museums Association (BCMA) office is located on the traditional, unceded lands of the Lekwungen peoples (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations). We respect past, present, and future Indigenous stewards and recognize that we are uninvited guests on this territory. As a reflection of the provincial scope of our membership and organization, we recognize that our affiliates occupy the ceded, unceded, and sovereign territories of Nations across what is referred to as British Columbia.

“Little Shuswap is grateful for the 2020 Repatriation Grants and the show of respect for our cultural beliefs as well as acknowledgment of the hurt that has been caused as a result of the development of archival and museum collections.”

- *Little Shuswap Lake Band, 2022*

Table of Contents

About the BC Museums Association.....	p.5
Executive Summary.....	p. 5
Statistical Summary.....	p. 6
Outcomes & Impact.....	p. 8
Challenges.....	p. 10
Successful Applicants.....	p.13
Recommendations for Future Initiatives.....	p.28

About the BC Museums Association

The British Columbia Museums Association (BCMA), founded in 1957, is a professional association for the museum and gallery sector. As one of BC's oldest provincial arts service organizations, BCMA represents over 450 members including museums, art galleries, historic places, heritage sites, Indigenous cultural centres, science centres, aquariums, local and city archives, and other related organizations located throughout BC and Canada.

BCMA is a provincially incorporated non-profit society and a registered charitable organization that works to create a bright future for BC's museum, gallery and heritage sector through networking, advocacy, innovation and professional development. The organization is led by a 13-member volunteer Board of Directors (the BCMA Council) and supported by a dedicated professional staff and volunteer committees.

Our Vision: The museum community is valued for providing cultural leadership, influence and knowledge to all British Columbians.

Our Mission: We lead by supporting, empowering and advocating for the BC museum community.

Why: We believe in the transformative power of museums.

2020 Repatriation Grants Executive Summary

In April 2020, the BC Museums Association was awarded a one-time payment of \$500,000.00 to create a Repatriation Grant Program to assist BC First Nations communities in repatriating ancestral remains, cultural objects, and belongings.

The award stipulated that the intent of the program is to:

- Provide repatriation grants directly to Indigenous organizations, BC First Nations bands, and community organizations supporting the principle of self-determination for reconciliation and repatriation at the local level;
- Encourage collaboration and long-term planning between cultural institutions and Indigenous peoples;
- Support collaboration with the Royal BC Museum (RBCM), guided by the RBCM's Indigenous Repatriation Handbook; and
- Coordinate, where possible with Canadian Heritage, and the First Peoples' Cultural Council on potential links between respective grant programs.

The BCMA was instructed to administer the Repatriation Grant Program with an administration fee of 10% (\$50,000) and award the remaining \$450,000 to communities in BC. The BCMA was directed to award successful applicants 80% of their grant upon approval and 20% upon completion and acceptance of their project report.

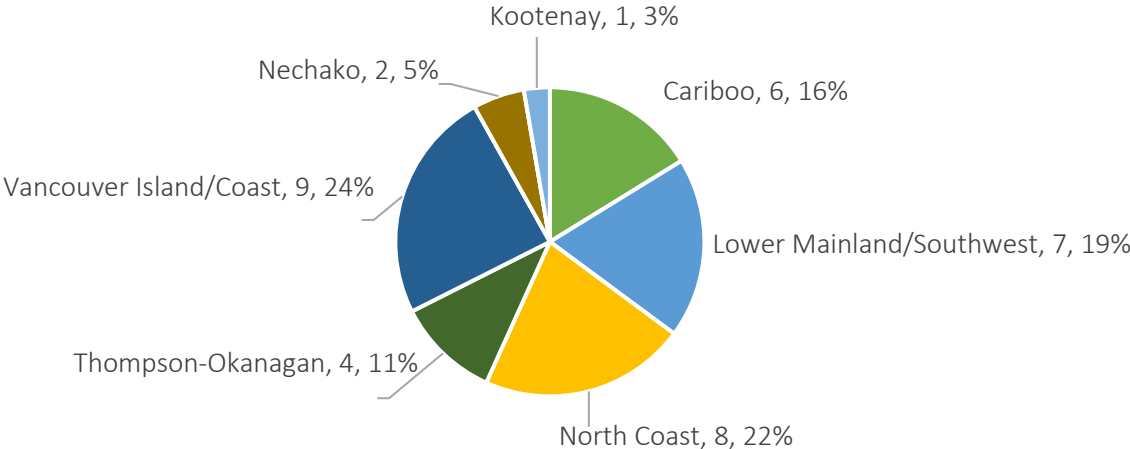
The 2020 Repatriation Grant program open for applications on September 2, 2020 and the program closed on January 15, 2021. A total of 37 applications were submitted, representing nearly 50 BC First Nations.

A total of \$1,107,288.00 was requested and \$454,00.00 was awarded to 25 applicants.

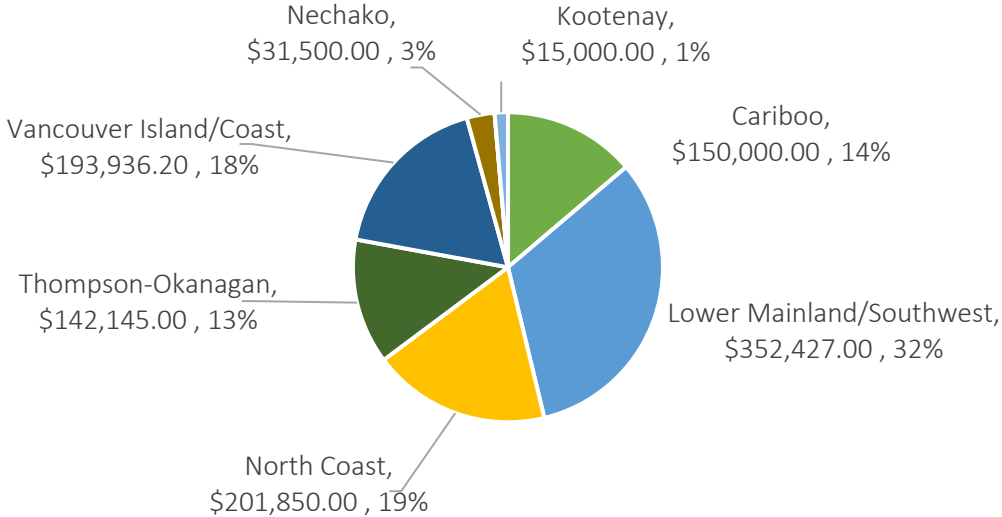
Statistical Summary

In total, 37 applications totalling \$1,086,858 were submitted for the 2020 Repatriation Grants. The requests came primarily from Vancouver Island/Coast (24%), the North Coast (22%), Lower Mainland/Southwest (19%), and Cariboo (16%).

Regional Distribution | Quantity of Requests



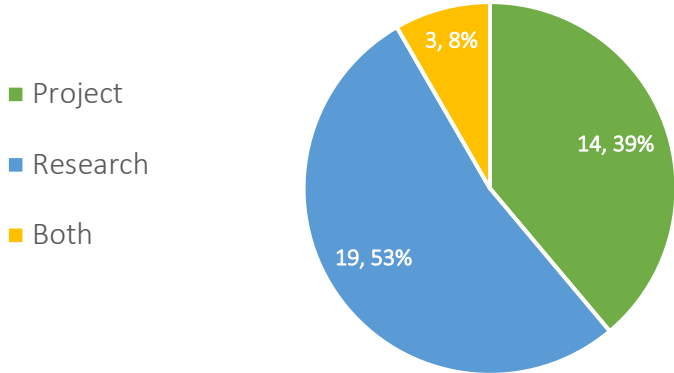
Regional Distribution | Amounts Requested



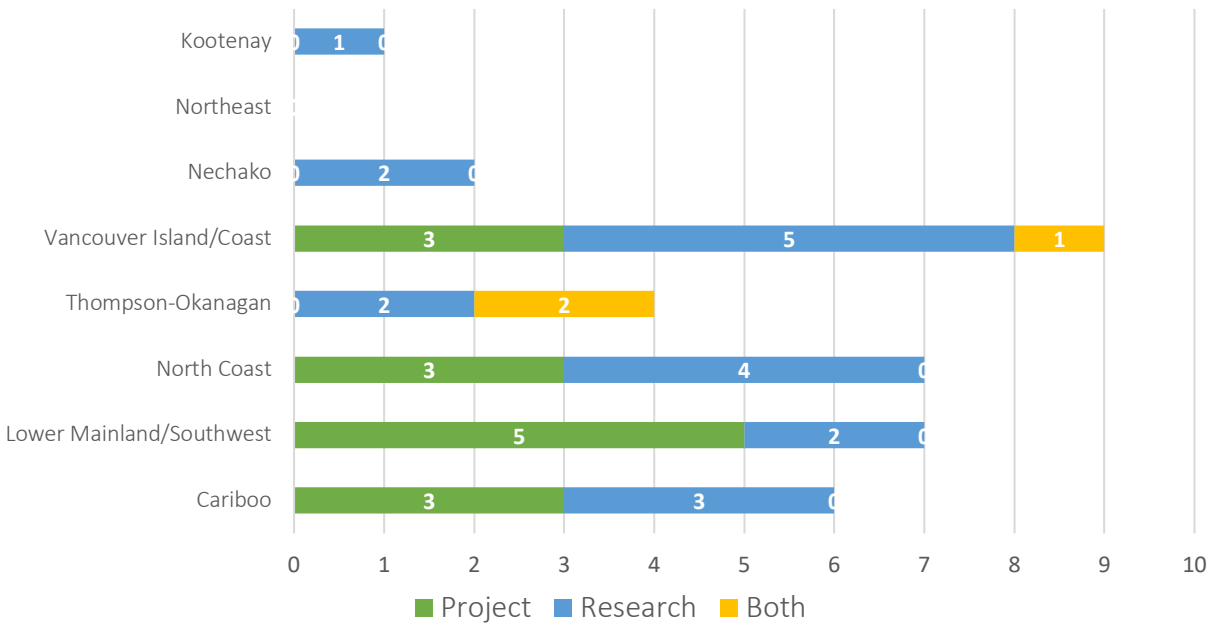
The only region in the province not reflected in the applications is the Northeast region, otherwise all regions are represented.

The 2020 Repatriation Grants offered two streams of funding; Research Grants of up to \$15,000 for earlier stage repatriation activities and Project Grants of up to \$35,000 for repatriation activities that have moved beyond the research stage. Communities could apply for both research and project grants. Applications were evenly split between both streams, suggesting that there is fairly even need for support for early and later stage funding.

Grant Streams Overview



Grant Streams (Project, Research) by Region.



Outcomes & Impact

A significant impact of the 2020 Repatriation Grants is the number of communities who have applied for repatriation funding for the first time. Of the 37 applications received in the 2020 intake, 23 communities had not applied for funding through the Royal BC Museum’s repatriation program which ran from 2017-2019. Of those 23 first-time applicants, several noted in their applications that their communities were engaging in formal repatriation activities for the first time.

It is important to note that many communities faced challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic among other concerns outlined below in more detail, and the impacts of the full breadth of projects may take additional time, but the advancement of these projects at the time of this report show the impact that these funding opportunities can have, and the ripple effect that they create throughout communities.

Final reporting from all Repatriation Grant recipients was due on March 31, 2022. At the time of this report, we have received final reports from 22 of the 25 funded organizations. The final report was available as both a fillable PDF and online form to provide flexibility. The 16-question report requested information including a summary of what was completed, the impact on the community, plans for future work, and opportunities to provide feedback on the program.

We expect the additional reports to be submitted in the coming month, as we have been

informed that some projects are still in progress. Several reports make note that their original goals were not met, but that they have plans in place to continue and will make progress steadily as their communities emerge from the pandemic. BCMA has released the remaining 20% of funding to all organizations that have submitted a report with plans for how their project will continue if not yet completed. **At the time of this report, the BCMA retains \$10,913 that will be released upon receipt of the outstanding reports from T'Souke First Nation, Tsawwassen First Nation, Nunwakola Cultural Society, Lower Nicola Indian Band and Lax Kw'alaams Band.**

As the BCMA has followed up with 2020 Repatriation Grant recipients, many communities have noted the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and have mentioned that the deaths of elders in their communities have slowed their ability to conduct repatriation activities. The BCMA wishes to ensure that we do not contribute to community stress or harm and is providing communities with the highest amount of accommodation and support possible as they complete their repatriation activities.

"The digital media files that were found brought back feelings of a sense of community, a sense of culture, a sense of peace and belonging. The pictures depicted life teachings that have not been practiced in several years. There are plans on bringing these teachings back and passing on to the next generation. The reaction and excitement from our hereditary chiefs, their enthusiasm and pure joy they have while reviewing Gitanyow artifacts has been incredible. This is the beginning of a movement, a movement to bring our heritage and cultural artifacts home."
- Gitanyow Huwilp Society

"The project has inspired young people to reconnect to their ancestral history...the project has led to expanding upon knowledge of Chief Boston lineage, and the burial items corroborate existing knowledge of burial places and their contents. From community, there is renewed interest to continue the repatriation process, to build a new facility that has more storage space than exhibit space and to encourage youth to undertake courses in museum management and care of archaeological and indigenous collections." - Heiltsuk First Nation

"One example of the importance of the repatriation process relates to archaeological site EfQv-10, located on Little Shuswap's Quaaout IR1. EfQv-10 is part of a large village site, containing pre- and post- contact cultural materials, with large quantities of trade goods in evidence. During a 1979 archaeological study conducted by Gordon Mohs, 101 circular, 30 square, 9 rectangular, and 1 ovoid cultural depression(s) were observed. Unfortunately, EfQv-10 was excavated in a "free for all pot hunt previous to that assessment in 1961 by an American Archaeological Club." Unknown quantities of cultural materials were removed from the Quaaout IR1 in 1961 illicitly and are held in unknown locations. We believe there have been other instances where cultural materials were removed from Little Shuswap reserve lands. The repatriation grant has provided Little Shuswap with the resources to begin, what is a complicated process, of identifying and eventually returning some of these materials. A positive example concerning EfQv-10, was the show of respect for Little Shuswap's ancestors by the RBCM and the repatriation of Little Shuswap ancestral remains, (cataloged by the RBCM as Skull

S52-10 7188), from the RBCM in August, 1995. We intend to build upon that.” - Little Shuswap Indian Band

Challenges

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on repatriation activities have been numerous, both due to the severe impact on Indigenous communities, on-going uncertainty about when, or if, it is safe to “return to normal,” and in impeding research and collaboration with museums and heritage organizations as the cultural sector also struggles under new capacity challenges posed by the pandemic.

Many final reports from grant recipients noted that COVID-19 meant fewer meetings and community gatherings where ceremonies, knowledge sharing and inspection of collections could take place.

“COVID has not allowed us to involve the community in the research as much as we would have liked. Cowichan Tribes is holding their Annual General Meeting in May and we hope to share with the community through an information booth including displays, running video and photos. We hope to get feedback and ideas from our members about our continuing work.” – Cowichan Tribes

COVID-19 continued to complicate project momentum through illnesses and family deaths. Restrictions in many Indigenous communities have been above and beyond the provincial restrictions due to the prevalence of pre-existing health conditions, multi-generational housing, remote locations away from hospital care, and other factors which magnify the pandemic’s severity. This means that even in April 2022, many communities still have restrictions of meetings and community events, resulting in many projects still being considered ‘in progress’.

*“COVID disrupted our work at times. We’d hoped to bring home ancestors and burial materials from the Canadian Museum of History, but this will happen in Fall 2022. We were going to repatriate belongings from the Museum of Vancouver, but this has been postponed to Spring 2022. Short breaks in pandemic restrictions did allow our Coordinator to travel to Denver and visit a collection and meet people there. **However, Zoom allowed us to get way more work done than pre-pandemic, when we didn’t use online communications. It is incredible how much Zoom allows us to engage with community, institutions and others on a global scale!**” - Haida Gwaii Museum Society*

“[Our] biggest challenges were few such as series of deaths in the village in between COVID outbreaks. The village became a living ghost town as restrictions shut down offices, schools, community buildings. As a village of interrelated families, COVID prevented them from supporting each other. Virtual options allowed support through technology but it removed the personal support. Another challenge is engaging community in public settings for their support of the project and engaging in their participation and contributions. However, as our nation

adjusted to COVID restrictions, new ways of contributing from a distance has become the norm. Therefore, when the items arrive in the territory, we will follow COVID guidelines from our village perspective and the provincial guidelines as well.” – Heiltsuk First Nation

*“It was difficult to plan for an installation of the storage units, as we did not know when the office would be open to outside contractors. **The uncertainty of the pandemic slowed timelines, and added unknowns to the planning process.**” - Tsleil-Waututh Nation*

Several recipients noted capacity issues in the heritage sector as barriers to their work and research. While some of this lack of capacity can be linked to the pandemic creating additional demands on heritage organizations, factors like limited operating hours, understaffing, and partially digitized collections, are perennial challenges for the sector. Many communities noted a lack of online databases to view collections, or barriers within those online databases as impediments to their repatriation work.

*“Inability to travel and visit museums to view cultural artifacts in person, **reluctance of curator to have conversations about repatriation of specific artifact, some museums do not have an online platform to research and review cultural artifacts,** some museums require payment to view collections online, some museums require account set up to view online collections and /or download content, the spelling of certain names (ie. Gitksan, Gitxxsan, Kitksan, Gitanyow, Kitwancool, Gitwinkul, Kitwankul, Gqinuu, Gwinhu, etc).” - Gitanyow Huwilp Society*

*“Museum capacity is clearly a challenge. **Covid restrictions resulted in many museums being closed and staff working from home; this slowed down research and communication. Some archival research is proving more difficult due to staff losses during Covid. The reproduction of archival materials in particular will be more time- consuming and expensive, requiring our staff to visit archives to scan documents ourselves.**” - Gitxaala Nation*

More than one organization noted a reluctance in institutions to communicate and work with the Indigenous community to discuss repatriation. A few recipients noted that seeking and obtaining information from various sources – including museums, archives, and the BC Archeology Branch – were challenging.

*“Our team contacted 40 museums and institutions total and received a response from 30 (a 75% response rate). **Most museums and universities seem willing to work together towards repatriation, but the onus is primarily placed on Indigenous communities to locate ancestors, prove their connection, familiarize themselves with repatriation policies/legislation, and find the capacity/funding to support bringing ancestors home. Holding museums accountable for what were often unethically collected and still unethically held collections and creating policies/legislation that places more responsibility on these institutions would ease the burden for Indigenous communities who wish to bring ancestors home.**” - Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre*

*“The COVID restrictions have definitely made research and travel activities more challenging. We have also **encountered reluctance and resistance from the museums from which we are trying to repatriate our belongings and ancestors due to their repatriation policies.** Despite what they may say that they support the Squamish Nation having access to our belongings and ancestors, there is little concrete action to support their claims.” - Squamish Nation*

*“We would like to discuss, once again, the complex process of determining what has happened to the material culture identified and removed from Little Shuswap’s reserves lands. As noted earlier, the research begin with **BC Archaeology Branch and includes several complex steps. Not only is the process time consuming, navigating through the system is challenging. As experienced and described, the process does not meet what should be an ultimate goal, that of direct access for Indigenous peoples to learn where their cultural items are being held**” . - Little Shuswap Band*

*“**The changeover and renovations at the RBCM have stalled our repatriation work with them.** In 2022, with COVID and travel restrictions lifting, we hope to visit the museums we need to repatriate from and to have our gravehouse built” . - Haida Heritage and Repatriation Society*

*“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, travel to museums and institutions locally, domestically and internationally were restricted to research online collections and catalog into spreadsheets. **Smaller museums do not have an internal IT specialist to make collections available in an easy to export digital format as larger museums currently have available on their website. Some online collections were being updated as I was researching** when revelations - known to Indigenous communities prior to and through Residential School Survivors testimonies from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission - of the Kamloops Indian Residential School buried children arose. This informed me that artifacts, previously not available with museum online collections, have now become available making a bridge open to begin active reconciliation. So I have to revisit websites for new material culture and photographs.” – Witset First Nation*

In addition to these factors, Indigenous communities also notes that a lack of dedicated staffing, a lack of consistent funding, lack of capacity or other staffing-related concerns create challenges in this work.

*“The biggest issue was that the **UFN did not have a dedicated Heritage and Cultural staff member to be responsible for the collection and organization of the archive materials and do the research necessary to identify material stored in other facilities and to work on a proposal to have a Heritage and Cultural Center built in the community.** One positive result of this project was identifying the need for such a person. It has lead to the UFN placing an advertisement to hire a cultural and heritage director” . - Ulkatcho First Nation*

*“The project isn't completed yet, but so far we have noticed that **there is a lot more work to organizing and preparing the exhibit than we originally expected.** - Maiyoo Keyoh Society*

“We also had a gap of 8 months employment of our Cultural and Language Coordinator to lead this project in 2021 which also made the planning and execution of this project difficult.” - K’omoks First Nation

*“Our biggest challenge is trying to keep find money to keep this work going. **Ours is not of a project nature We’ve been doing this for over 3 decades**, and there are so many pokers in the fire you wouldn’t believe it. Our biggest challenge is annual funding towards this expensive, time-consuming and healing work. The bare minimum team required for the work we do in research & repatriation is: Research & repatriation Coordinator, Researcher, Collections Assistant, Archives Assistant. Of this, only the Collections Manger has a guaranteed job each year.” - Haida Gwaii Museum Society*

Some other challenges grant recipients noted are below:

*“Private ownership is a hindrance that we have yet to address for this project. One of the grave sites that was identified through old survey maps exists on private property. **The land owner is unwilling to admit any of our staff to assess the area and denies any knowledge of the sites.** Remaining funds will be spent to cover the first two grave investigation trips that took place in late 2020”. – High Bar First Nation*

*“COVID restrictions made travel challenging and limited the number of people that could be involved in Vancouver and also made the in-person community celebration we were planning unfeasible. **Unwillingness of a neighboring Nation to work together** has prevented the institution from being able to return the remaining artifact in their possession.” - Kitasoo/Xai’xais First Nation*

Successful Applicants

**Cowichan Tribes
Research Grant**

**Vancouver Island/Coast
\$15,000**

Summary: Funds were used to research Cowichan belongings locally, nationally and internationally. We prepared a template letter to initiate repatriation discussions with institutions, as well as lists of belongings in each place. Two lists have been made, one for institutions with the most Cowichan belongings, and the other for places holding the sensitive cultural objects. These lists are will inform our Elders and leadership so they can prioritize which institutes to contact.

Impact: This funding has allowed us to continue our research to find Cowichan belongings all over the world. We were able to hire Shaun Canute to continue this research, as he had experience from the working on the first repatriation funding we got. We also checked all institutes for updated repatriation or related policies. This ensures that we approach each place in the manner indicated. Due to chief's prolonged illness, Shaun continued researching institutions on our long list of those still to be looked at. **The community is excited about**

finding things that were taken away so long ago and has also determined we will need our own museum for these things.

Future Plans: More research is needed beyond this funding period. We still have hundreds of institutions to look at. Every time we look at one, it leads us to more places. Chief had intended to create an advisory/working group to give recommendations and direction for this program, but unfortunately, he became ill and this is not in place yet. We intend to seek direction from the new chief and council. If they choose, we will establish an advisory group and provide our information for their review, then seek approval for sending out the letters of inquiry.

**Gitanyow Huwilp Society
Research Grant**

**North Coast
\$15,000**

Summary: The Repatriation Research funds were used to research and catalog cultural items at the following museums and post-secondary institutions: Audain Art Museum, Museum of Anthropology, Museum of Northern BC, Museum of Vancouver, Royal BC Museum, American Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, McMichael Canadian Art Museum, Canadian Museum of History, Oceana British Museum, National Museum of Natural History, Seattle Art Museum, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Washington. The collection also includes digital media and recordings.

Impact: The Repatriation Committee had a wealth of cultural artifacts to review due to the outstanding work conducted by our Repatriation Researcher. **We are pleased to find out that there are hundreds of cultural artifacts located throughout Canada and the world. It has been heartwarming to find and listen to audio files from almost a hundred years ago, sacred songs that were shared during specific events and cultural practices. There are plans to bring these sacred songs back to the light and shared with our people and pass on to the next generation.** A plan of action has begun and we look forward to visiting museums, becoming reacquainted with our ancestors, and celebrating and singing as we welcome our ancestors home. As we get further along with our plan of action, we will involve people from our community and the surrounding area to bear witness to our future events.

Future Plans: The work conducted by the Repatriation Committee to date has been valuable and will guide the direction on where this project will go from here. The Committee will review all cultural artifacts, digital media files and audio files associated with Gitanyow/Kitwancool and list the items based on priority. The Gitanyow Huwilp Society will apply for Project Funding, hire a project leader to work on bringing some cultural artifacts back to their rightful owners, and back to the community. In the meantime, we will work with museums and post-secondary institutions and request copies of all digital and audio files associated to Gitanyow/Kitwancool. The voice/song recordings will be shared with each respective Wilp (House) group to learn the songs and share at their discretion. Leadership will work on a business plan in preparation of re-opening the Gitanyow Interpretive Centre. There are plans in place to create an online platform to offer virtual tours to share Gitanyow history, laws and territories. Also, renovations will be made to the existing Gitanyow Interpretive Centre to meet/exceed the building requirements

for repatriated cultural artifacts. We will submit applications for funding to carry out all necessary renovations.

**Gitxaala Nation
Research Grant**

**North Coast
\$11,000**

Summary: Funds were used to support research, communications with museums, and community engagement regarding the repatriation of Gitxaala cultural objects. The funds supported a search of online catalogues for Gitxaala and unattributed Tsimshian items and the refinement of this inventory. A report documenting 73 objects at 12 museums [was created]. Community engagement involved newsletters and community meetings. The Gitxaala Repatriation Committee has been delegated by the Hereditary Table and is guiding the process.

Impact: **This funding was critically important seed funding for Gitxaala's repatriation initiative. It supported the preliminary research that was needed to develop a repatriation plan and identify priorities for future work.** Specifically, the development of the Cultural Objects Report that identifies the known Gitxaala pieces held in external museums in North America and Europe has positioned the Nation to create a clear workplan and budget. A large application to the Indigenous Heritage stream of the Museum Assistance Program was developed based on the Gitxaala Cultural Objects Report, seeking funding for travel to the museums holding Gitxaala objects to advance research and repatriation negotiations. An application to the Digital Access to Heritage stream of MAP was also made, to create a repatriation database and a virtual museum, where all Gitxaala cultural objects can be exhibited prior to physical repatriation. The funding has thus supported repatriation research, work planning, and hopefully, leveraging other funding.

Future Plans: 1. Repatriation negotiations. Discussions have started with museums about the repatriation of the 73 Gitxaala objects identified through our research. Visits to the museum and establishing repatriation and loan agreements are the next steps. 2. Community-based and archival research on Tsimshian objects. Work needs to be done to identify Gitxaala objects among the 600 plus objects that have been identified in museum collections that are catalogued as Tsimshian but not attributed to any specific community. Gitxaala [will view] objects virtually prior to physical repatriation. This involves working with the museums to receive high quality photographs and relevant information and enhancing the Gitxaala archive database to function as a platform for the virtual museum. 4. Museum design. Community engagement and consultation with museum experts to design the Gitxaala museum and exhibit infrastructure.

**Haida Gwaii Museum Society
Project Grant**

**North Coast
\$35,000**

Summary: Worked with clans on repatriated poles. Finalized research/catalogued belongings at Canadian Museum of History-2000 objects, ongoing research on 1000. Handled private donations/repatriations. Worked with global museums on research, co-productions, MOUs, and

repatriation negotiations, including: American Museum of NH, Time & Tide Museum, British Museum, Field Museum, Ethnology Museum Berlin, Quai de Brunley, Fowler Museum, Peterborough Museum, Museum of Vancouver, Florida Museum of Natural History, Denver Museum, Buxton Museum, etc. Created repatriation protocol and began work to repatriate belongings in our museum back to originating nations. Supported other Indigenous Nations' work.

Impact: This funding provided employment; built capacity in the language, arts, culture & social justice fields; increased the quality/quantity of our museum's and Haida Nation's research; increased the quality/quantity of our museum and Nation's engagement with community, other Indigenous Nations, and global museums/institutions/individuals; furthered our Nation's language, art & culture mandate, ability to heal, and to heal with others; furthered BCs DRIPA mandate and goals to align with UNDRIP and TRC Calls to Action.

Repatriations achieved: Museums/universities: model pole from Peterborough Museum
Private: shaman rattle, 3 baskets, 1 trade-bead necklace, goat horn spoon, rare NWC book collection, archival photos, stone maul

Repatriations upcoming: Museums/universities: ancestors from British Museum, Fowler Museum, Canadian Museum of History; cultural items from Museum of Vancouver, Time & Tides Museum, Florida History Museum, Canadian Museum of History, Royal BC Museum
Private: ancestor, chief's talking stick, secret society mask

Future Plans: Repatriation to the Haida Nation: Ancestors: British Museum, Canadian Museum of History, Private Citizen, UCLA Fowler Museum. Belongings: American Museum of Natural History, Canadian Museum of History, Buxton Museum, Florida Museum of Natural History, Denver Museum of Art & Sciences, Museum of Vancouver, Royal BC Museum, Ethnography Museum Berlin. Repatriation to other Nations: Belongings held in Haida Gwaii Museum: Coast Salish baskets, Nuu-chah-nulth baskets. Belongings held by Parks Canada/cared for in HGM: Kwak'wakawak'w collections of coppers, other treasures.

**Haida Heritage and Repatriation Society
Project Grant**

**North Coast
\$25,000**

Summary: This grant helped to unite 3 Haida communities on Haida Gwaii and Alaska. 4 meetings were held in 2021 via zoom with approximately 20 members joining the meetings to plan for future repatriation from museums and to create a repatriation protocol to other Indigenous nations. Research into the ancestral remains at the Smithsonian was done, and a repatriation request started. The remains were once thought to be from Alaska, thus NAGPRA applies, but they are from Haida Gwaii.

Impact: Repatriation work is empowering for the Haida nation. It brings us together, gives us strength and ownership and shows the world how we are taking responsibility and doing reconciliation work on our own terms. We once thought it was about bringing the ancestors home from museums, but the work has also grown into also taking responsibility for ancestral remains that continue to be discovered on Haida Gwaii today and into the future.

Taking ownership over what is displayed and said about the Haida in museums is also a key aspect of this work. The extensive Repatriation work done to date has established the Haida as leaders in Indigenous museology. This project gave us the opportunity to research some belongings in museums. We had the opportunity to delve deeper into the collection of sGaaga, medicine man belongings in museums. At the Haida language immersion in 2021, we were able to translate some Haida phrases relating to the paraphernalia and to gain a deeper understanding of the beliefs around the belongings and Haida spirituality. This will create a stronger case for future repatriations and to better care for the belongings when they return home. Interestingly, the names of the SGaagas are often recorded, giving us knowledge for clan connections.

Future Plans: We require an extension for the repatriation work. Revised timeline: April-June: creation of grave-markers, revised plan with RBCM, in-person repatriation meeting July-Aug: creation of grave-house, travel to Smithsonian for preliminary research and repatriation planning Fall: travel to CMH to repatriate ancestral remains

**Heiltsuk First Nation
Project Grant**

**North Coast
\$13,000**

Summary: Funds were used to return three items from Royal British Columbia Museum. Funds were used to hire a repatriation coordinator to organize logistics for transportation, travel insurance, communication with RBCM and BCMA staff members and meetings with joint leadership in the Heiltsuk Nation. Although the budget is limited to \$13,000, it covered transportation of items and working group members to attend blessing ceremony, travel and property insurance, and funds for installation and/or reburial.

Impact: This is very important to the Heiltsuk Nation for coming together at short time frame to coordinate the repatriation of three items that have in-depth history of chiefly lineages and their burial practices. The HIRMD office has conducted surveys prior to this project to relocate burial sites that were incorrectly plotted in the archaeological database and at same time, crews have recorded new ones. This has led to learning about the burial practices of Heiltsuk ancestors such as box and chest manufacture, form line designs, and associated grave goods. **Crews brought their historical background to the sites and sang chants to honor their ancestors and treated the sites with utmost respect compared to those people who preceded them with disrespect by removing boxes, grave goods and skeletal remains. From this newly acquired knowledge, it has inspired youth to rewrite history by gathering important scientific and cultural data for educational and resource management purposes.** In 2019, one crew member visited the RBCM collections supported by indigenous collections staff member Brian Seymour to view items that are similar to the ones Heiltsuk have recorded in our burial sites. **The impact grows as Heiltsuk direct their own projects for the purpose of mentoring and inspiring youth to become future leaders. Many of them are active potlatch speakers, researchers, dancers, singers. The community is excited for return of these ancestral items, for them to connect with them and to honor their return. Coordinating the repatriation with RBCM staff is a sign of change from old colonial mindsets that others can do for us rather**

than us working on our projects. Another inspirational impact is that it will develop renewed interest for Heiltsuk Nation to raise funds to build a new cultural facility to Heiltsuk standards staffed by Heiltsuk people. At present time, our cultural center is full to capacity with archival material. Thankfully we have a big house built to code to store any repatriated items albeit temporarily. Therefore, from this project, the Heiltsuk will continue to pursue repatriation of more of their ancestral items worldwide.

Future Plans: The project is delayed however; logistical plans are in progress. With RBCM staff in repatriation, archaeology and indigenous collections, a small group of Heiltsuk will conduct a blessing ceremony on April 12 2022 at the Glass House outside of RBCM. The ceremony will be a short private event to prepare for a mortuary pole to be removed from glass house and crated and transported along with two other items to Campbell River for transportation to Bella Bella Village. Group of youth will transport them to the Big house to the accompaniment of ceremonial songs to honor the ancestral items. For a short time, the items will be displayed for viewing to allow ample time for joint leadership, working group, and artists. Subsequently, the three items will be stored temporarily at the Big house ceremonial building under lock and key until decision is made by joint leadership of the fate of the three items to be either reburied or installation in the Big house. The three items arrive on April 17th and a viewing will be open to joint leadership and members of the Working Group before placing into storage. Future meetings with community to engage them of the repatriation process. At present two community newsletters have been posted to the community as form of community engagement until covid restrictions are lifted. **This will be our first repatriation event.**

**High Bar First Nation
Research Grant**

**Cariboo
\$12,500**

Summary: Funds were used to research unmarked graves. This research involved employing surveyors, paying honorariums for meetings with Elders, as well as employees to physically go out to suspected sites.

Impact: **High Bar First Nation is thankful for the opportunity to explore and authenticate some stories of unmarked graves throughout High Bar territory. This project proved to be more prolific than expected. The authentication of four grave sites brought up questions that had not been asked yet and lead to stories of even more sites. This was taking place while the world finally heard of the mass residential school graves across the country. The worldwide awakening to these realities increased both emotion and purpose for this project. Though this grant has come to an end, the project is still in its infancy.**

Future: Once restrictions related to COVID and weather ease travel, a lot more research is necessary. Though we have identified four sites through surveyor records and physical indicators on the land, ground-penetrating technology is still needed to determine if there are bodies and if so, how many. Nations with overlapping territories may need to be consulted. Archaeology permits and professionals will be required if further authentication is deemed

desirable. If not, erecting markers to indicate the sacredness of the sites will be a minimal requirement for future protection.

**Huu-ah-aht First Nation
Project Grant**

**Vancouver Island/ Coast
\$35,000**

Summary: Huu-ah-aht First Nations utilized the funding to assist with the research and repatriation of treasures from the RBCM, including the creation of display cases, transport, and associated ceremonies. To date, the treasures have not been repatriation due to delays at RBCM.

Impact: HFN is eager to see their treasures returned to the community to be included in the future opening of a Cultural Centre in their territory, an event expected to be taking place in summer 2022 and that the community is eager to celebrate.

Future Plans: Continued meeting with RBCM – unknown timeline due to personnel changes at RBCM. In-person visit to measure objects for creation of display cases.

**Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation
Project Grant**

**Vancouver Island/Coast
\$20,000**

Summary: Funds were used to repatriate a Kitasoo Xai'xais ancestor and an artifact from the Museum of Vancouver and digitize cultural heritage audio and video tapes.

Impact: **This funding was instrumental in the return of the first Kitasoo Xai'xais ancestor to the Nation in living memory and possibly the first ever.** It allowed a chief and elder (and a handful of community members) to actively take part in the repatriation and return his ancestor back to his village in person. **This repatriation provided powerful learning and leadership opportunities for the Nation's youth and provided an emotional but positive cause for celebration and reflection throughout the Nation. This success has also motivated further current repatriation efforts. Giaxsixa!**

Future Plans: We are continuing to work on repatriating the remaining artifact at the Museum of Vancouver and are working to repatriate ancestors and artifacts from the Royal BC Museum, the University of Victoria, and Simon Fraser University.

**K'omoks First Nation
Project Grant**

**Vancouver Island/Coast
\$27,835**

Summary: Funds were used to ancestral repatriation from UVIC and Baseline Archaeological which included transportation, building of cedar boxes, traditional wrapping of ancestors, and repatriation event where the ancestors were reinterned into the KFN grave house. The repatriation ceremony took place on March 18th, 2022.

Impact: This funding has greatly impacted KFN in a positive way by allowing us to begin the long process of repatriating some of our ancestors. This funding has allowed us to rebuild cultural practices around repatriation with the ceremony and wrapping of the ancestors, and for the first time in close to a century, our community reinterned ancestors to their proper resting place in our grave house at K'ómoks. This funding also positively impacted the community by bringing us together in ceremony after two years of COVID, and many members continued to share connections of how we are all related. We had members, including Elders, come together to prepare traditional ceremonial resources, donating traditional food for the ceremonial burning, and donating time with event preparation/set up/take down. Our Guardian Watchmen were involved by helping gather food and teach youth the traditional ways of preparing and cooking food in a pit fire and smoke house for the ceremonial burning. Children as young as 4 years old helped prepare for the ceremonial burning by preparing the cedar plank plates and platters, setting the table at the event, and gathering cedar boughs for the ceremony. In preparation of the ceremony, members partook in cleansing rituals for the first time and those that had knowledge shared their teachings.

Future: The biggest challenges we faced were a direct result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic with restrictions making planning and carrying out activities more difficult. We also had a gap of 8 months employment of our Cultural and Language Coordinator to lead this project in 2021 which also made the planning and execution of this project difficult.

**Lax Kw'alaams Band
Research Grant**

**North Coast
\$9,000**

Summary: Final report pending.

Impact:

Future Plans:

**Little Shuswap Band
Research Grant**

**Thompson-Okanagan
\$15,000**

Summary: Funds were used to research cultural items held at the following institutions - initial on-line searches: 1. Canadian Museum of History (CMH); 2. Museum of Anthropology, UBC (MOA); 3. Royal BC Museum (RBCM); 4. BC Archaeology Branch: searched the Remote Access to Archaeological Data to identify the archaeological sites located on Little Shuswap's reserve lands (Quaaout IR1, Chum Creek IR2, Meadow Lake IR3, Scotch Creek IR4, and North Bay IR5). Once the permit number associated with each archaeological site was found, a search was conducted on the Provincial Heritage Register to find the permit report...to determine if any cultural materials were identified and where they were stored. There are numerous archaeological sites on each of the reserves... In-person visits were undertaken at: 1. Chase & District Museum and Archives; 2. Kamloops Museum and Archives; and, 3. R.J. Haney Heritage

Village and Museum. In addition, Little Shuswap sent correspondence to lease holders on Quaaout IR1 and Scotch Creek IR4, asking them if they had private collections of cultural materials found on their leased lands, and if so, to submit the collections to the Cultural Heritage Protection Department (to date two leaseholders provided their collections). The material culture identified at the repositories that were researched thus far, was catalogued in an excel file...Images available of the material culture identified were downloaded and organized by institution.

Impact: Little Shuswap believes the cultural items housed in cultural institutions locally, nationally, and internationally, are physical evidence of their ancestors' knowledge. The 2020 Repatriation Grant, is an important step toward creating a more level playing field and supporting Little Shuswap as their members reclaim a more significant role in the management of their heritage. It has allowed Little Shuswap to begin the process of finding and eventually acquiring some of our ancestors material culture. **Our work thus far falls under the category of Preliminary Research, with a focus on what and where heritage from Little Shuswap's reserves and unceded lands is being held.** The institutions that were focused on during this stage are primarily within British Columbia and the Canadian Museum of History. We recognize that repatriation work is a complex process that includes extensive research, relationship building, advocacy, fundraising, and more. The 2020 Repatriation Grant has supported Little Shuswap in the first steps of our larger goals of recovering lost belongings, and building a cultural keeping place to house them.

Future Plans: Little Shuswap believes increased involvement of Indigenous communities in the interpretation of their culture and history through improved and increased access to museum collections, and the resulting new partnership with museums is vital. Determined to see the repatriation process through to the end, Little Shuswap's plans for future work include: 1. Further Research. While preliminary research has been conducted by Little Shuswap, the reach of that research has thus far been limited and is time consuming. Further background research will be required to determine which other institutions (locally, nationally, and internationally) hold cultural items (including stories, songs, interview data, as well as material culture) related to Little Shuswap. 2. Community Engagement. As Little Shuswap continues with this process, steps will be taken to ensure the repatriation research is respectful of Little Shuswap's goals and values as a community, and as efficient as possible. Taking the lead from other Indigenous communities (e.g., Haida) community engagement, organizational structures, and a repatriation committee will be important in determining next steps, once cultural items and institutions have been identified. This includes which institutions to focus on, and which sites to visit. 3. Cultural Heritage Centre and Repository. Little Shuswap's long term goal is building a cultural keeping place for repatriated cultural materials. While some access can be achieved via digital platforms (i.e., web access, digital media artifacts) Little Shuswap is focused on working towards the construction of a physical gathering space for the community and cultural materials - a Cultural Heritage Centre and Repository.

**Lower Nicola Indian Band
Both**

**Thompson-Okanagan
\$7,500**

Summary: The Lower Nicola Indian Band Repatriation Committee (LNIBRC) have begun the process of researching Nleʔkepmx history and in identifying and locating ancestral remains and material culture collections at museums, archives, institutions, repositories and in private collections around the world.

Impact: **This funding has allowed us and will allow us to: engage with community Knowledge Keepers, consult with archival professionals, Undertake research** at the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives, Canadian Museum of History, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University and started reaching out to the American Museum of Natural History (preliminary visits), Smithsonian Museums (drafting lists of relevant accessions), Chicago Field Museum as well as other international repositories; Investigate previously repatriated remains from RBCM, Forms a community committee to plan preliminary research trips to repositories, Plan a visit to the Canadian Museum of History and are planning to return for ceremonial stewardship of sacred materials.

Future Plans: The community's plan is to reengage previous efforts to meet as a group and meet with elders in the community to discuss how the committee can go about documenting the significance of these items and then allowing discourse to take place between the LNIBRC and the Canadian Museum of History. We plan to complete the research portion of the project by September 30, 2022.

**Maiyoo Keyoh Society
Research Grant**

**Cariboo
\$5,000**

Summary: Funds were used to develop curriculum about the cultural context of the Maiyoo Keyoh, the territory, the contemporary and historical use and occupancy and how the "A'Huille" Headdress fits into the Keyoh's context, for exhibit at "The Exploration Place"

Impact: **The funding has had a profound impact on our community. We noticed an increased awareness and pride among the Keyoh with the long term loan / repatriation**

Future Plans: the curriculum development is expected to be a work in progress.

**Maiyoo Keyoh Society
Project Grant**

**Cariboo
\$35,000**

Summary: Funds were / are used to purchase a case to display the Headdress and to display other items to show the cultural context of the Maiyoo Keyoh, the territory, the contemporary and historical use and occupancy and how the "A'Huille" Headdress fits into the Keyoh's context, for exhibit at "The Exploration Place"

Impact: The funding has had a profound impact on our community. The repatriation / long term loan of the headdress will not be completed until June. At that time, we will have a grand opening and a closed ceremony to welcome the headdress home to central BC. We will also have a public opening the same time with a press release.

Future Plans: We have already received the Case and the long-term loan / repatriation is in progress. The project work is expected to carry on and is a in progress. Currently The Exploration Place is / will be the temporary home for the Headdress and the exhibit but we are looking forward to finding a permanent home for the headdress and the exhibit.

**Nunwakola Cultural Society
Research Grant**

**Vancouver Island/Coast
\$5,065**

Summary: Final report pending.

Impact:

Future Plans:

**Semiahmoo First Nation
Project Grant**

**Lower Mainland/Southwest
\$25,000**

Summary: Semiahmoo will be repatriating ancestral remains from SFU in Burnaby. We have only had some introductory telephone conversations with SFU to provide us with guidance on their process. We were able to get a draft Band Council Resolution which will be advance to the Chief and Council next week at the strategic planning session.

Impact: This project has significant meaning for our community. **There are over 200+ ancestral remains currently stored at the repository at SFU from our Traditional Lands. Storage timeframes go back 50+ years. It has been a long time coming for our Ancestors to be able to journey home to rest undisturbed in our community.** Our community members will get to know the history of this era and how these ancestors became stored here at the SFU repository and will be able to participate in a meaningful way in bringing our ancestors back home to their final resting place.

Future Plans: our project is still in progress. Our next steps will include: starting with a strategic planning meeting with our Chief and Council, next week to set the guidance required for setting up meetings with SFU and other neighboring First Nations about our project. Set up our planning committee and commence planning process.

**Shuswap Indian Band
Research Grant**

**Kootenay
\$4,000**

Summary: Funds were used to provide archival research and database management training to relevant SIB staff, and to support the production of an archival research guide. This was intended to build capacity within the band to conduct further research into cultural heritage objects and support future repatriation efforts.

Impact: **This funding has built research and archival-systems capacity within the Shuswap Indian Band office, and has provided a basis with which to conduct repatriation research. From here, the research team at SIB can follow up on objects, documents, and historic events which have been noted by Knowledge Keepers during community sessions and interviews.** With this in mind, the funding has provided an avenue for SIB staff to research Secwepemc interests and history more fully, which will impact assertions of culture and heritage within the community's traditional territory.

Future Plans: Shuswap Indian Band intends to continue to develop their research guide as begun through the training sessions with Kwusen Research & Media. From here, SIB aims to develop a repatriation committee to address and follow up on concerns relayed by Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and begin to develop a formalized repatriation process.

**Squamish Nation
Project Grant**

**Lower Mainland/Southwest
\$19,400**

Summary: Funds were used to research materials related to Squamish Nation ancestors at the Canadian History of Museum, as well as ancestral remains at the Museum of Vancouver. The work has been focused on bringing the cultural materials and ancestral remains home to the Squamish Nation.

Impact: **The opportunity to bring home cultural materials at the Canadian Museum of History related to the Squamish Nation is part of ongoing efforts to revitalize and celebrate Squamish culture. Bringing the materials home to the Squamish and Lilwat Cultural Centre will provide Nation members and communities with direct access to our culture and history. It is a way to show our Nation, from the youngest to the oldest, that this is where we come from.** Similarly, the opportunity to bring home the Seńákw ancestor from the Museum of Vancouver has an incredible impact on the community. This is an old ancestor that deserves to be repatriated home under ceremony to honour and recognize the presence of Squamish people in our traditional homelands.

This funding has provided an opportunity to repatriate sacred materials and human remains that support Nation members holistic wellness.

Future Plans: The project activities are still in progress, as we are still in discussions with the Canadian Museum of History over their repatriation policy, as well as dispute over land claims and village sites with the Museum of Vancouver. Moving forward, we must walk slowly and carefully with our relatives and the institutions in order to bring our belongings and ancestors home.

**Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre
Project Grant**

**Lower Mainland/Southwest
\$35,000**

Summary: The Stó:lō Xyólhmet S'olhetawtxw Sq'é'ip (Stó:lō House of Respect Caretaking Committee) established communications with 30 museums and universities, obtained 633 records, and located 38 confirmed or likely Stó:lō ancestors in five museums. In building our inventory of ancestral remains, we identified ancestors from neighboring Coast Salish and Nlaka'pamux First Nations and met with representatives for the purpose of information sharing.

Impact: **It is empowering and healing to return ancestors to S'ólh Téméxw.** The House of Respect Caretaking Committee was able to locate and identify 38 Stó:lō ancestors and 146 belongings. This represents the first small step in bringing these ancestors home. The research funded by this grant has already led to the repatriation of six ancestors and 146 belongings from the Royal BC Museum in January 2022. **The repatriation work itself was an opportunity for Stó:lō community members to come together in a healing way. Three ancestors from this repatriation work are from the traditional lands of Chowéthel (Chawathil) and Yale First Nations, who will use data from the Royal BC Museum on these ancestors' original burial places in land use planning efforts.**

Throughout the next five years, the House of Respect Caretaking Committee will to work to move forward on the repatriation of the 32 ancestors identified through this grant at the Royal Ontario Museum, National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, D.C.), Canadian Museum of History, and the Field Museum (Chicago). The grant-funded research that identified these ancestors has helped the House of Respect Caretaking Committee start to shape long-term plans for bringing them home.

In sharing our research with neighboring First Nations, we have identified opportunities for further collaborative on the topic of repatriation among First Nations in British Columbia. Major questions ripe for wider discussion have arisen from our research under this grant. For example, many museums and universities have poor records from the early 20th century and before, many ancestors' records only give general identifying location markers such as: "British Columbia," "Fraser River," or "Coast Salish." **We have also identified opportunities for the development of centralized information sharing mechanisms for this kind of work.** After participating in information sharing with neighboring nations including Lytton First Nation, Kwantlen First Nation, and Musqueam First Nation, the House of Respect Caretaking Committee has reaffirmed that many aspects of repatriation work cannot be siloed.

Future Plans: Through our Stó:lō "Lost Boys" Project, the House of Respect Caretaking Committee intends to hire a contractor to assist in researching the whereabouts of Stó:lō children from Xwchíyó:m (Cheam) kidnapped by miners in the late 19th century and taken to work as labourers in the California workforce. This research is currently still ongoing.

To conclude this grant, the House of Respect Caretaking Committee hopes to host a multi-nation workshop on repatriation policy and practice discussing the issues uncovered through our research outlined in Question 9. This workshop has been postponed for safety reasons as our Elders wish to hold it in person.

**Tsawwassen First Nation
Research Grant**

**Lower Mainland/Southwest
\$25,000**

In contact with the Nation – Project Manager handling a family emergency at time of final reporting and will be late, but project complete.

Summary: Final report pending.

Impact:

Future Plans:

**Tsleil-Waututh Nation
Project Grant**

**Lower Mainland/Southwest
\$30,000**

Summary: Funds were used to establish an archaeological repository at Tsleil-Waututh Nation. Storage units were design and purchased to ensure safe storage of future repatriated Tsleil-Waututh belongings.

Impact: **The funding provided through this grant has greatly impacted the Tsleil-Waututh community and will continue to do so long into the future. As mentioned above Tsleil-Waututh used the funds to establish an archaeological repository on site. This has give the community the ability to increase stewardship over their cultural material/belongings. The process of returning belongings to the community is healing and will eliminate the need for any future excavated belongings to need to be stored in an institution, away from the community.** The repository will also provide training and employment opportunities in the future. As our Archaeology and Cultural Heritage program expands we will have a space to train Nation members on collections management and artifact/belonging cataloging.

Future Plans: **This project grant facilitated the first step in Tsleil-Waututh's repatriation program.** The Nation has two streams of repatriation planned. Repatriation of Tsleil-Waututh belongings currently stored archaeological repositories, museums and private collections. This grant allowed the Nation to purchase storage units to return these belongings to the community. The other stream is repatriation of Tsleil-Waututh Ancestors. The Nation is in the early stages of securing an area and creating infrastructure to return Ancestors to in the community. Repatriation of belongings will begin with material currently stored at local institutions once Covid restrictions are lifted.

T'Souke First Nation

Vancouver Island/Coast

Research Grant

\$8,000

Summary: Final report pending.

Impact:

Future Plans:

**Ulkatcho First Nation
Research Grant**

**Cariboo
\$12,000**

Summary: The UFN used the grant to build a storage room for its archive material. It was previously put into a classroom at the Band Operated School. The new storage room is larger and has room for the next stage of categorizing and digitizing the archive material.

Impact: **This funding allowed the community to have a safe and secured space in which to archive heritage and cultural materials. Having a space dedicated to the storage of cultural and heritage material allows the First Nation community to begin gathering and storing material that will be further categorized and made available for research etc.**

Future Plans: None mentioned in final report at this time.

**Witset First Nation
Research Grant**

**Nechako
\$9,700**

Summary: Repatriation research included Witsuwit'en material culture and photographs are currently located in local, domestic and international museums. Post-pandemic societal restart is when visits to museums will commence with enthusiasm.

Impact: As a result of this pandemic, our nation members interest has grown to learn Witsuwit'en language and participate in cultural activities they can continue outside planned community events. **Repatriation of artifacts will show youth a wealth of knowledge and spirituality that can be learned and practiced from harvesting resources following traditional protocols.** For example, fish traps or weirs can be made from harvesting spruce and cedar roots or willow branches on traditional territories. Researching and cataloguing Witsuwit'en artifacts and photographs will inform growing a new museum expansion to a Cultural Centre envisioned to house the repatriated inventory in a secured, climate-controlled environment to further educate tourists, Witsuwit'en members and with a compassionate focus on those living with intergenerational trauma that lack self-identity and self-worth. **Making the intangible manifest by connecting with 'seen and felt' proof of ancestors physical and spiritual resiliency of living in the natural world using readily available resources as tools will enliven youth to share their knowledge and experience with loved ones.**

Future Plans: Widzin Kwah Museum current infrastructure and location is a direct and immediate connection to Witsuwit'en and non-Witsuwit'en members and tourists. Our current facility would not be the large enough to house the current inventory and the items that were located during the Repatriation Research. The research has identified many items that would be of interest to bring back to the homeland and be shared by the descendants of the artifact while promoting the Witsuwit'en language and culture; by means of a new Cultural Centre and new Museum together that will both teach and share the histories of our Witsuwit'en Ancestors while revitalizing traditional practices and the language spoken by our ancestors with the artifacts that demonstrate the ways of our ancestors.

Recommendations For Future Initiatives

The BCMA was recently invited by Heiltsuk Nation to a repatriation ceremony at the Royal BC Museum. The speakers noted three things that stress the critical importance for continued Provincial support for repatriation. First, they noted that their Nation's initial correspondence about repatriating the sacred objects was sent to the Royal BC Museum was in 1989. Second, they noted that their Nation did not have repatriation ceremonies until relatively recently because in their cultural context, removing items from a burial site is an unthinkable act and they had never encountered this until colonization. Third, with the support of the 2020 Repatriation Grants and an institutional mandate within the Royal BC Museum to support repatriation, it took two months for the Heiltsuk to work with the museum to repatriation their sacred items.

Indigenous communities have been attempting to right unimaginable wrongs for decades and with a modest amount of financial support, they are able to close a wound that has existed within their community for decades within a handful of weeks. Museums have ignored the advocacy of Indigenous communities for centuries, but these institutions are finally listening and are willing to support repatriation – the time is now to take action in this critical step towards reconciliation.

When submitting final reports, the BCMA requested feedback from the grant recipients for both the overall projects and for how to improve future granting programs. A total of \$1,107,288.00 was requested from more than 50 applicants, and \$454,00.00 was awarded to 25 applicants; many recipients requested more funding be made available for repatriation work. **100% of final report respondents agreed that their community would apply again for more funding if it became available.**

*“More research is needed beyond this funding period. **We still have hundreds of institutions to look at. Every time we look at one, it leads us to more places.**” – Cowichan Tribes*

“We wish to emphasize the importance of continuing similar streams of funding for First Nations in the future.” - Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre

*“Due to the amount of cultural artifacts out there, **additional funding to carry on the research work would be much appreciated.** Out of hundreds of museums located throughout the world, we were only able to catalogue a fraction of them. There is much more work needing to be done but we have run out of funding to carry on this valuable work.” - Gitanyow Huwilp Society*

“We are grateful for this funding, and would benefit from increased, annual funding towards this work, which benefits not only our Haida Nation and museum, but all the Indigenous Nations and museums/universities we support across BC, Canada and internationally. \$100k would not even cover the positions we truly need to do our work, but it would be a huge weight off our shoulders, and give some breathing room to raise the rest of the monies needed in a year. I would ask the BCMA lobby for annual repatriation assistance, and to increase the funding available.” - Haida Gwaii Museum Society

*“There is repatriation funding available through the Museum Assistance Program, but the application process is extremely daunting. **It would be very helpful if more small grants were available like this one, funded provincially, and potentially delivered through First Peoples' Cultural Council.**” - Gixtaala Nation*

“Continue to put out grant funding opportunities every 6-12 months. We have so many ancestors we need to bring home and repatriate and having funding will allow us to continue to plan next phases and continue this extremely important cultural work.” - K'omoks First Nation

Since a significant percentage of the 2020 Repatriation Grant funding supported research, many communities are now in a better position to take action to repatriate their ancestors and cultural patrimony but require funding for this critical work. During 2021, and continuing into 2022, the BCMA has partnered with the Department of Canadian Heritage to offer regular webinars exploring available federal funding for repatriation, but as noted in the above quote, federal funding applications are complex, time consuming, and are often a significant capacity drain for many Indigenous communities.

Regular annual provincial funding with flexible timelines would allow this work to continue and the burden of seeking and returning ancestors and cultural materials to be eased slightly on the communities who carry out this work. As we have seen through the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges faced by these organizations, this work can be unpredictable and depends on travel, online materials from the heritage sector, and willingness of heritage organizations to discuss and support repatriation. Flexibility in reporting and timelines would enable communities to take the time to complete these projects while caring for their communities and adapting to setbacks.

BCMA would recommend that any future provincial repatriation funding initiatives seek to streamline and simplify reporting and application processes to the highest possible degree to avoid burdening Indigenous communities with limited capacity. As we outlined in the

challenges faced by recipients, many communities pursue this work with the help of grant funds, and do not have a permanent staff to focus on repatriation projects. Knowing this, the burden of applications and reporting falls to those within the organizations who have full time jobs with additional portfolios, often with more dire consequences for the community.

During Summer 2020, Chepximiya Siyam – Chief Janice George, was contracted as a consultant to support the 2020 Repatriation Grant program and provided recommendations for the granting process to the BCMA Indigenous Advisory Committee for review. Chief George was determined that the application process be as “friendly” as possible. She noted that all too often grant applications can be intimidating or use overly formal language, discouraging communities with less experience in grant writing from applying. From the option of having both online form submissions and download PDF submissions, to offering downloadable budget templates, to encouraging applicants to call the BCMA directly with their questions, we have tried to infuse this “friendly” ethos into all levels of the application. We cannot stress enough the importance of removing barriers to this funding and encourage this ethos continue in any future provincial funding initiatives.

BCMA offered a series of webinars in spring and summer 2021 from BC Arts Council and Canadian Heritage to discuss opportunities for Indigenous organizations to learn more about funding programs that could assist them. We targeted outreach for these webinars towards all applicants to the 2020 Repatriation Grant program and they were well attended. We believe that these webinars enabled organizations to find additional funding opportunities where they could leverage their 2020 Repatriation Grants to apply for additional funds to continue repatriation efforts. In responding to the value of the webinar, one attendee noted that the session provided “confirmation that our institution (Tribal Council) is eligible to apply for the Indigenous Heritage component of MAP despite the fact that we are not a museum.” (Survey Response, Spring 2021).

“The process of applying for, and receiving grant funding was easy and efficient.” - Tsleil-Waututh Nation

“The House of Respect Caretaking Committee appreciates the administration efforts of the BCMA in coordinating this grant and found BCMA's flexibility and cultural sensitivity to be very effective.” - Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre

“The application and reporting process was easy to follow, and the grant team very supportive and helpful.” - Haida Gwaii Museum Society

*“This grant application and the reporting template were very community friendly. **We have been applying for many grants over the last year, and are relieved and grateful when a funding process is reasonable and accessible, and does not overtax program capacity**”.* - Gixtaala Nation

BCMA Indigenous Advisory Committee has recommended that the Association offer 2020 Repatriation Grant recipients opportunities to discuss their challenges, strategies, projects and processes. Several applicants have expressed a desire among to be brought together to share their knowledge with each other and to share with those looking to apply for funding who have not yet started this work. The BCMA will work with the Indigenous Advisory Committee and sector partners to explore opportunities in the coming year to facilitate this dialogue and knowledge exchange.

*“We recently participated in a symposium hosted by FPCC that was a wrap up of their Sense of Place Grant. It brought together all the program participants to talk about their projects. This occurred a few months prior to the new funding intake. It allowed communities to hear about relevant projects done by other Nations and get ideas for future work. **If there was another round of repatriation funding available through BCMA, I highly recommend a webinar or virtual symposium where communities could share their project outcomes, challenges etc. prior to developing new workplans and proposals.** I would also recommend info-sharing sessions prior to MAP intakes. BCMA hosts the funding agents, which is great, but it would also be helpful to host a session of grantees who can share insight and tips for new applicants, or advice on requirements”. Gixtaala Nation*

“Bringing together grant recipients to share successes and challenges throughout the year would strengthen and coordinate repatriation efforts in BC.” - Haida Heritage and Repatriation Society

The BC Museums Association extends its most sincere thanks to the Province of British Columbia for their support of the 2020 Repatriation Grants and for their support of the essential role that repatriation plays in the reconciliation process.

In closing, we would like to reiterate how critical it is that the Province of British Columbia continue to offer annual support for repatriation. In the words of Dan Smith, former chair of the BCMA Indigenous Advisory Committee and a member of the Wei Wai Kum First Nation in Campbell River: **“True, meaningful, and lasting reconciliation must include the return of our ancestors back to the Nations where they were taken from. We must work together to realize this, and in doing so free our children and their children from the sacred obligation we have for finding our ancestors and bringing them home.”**