

Community Profile



Nelson Leon – Kukpi7 Candidate for Adams Lake Indian Band

Nelson Leon - a member of the Secwepemc Nation, is the former Chief of the Adams Lake Indian Band. He has served his community for a total of 16 years, the last 9 as Chief. As former Chief, Nelson actively participated and contributed to all levels of First Nation governance including: Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (SNTC), BC Assembly First Nations (BCAFN), Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and the National Assembly First Nations (NAFN).

Since the last election he has been self-employed in a number of activities: mechanizing auto and marine, wood art, natural forest furniture and working with the First Nations Energy and Mining Council.

He also returned to our traditional territory, Cstelnètkwe (Adams Lake waters). Asserting Secwepemc title on an area he calls home, approximately 5 square kilometers and 3 km of lake front, all off reserve. He has been clearing land for a building, developing heritage trails and campsites. It is his intent to earn a livelihood from the land through aboriginal tourism.

As former Chief he was committed to the growth and development of our community, with a focus on capacity development. During his tenure, the leadership team did accomplish structural change, policy development, economic partnerships, reduction of social assistance clients, increase of employment and the building the gaming centre on our Salmon Arm reserve.

Nelson is a strong advocate for the recognition of aboriginal title and rights. The establishment of the Adams Lake Cultural Camp in 2009, located off reserve in the traditional territory was an assertion of inherit Secwepemc jurisdiction. There is an annual camp involving 50 to 60 members that return to the land in recognition of ancestral responsibilities.

Nelson also served on various Boards in support of economic development, human resource development, and First Nation governance. The boards included All Nations Trust, Central Interior Aboriginal Human Resource Development, BC AFN Board of Directors and the First Nation Energy and Mining Council. In recognition of his contributions to community he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal in 2012.

Nelson owned and operated a successful Silviculture Business for seven years prior to entering politics. Demonstrating the competitiveness of aboriginal business and providing 22 jobs for his and neighboring communities. Concurrently he was employed by the Shuswap Training and Employment Program (STEP), as Administrator. With the support of the STEP board he developed programs, policy and the establishment of Aboriginal Employment service in Kamloops, Chase and Salmon Arm.

Nelson was raised by his grandparents until the age of nine, he has developed and maintained a strong connection to the land and traditions. He is an avid hunter and has shared his knowledge and equipment with the youth on community hunts. He initiated the purchase of a community canoe and journeyed as skipper with the youth on two Pulling Together Journeys.

“If elected as Chief, I am committed to finding resolution to the issues in our community that has caused such a terrible divide. Asserting Secwepemc Title, developing future Leadership and supporting the youth back on to the Land.”