

edlánet'e

Hháiye (Winter) 2025



BUFFALO RIVER
DENE NATION





**Acting Chief
Dallas Billette**



**Councillor
Terrance Byhette**



**Councillor
Collin Catarat**



**Councillor
Louis Chinalquay**



**Councillor
Melissa Desjarlais**

edlânet'e

Greetings to all our members, near and far.

Welcome to the third issue of edlânet'e! Our winter newsletter shares updates on our Settlement Trust, business investments and partnerships, and stories about our community and the people who make it stronger every day.

We want to start by thanking Norma Catarat for her leadership as BRDN Chief. We're proud to see her working to bring all our northern neighbours together as Dene Vice-Chief for the Meadow Lake Tribal Council.

Our Nation reached a milestone in February 2024 when members voted to create the BRDN Settlement Trust, uniting our CLAWR and Cows & Plows funds. Created by our community settlement committee and expert legal and finance advisors, our Trust protects these funds for our youth and supports growth for the future. Members will be able to see all trust documents on our website (www.brdn.ca) in April when RBC presents the first annual trust report.

BRDLP continues to build BRDN's economic foundation. Our first major investment, a 51% stake in Mainstay, plays a key part in BRDLP's strategy to maximize opportunities from our benefit agreements with NexGen and Fission. Read ahead to meet Jeff Spence, our partner at Mainstay.

The last few months haven't been easy for our community, with HR and resource challenges at the school, negative messaging and misinformation on social media, and the impact of the forensic audit initiated at our January 8 General Band Meeting. We hope the lessons learned lead to more transparent and accountable governance, and stronger policies and procedures that protect our Nation's money and most important resource — our people.

Through it all, our community's strength shines through in the work of our teachers, health workers, Jordan's Principle leads, and all our staff. Thank you for all you do to make our community great, and especially for supporting our youth and elders.

We are proud to work for our community. Together, we are building a better future that honours our traditions and creates new paths for our people.

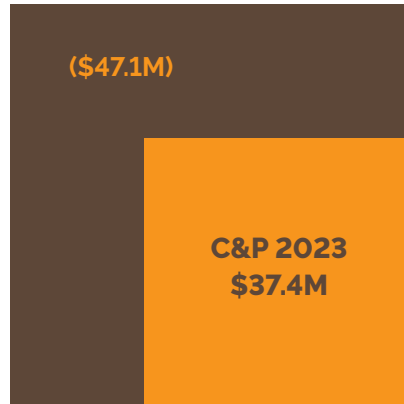
**Marci cho,
Chief & Council**

Cold Lake Air Weapons Range (CLAWR) 2021: \$60.5 million



\$15K per Eligible Member
1135/1495 (18+) PAID Dec 2023 (360 held in Minors Trust)

Agricultural Benefits (Cows & Plows) 2023: \$84.5 million



\$30K per Eligible Member
+ \$1000 x 5 Years (2024-2028)
1196/1641 (21+) PAID Dec 2023 (445 held in Minors Trust)

- Value Dec 2023
- PCDs, loans, expenses paid
- PCD = Per Capita Distribution

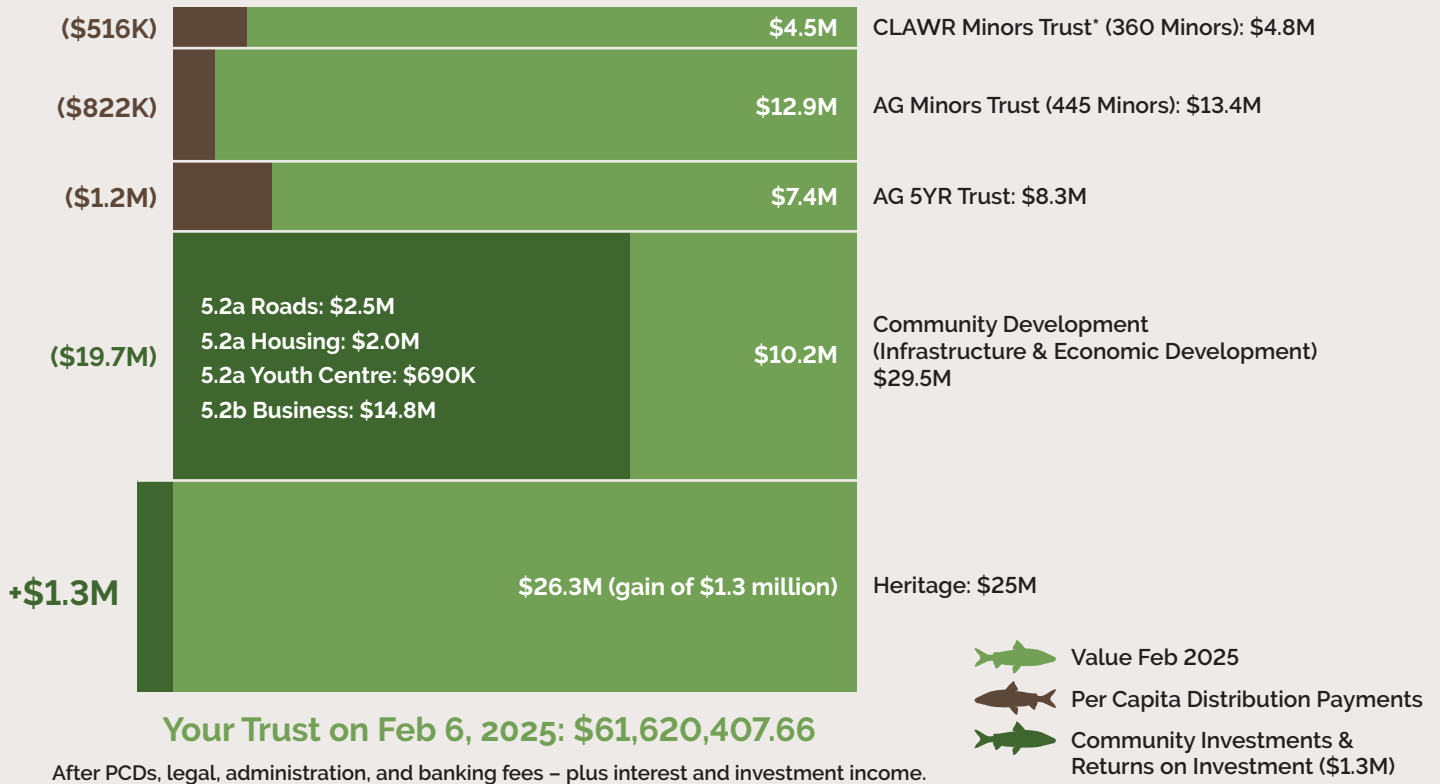
\$44.2M CLAWR + \$37.4M C&P = \$81.6M

After PCDs, \$6.9M FNBC Housing Loan payment, legal, administration, and banking fees – plus interest and investment income.



BUFFALO RIVER DENE NATION SETTLEMENT TRUST

\$81,586,040.23 (as of Feb 2024)



For presentation purposes, numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000). Numbers are expressed in full in trust updates, audited financial statements, and annual reports. This information is available for viewing by all BRDN Members.

*\$600K Adult CLAWR PCDs past cutoff are now designated to support funerals (\$200K spent in 2024).

BUFFALO RIVER DEVELOPMENT (BRDLP)

Message from BRDLP President & CEO Brad Darbyshire



As we move into our second official year of operations, BRDLP continues to explore investment opportunities that support the Nation's economic development vision. This vision includes more training and job opportunities, sustainable returns that benefit our

people long-term, and ensuring our businesses and operations align with our community values, which remind us that it's not just what we do but how we do it and who we do it for.

Good governance is the foundation of our success. BRDLP's Board of Directors and internal committees meet monthly to develop and inform policies, ensuring a framework that supports ethical, transparent decision-making systems that are accountable to our community and partners.

While BRDLP's core focus right now is dedicated to maximizing opportunities from regional mining developments like the Fission and NexGen projects, including through investment and partnerships that complement our existing portfolio, our long-term vision is to expand BRDN's economy beyond the region through diverse, multi-sector investments.

As we grow, every decision we make balances four key priorities: community values, environmental responsibility, risk management, and the potential for financial returns that benefit our community. This year will see new and exciting initiatives that will engage our youth and entire community for a healthy future.

Marci cho,
Brad

A proud BRDN member, Brad has advocated for increased Indigenous participation in the economy, holistic community engagement, and business approaches grounded in Indigenous values throughout his career. Among many positions in leadership, Brad was CEO of STC Industrial from 2015-2021 and CEO of Points Athabasca from 2001-2014. A founding member and Board Director of the Indigenous Manufacturing & Contracting Network (IMCN), Brad has dedicated his time to many boards and charities, including Saskatchewan Industrial & Mining Suppliers Association (SIMSA), White Buffalo Youth Lodge, Hands-On Outreach, and others. Brad and his wife Deni live in Shell Lake and enjoy hunting, snowmobiling, and boating with family and friends. Their son, Lane, and daughter, Tori, are both students at the University of Saskatchewan.

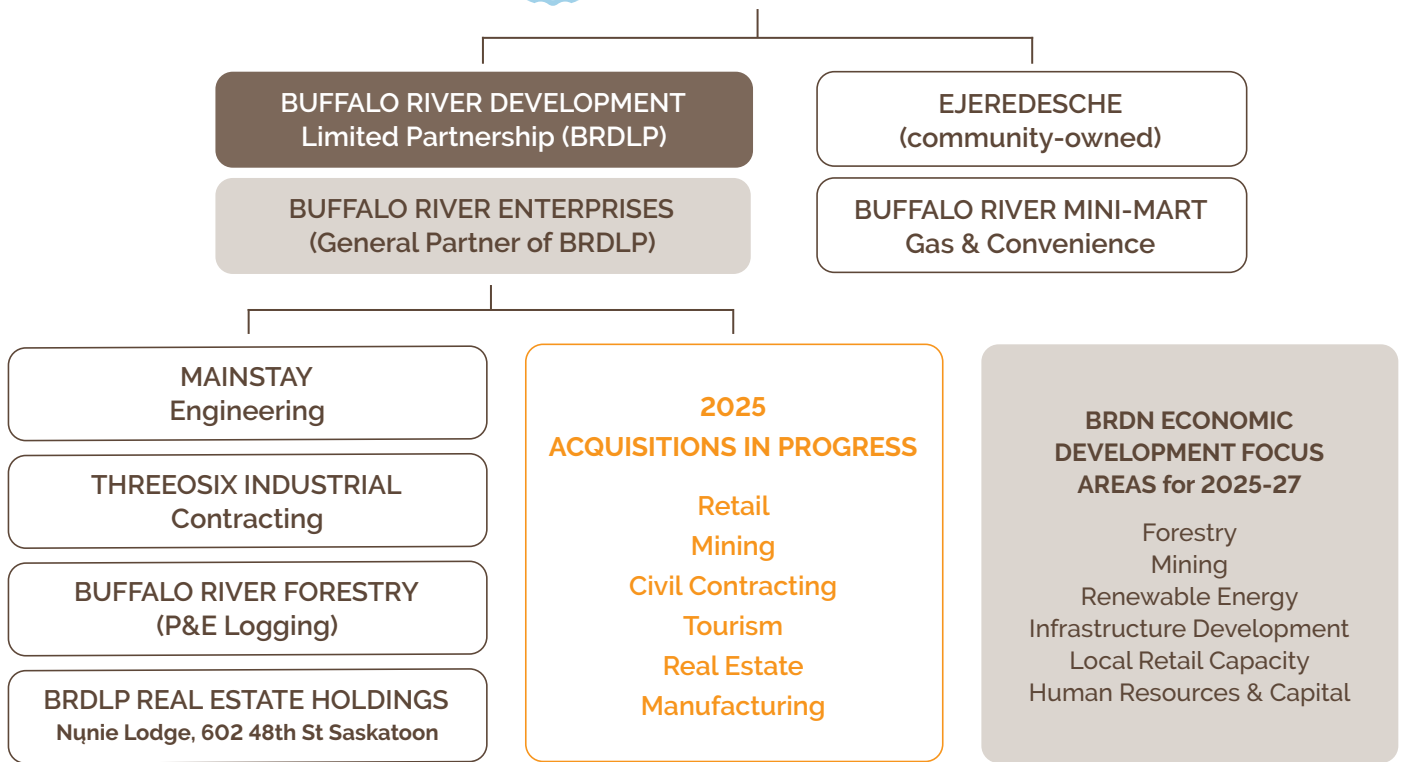
Alliances & Partnerships

BRDLP is committed to nurturing multi-sector alliances and partnerships that support our ability to pursue economic opportunities within our traditional territory and beyond.

- 3twenty Modular - commercial & industrial buildings
- Cementation Mining Services - full mine services
- Co-op - lumber & supplies
- Delco - water & sewage treatment
- Earth Drilling Services - sonic diamond drilling
- EngComp - engineering & project management
- Far North Crane - crane services & logistics support
- Finning Canada - generators & heavy equipment
- Flyer Electric - electrical & instrumentation
- FLSmidth - technology solutions for mining
- FDNSK - strategy & communications
- Full Force Drilling Services - diamond drilling
- Mato Industrial Contracting - vegetation control
- Millar Mechanical - plumbing, HVAC services
- Mine Supply Company - mining supplies & solutions
- OBR Industrial - electrical, mechanical & millwright
- Outline Construction - road & site stabilization
- Phase Electric Ltd - electrical, project management
- Polar Oils - full service fuel supply
- Rise Air Services - northern charter air services
- Sixteen Safety - staffing, paramedical & supply
- Westlund - pipes, valves, fittings & supplies



**BUFFALO RIVER
DENE NATION**



[Learn more at brdlp.ca](http://brdlp.ca)

BRDLP Group of Companies



BRDLP is the wholly-owned economic development corporation of Buffalo River Dene Nation. Dedicated to supporting local enterprise and sustainable business and economic growth that benefits all BRDN Members, BRDLP is inspired by its people, culture, and lands, and excited to develop the community's workforce and abundant natural resources. **(100% ownership)**



Buffalo River Forestry (formerly P&E Logging) is a full-service cutting, processing, hauling (stump-to-dump) operation north of Glaslyn. A family operation with Métis roots and majority-

Indigenous employees, P&E Logging has been in operation since the 1960s. BRDN is proud to now run a 100% Nation-owned forestry operation in its traditional territory. **(100% ownership)**



Mainstay Engineers & Owners Reps provides mining and industrial companies with engineering services and qualified project and construction management professionals who act as owner's representatives on capital construction projects. Through a Mainstay representative, owners control project safety, quality, schedules, and costs. **(51% owned)**

[Find out more at mainstayreps.com](http://mainstayreps.com)



Threeosix is an industrial solutions provider located in Saskatoon with offices in Edmonton and Calgary serving both resource and infrastructure sectors across Canada. Threeosix develops long-term, value-added relationships, and provides timely and transparent services for project owners. Threeosix is committed to diversity, inclusion and hiring from the communities in which they do business. **(75% owned)**

[Find out more at threeosix.ca](http://threeosix.ca)

MAINSTAY ENGINEERS & OWNER REPS

Meet Jeff Spence, co-founder & CEO of Mainstay Engineers

Growing up on his family's farm south of Maymont, Saskatchewan, Jeff Spence worked alongside his brother and sister to help his parents (who held down other jobs) complete the tasks necessary for the farm's success. These early lessons about community, hard work, and collaboration developed the values that would later shape his approach to business and leadership.



After earning his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Saskatchewan, Jeff moved to Calgary to work in the oil and gas sector before returning home to his Saskatchewan roots. Saskatoon has been home for Jeff ever since, and where he is raising his four children: Jackson, Abby, Becca, and Kyle.

Jeff's move to Saskatoon shifted his career focus to the mining sector. At Cameco's Cigar Lake Mine Project, he was responsible for the design, procurement, construction, and commissioning of the process systems, including the site administration facilities. His work at Cigar Lake and on other Cameco projects is what led him to co-found what would eventually become Mainstay.

"Mining operations can't just reassign people to project roles if it takes them away from the core work they do

supporting ongoing operations," Jeff says. "That's what inspired our business. Mainstay partners with clients to support projects by filling key roles, such as project manager, engineer, or construction coordinator when they lack internal capacity. We fill these resource gaps by providing services to support development and ensure that shorter-term projects don't impact operations."

During Jeff's many years working across northern Saskatchewan and Alberta, he saw many examples of Indigenous engagement and partnership done wrong; highlighting the importance of reconciliation. When the opportunity to partner with Buffalo River Dene Nation came up, Jeff saw a path to doing work the right way.

When the opportunity came up for Mainstay to partner with Buffalo River, I saw opportunities for growth as an Indigenous-owned venture, but way more importantly than that, I saw a chance for a genuine Indigenous partnership that I think is one of the best ways forward. – Jeff Spence

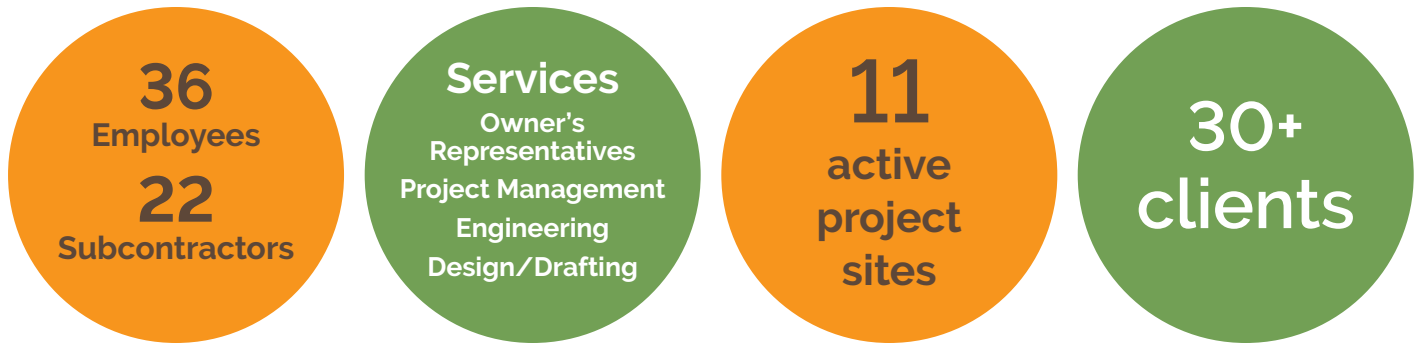
Jeff sees Indigenous ownership as more than just job creation; he sees equity positions as important investments in the community that provide a chance to participate in regional mining development in a meaningful way, with an active seat at the table through genuine partnership.

Mainstay's motto is "Together, we thrive." Brad Pederson, an urban BRDN member who works as a professional engineer for Mainstay, describes it as a company dedicated to helping clients find solutions.

I like to think that our clients think of Mainstay when they have a problem or an issue because they trust us to get in there and work with them to find the best solution. I hope that Mainstay's relationship with Buffalo River is the same; that we work together and do many great things.

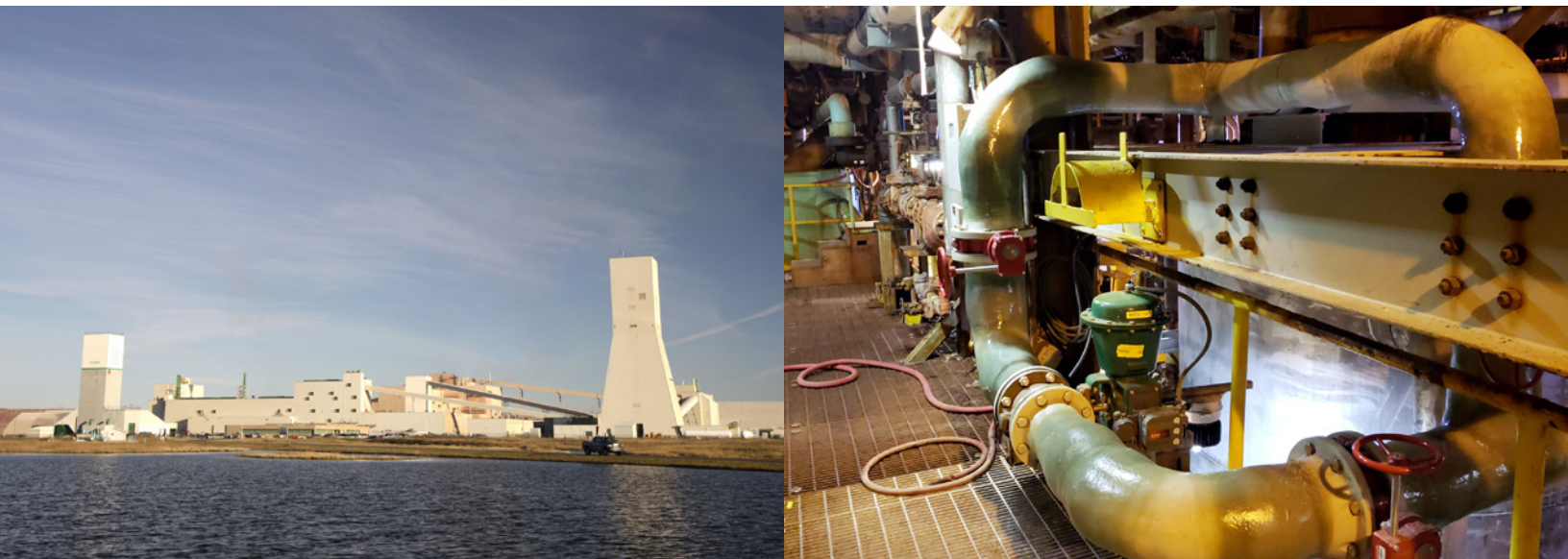
Brad Pederson – Urban member of BRDN and professional engineer for Mainstay

MAINSTAY ENGINEERS & OWNER REPS



Mainstay is one of the first Indigenous-owned professional services firms specializing in engineering, project management, and construction support for Canada's mining and industrial sectors. Mainstay's experienced team of engineers and industry professionals deliver high-quality results by maintaining strong relationships with their clients.

Mainstay clients include: Cameco, Nutrien, NexGen, Fission, Orano, Mosaic, BHP, Teck Resources, SSR, K+S



Mainstay at Nutrien Lanigan: Upgrades & maintenance

In October 2024, Nutrien shut down the Lanigan facility for four weeks to perform maintenance on their systems and make significant changes to the mill and mine equipment and processes. These shutdowns for maintenance and improvements are executed annually at all Nutrien sites.

The 14-member crew from O'Neill Project Management (now part of Mainstay) was a key part of the Nutrien team that had begun planning for shutdown in 2023. This included purchasing much of the equipment, materials, and services required to perform the work, managing the on-site work to ensure quality and safety standards, and then commissioning the newly modified systems.

Thanks to our team's expert advice and hard work, the Lanigan shutdown was reduced from ten to four weeks by shifting many activities off the critical path timeline of the shutdown. The team managed up to ~\$50 million in capital projects on-site last year and has provided this service at Lanigan and other sites since 2016.

As a result of these many successes, Nutrien Lanigan has kept our team onsite for the next shutdown, scheduled for July 2025, and they have already begun putting plans together to achieve (and hopefully exceed!) targets.

Find out more at mainstayreps.com

BRDLP Group & SaskPower partner to showcase careers in trades

Twenty Buffalo River School students got an inside look at potential careers in the trades as part of the first BRDN Youth Trades Week field trip. The three-day program, a partnership initiative between Buffalo River Development, Mainstay, Threeosix, and SaskPower, brought students to Saskatoon for an immersive exploration of trades and industrial careers November 12-16.



The field trip kicked off with a surprise night at the Stoked Centre where students enjoyed supper and team-building activities at the bowling alley and arcade.

They spent their first morning at Mainstay Engineering, a BRDLP Group business (51% owned by BRDN), where students explored engineering career paths in project management and engineering for mining and industrial operations. That afternoon, they visited Threeosix Industrial (71% owned by BRDN) for an up-close look at construction-related trades and fabrication.



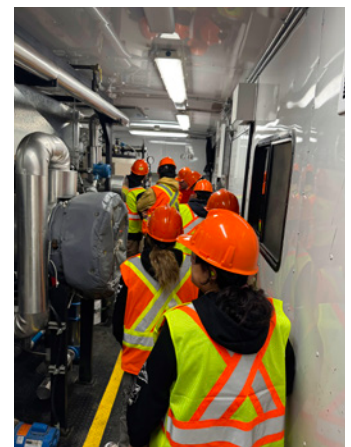
The next two days of the field trip were dedicated to energy sector opportunities through SaskPower. Students toured the Queen Elizabeth Power Plant, learning about power engineering, industrial mechanics, chemical technology, and instrumentation.

On the final day, they gained hands-on experience at the SaskPower Switchyard, exploring specialized roles like powerline technician, electrician, and electrical technologist. The program concluded as students learned

about training pathways to these careers with Sask Apprenticeship and Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centre.



BRDN Youth Trades Week, a collaboration between BRDLP businesses and SaskPower, connects our youth with rewarding career and training paths in Saskatchewan's growing mining and industrial sectors. Initiatives and partnerships like these reflect BRDN's core commitment to building opportunities for youth.



Canucks alumni skate into our local barn with NexGen!

Our community had a blast on the ice as Vancouver Canucks alumni Kirk McLean, Charline Labonté, and Rod Brathwaite, visited BRDN Arena during NexGen's LPA Tour in January. Kids and youth ages 5 to 17 had an opportunity to improve their on-ice skills and meet positive role models from professional hockey, creating unforgettable memories.



Photos: Greg Huszar

Jordan's Principle delivers 269 sets of winter gear for our kids!

Thanks to the staff at BRDN School and the Health Centre for writing letters of support for our application for 269 FXR winter snowsuits for youth. Winter is cold! Kids need

the right gear to get outdoors and participate in Jordan's Principle and Buffalo River School land based activities!



Photos: Carla Billette

BUFFALO RIVER LAND-BASED LEARNING

Jordan's Principle Land Based Activities Program

Land-based activities are an important part of Jordan's Principle programming. Teaching our traditional Denesuline ways helps our youth build self-esteem and cultural pride and ensures the teachings of our Elders are passed on to the next generation.

Our land-based programs are designed to benefit mental, emotional, and physical health by teaching youth environmental stewardship, culture-building, Indigenous knowledge, and practical skills. Land-based activities offer significant benefits to our community by creating opportunities for inter-generational knowledge transfer and mentorship, allowing our youth to learn and grow within culturally safe spaces.

Visit the BRDN Youth Centre to learn more about our programs!



Dillon Lake Outfitters Cabin (owned by Elder Arsene Nezcroche)

Nih asie bets'eldj (learning about/adapting to the land)



Boggan sledging



Building a fire by hand



Baking bannock on stick



Breaking the ice for fishing



Ice fishing with a stick



Checking the net for fish



Preparing fish outdoors



Filleting fish indoors

Dene go'dhe' honelten (teaching the young people)

Jordan's Principle is a legal framework that considers the unique historical, cultural, and geographical circumstances of First Nations children and helps ensure they have equal access to support and services. This commitment extends beyond our duty to meet a child's basic needs—it's about providing what they need to thrive! Jordan's Principle funds programs in health, recreation, education, and other areas that support youth in our community.

Jordan's Principle Staff

Coordinator: Troy.Benjamin@brdn.ca

Youth Mentors: Vanessa.Benjamin@brdn.ca
Julian.Sylvestre@brdn.ca

Elder Advisor: Gordon.Billette@brdn.ca

Buffalo River School Land Based Educators

Laurette.Chanalquay@mltc.ca
Vivian.Sylvestre@mltc.net



Children learn to appreciate what nature has to offer us.

Images courtesy: Troy Benjamin, Jordan's Principle, and Buffalo River School Land Based Activities



Setting snares



Setting traps



Fisher found in one of our traps



Fixing the rabbit



Cutting moose meat



Making a ribbon shirt for graduation



Making hand drums



Time for study

LEARNING OUR LANGUAGE

Yatiyé Dene

hhe
yes, ok

kú
let's go

hháiyë
winter

tida dahoritj
open the door

bit'azi edza
it is cold outside

niitts'i nek'ath
the wind is cold

jèth ts'eda
he/she is ice fishing

kon etk'eritj
put wood in the fire



Front and back cover images: Troy Benjamin



**BUFFALO RIVER
DENE NATION**

Buffalo River Dene Nation

Box 40, Dillon SK
SoM oSo
306-282-2033

Buffalo River Dene Nation (BRDN) is committed to its traditional ways of living while pursuing opportunities to increase wealth and self-determination through access to housing, education, and economic development.

Our Nation is over 1650 strong with traditional territory in Treaty 10. Our main community is in Dillon, along the banks of Peter Pond Lake and Buffalo River in northwest Saskatchewan.

[Find out more at brdn.ca](http://brdn.ca)