

ASSIGNMENT

READ: The document “TWN Our Story” (from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation’s website, 2018).

1. Summarize the key information in the introduction (the first 3 paragraphs on page 1).
2. Read the section titled “*Our Past*”. This section refers to “pre-contact” life (before European people settled in the region). In point form summarize the key points in this section.
3. Read the section titled “*Our Present*”. This section refers to “post-contact” life (after European people settled in the region). In point form summarize the key points in this section.
4. Read the section titled “*Our Future*”. In point form summarize the key points in this section.
5. Answer these questions in paragraph form:
 - a. *Personal reflection*: Think about your life in the Burrard Inlet region, in comparison to what you read in the document. The Tsleil-Waututh have been the “people of the inlet” for many thousands of years. Burnaby North students are also connected to the inlet – you go to school on the south shore of the inlet and live in the region of the inlet.
 - i. Is your experience of life in this region similar to, or different from, the way of life described in the document? Explain.
 - ii. Think of your sense of emotional connection to the land and environment of the region. How is it similar to, or different from, the sense of connection described in the document? Explain.
 - b. Pre-contact, in what ways did the Tsleil-Waututh peoples traditional practices support environmental sustainability in Burrard Inlet?

Refer to the document: “*Shellfish contamination in Burrard Inlet*”. Page 1 of the document is a map showing the areas around Burrard Inlet where shellfish are contaminated due to pollution (the entire inlet is contaminated – do not eat clams harvested from Burrard Inlet!).

For thousands of years the Tsleil-Waututh people were able to gather all the food they needed from the land and water of the Inlet (there’s an ancient saying: “When the tide is out the table is set” – they collected a wide variety of edible plants and animals from the intertidal region). But, in the early 1970s the shellfish in Burrard Inlet were deemed unsafe to eat due to toxins caused by pollution. In 2015 the Tsleil-Waututh Nation launched a project to try to clean up the inlet: (read the article at this link)

<https://www.nsnews.com/news/tsleil-waututh-nation-unveil-plans-for-burrard-inlet-clean-up-1.2188207>

READ: The document “*TWN-Burrard-Inlet-Action-Plan-Summary*”

6. Refer to Page 6 of the document. In point form, summarize the information (page 6 only).
7. The Action Plan identifies 6 “near term” priorities. Imagine that you have a chance to work with a team to address one of those priorities (like a work-experience job). Which of the priorities would you choose to work on? Explain why you chose this priority (what interests you about it? Why do you think it’s important?)

“Our holistic vision seeks to balance ethical growth with Tsleil-Waututh values.”

Our Tsleil-Waututh Nation is one of many groups of Coast Salish peoples living in the Pacific Northwest, throughout British Columbia, Washington and Oregon. Our knowledge of the lands and waters of our territory has shaped our people.

Many generations have lived and thrived in this area, due in no small part to an abundance of resources. So we have a sacred trust, a responsibility to care for and restore our traditional territory to its former state. Our stewardship of the land, air and water is deeply ingrained in our culture, because we understand the health of our people is interconnected with the environment we inhabit.

Our vision for our people is reflected in every action we take, every decision we make as a sovereign people. We have made a conscious decision to acknowledge our anger toward the damaging changes we experienced from colonial contact, and then to set it aside, preferring instead to find creative ways to move forward into our future. In our land and business development activities, we seek to strike a balance between smart, ethical growth and preserving Tsleil-Waututh values and territory.

To sustain and strengthen our culture, we:

- Think big and act decisively to care for our lands and waters
- Build strong relationships based on trust and mutual respect
- Participate in all social, economic, cultural and political activities taking place on our lands
- Share our wealth of knowledge with the broader community

Our Past

Our oral history tells us up to 10,000 Tsleil-Waututh members lived in our traditional territory, before contact with Europeans. Our ancestors' survival depended on cycles of hunting, harvesting and preserving foods, and on trade with our neighbours.

Originally, our great nation was about 10,000 strong, a distinct Coast Salish nation whose territory includes Burrard Inlet and the waters draining into it.

Our people lived by a “seasonal round,” a complex cycle of food gathering and spiritual and cultural activities that formed the heart of our culture. In winter, community members congregated in large villages located in sheltered bays. Shed-roofed houses up to several hundred feet in length were divided into individual family apartments. Our people subsisted largely on stored dried foods gathered and processed throughout the rest of the year. Winter activities included wood carving, weaving blankets of mountain-goat wool, and participating in spiritual ceremonies.

In late spring, families would disperse to set up camps on virtually every beach and protected cove in Tsleil-Waututh territory. Our people transported planks from the winter houses by canoe to construct smaller summer structures. From these base camps, we made excursions to hunt, fish and gather food, as resources became seasonally available. Some food was consumed immediately; others were processed and stored for winter.

Many of our ancestors and elders were devastated by contact with Europeans from smallpox, residential schools, and cultural suppression.

In mid-July or early August, most of the Tsleil-Waututh and other Coast Salish groups travelled to the Fraser River to catch and dry the most favoured type of salmon: sockeye. During this time, people would visit, exchange news of relatives, and form alliances. We also harvested and dried large volumes of berries during the summer.

After the Fraser River run finished in the fall, Tsleil-Waututh families would congregate in camps on the Indian, Capilano, Seymour and other rivers to fish for pink and chum salmon. Most of the catch was dried for winter use or trade. By December, families returned to their winter villages with the provisions collected throughout the year, and the cycle began again.

We have discovered numerous archaeology sites where our ancestors gathered, some are thousands of years old. We've truly been here since time out of mind.

Our Elders tell us, once Europeans arrived, a majority of our population was decimated through disease. We also hear how our people survived other difficult times—colonialism, the reserve system and residential schools. Despite this devastation, our people helped build Vancouver and North Vancouver, persevered in stewardship of our territory, continued practicing and passing down our language and culture, however we could. We found our way through the change happening in the world around us.

Our Present

Today our nation is 500+ people strong and growing. We draw on the knowledge of our ancestors to remedy past wrongs, reclaim our territory and traditions, and advance into a bright future. We assert our Aboriginal rights and title and put the Tsleil-Waututh face back on our traditional territory in all we do.

Our population has increased more than 200% in the past 30 years. Today, our Nation is more than 500 people strong. We have a young population and our community is growing quickly.

As always, we remain committed to caring for and healing our traditional territory. Our stewardship ensures Tsleil-Waututh participates in all planning and development on our traditional territory, so once-abundant resources can be restored, protected and used sustainably. And we are rebuilding our culture and environment so future generations can thrive as our ancestors have.

We now mandate a stewardship review of all proposed water, land, and resource plans to ensure proposals in our territory support sustainability and deliver benefits to our community.

We have mapped fish migration routes, elk herd locations, old growth forests, ancestral villages, art sites, and more in our territory.

We continue to negotiate for a treaty agreement with Canada and British Columbia (started in 1994).

- TWN now runs multiple successful businesses, which generate own source revenues, build our capacity for economic growth, provide employment opportunities for our people, and create wealth for current and future generations.
- We created the Sacred Trust Initiative to oppose the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline proposal, with a unanimous mandate from members to stop this threat to our lands, water and way of life.
- We deliver programs for our community members in education, health and wellness, child and family development, training and employment, support for youth, families and elders, and more.
- We have partnered with the Squamish and Musqueam Nations to acquire six properties in our nations' traditional territories—through the new MST Corporation—which will lead to sustainable, profitable developments over the long term.
- We are building a new TWN Administration & Health Centre to bring all of our services under one roof and provide more space for community activities.
- Today, we are inspired by the resilience and courage of our people. Our journey leads, ultimately, to Tsleil-Waututh self-sufficiency and sovereignty.

Our Future

Our vision for the future is, *“To maintain our identity as Tsleil-Waututh people, respecting our past and being mindful of our future, sharing a collective vision for a healthy, holistic community in harmony with our surroundings; guided by our spiritual, emotional, mental and physical teachings, thriving in our cultural excellence.”*

And so we dedicate ourselves to:

- Maintaining our sacred trust to restore the environment in our traditional territory
- Participating in all decisions within our lands—social, ecological, cultural, economic
- Building personal and professional capacity in our people
- Generating wealth and prosperity for the Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- Working with partners who share common goals
- Passing our cultural knowledge and traditions on to our children and grandchildren (and their children ...)
- Ultimately, we will attain our 150-year quest to regain and retain sovereignty in our traditional territory.

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