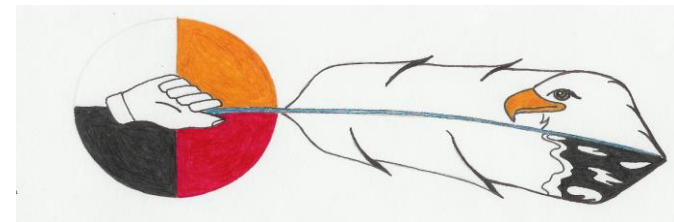


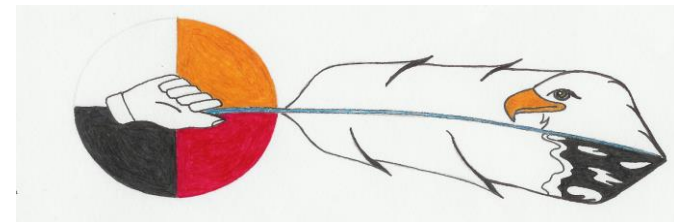
# Nicola Valley Community Justice Services Society

November 2020



# Nicola Valley Community Justice Services Society: History

- **1970s:** Merritt Legal Services opens as a LSS (legal aid) Native Community Law Office
- **2002:** Merritt Legal Services and Merritt Court Registry closes as part of wide government cutbacks
- **2003:** Nicola Valley Family Justice Services Society forms with two programs:
  - Family Justice Program
  - Nicola Valley Advocacy Centre
- **2005:** Family Justice Program cancelled. Aboriginal (Restorative) Justice Program begins
- **2006:** NVFJSS changes name to Nicola Valley Community Justice Services Society (“NVCJSS”)
- **2017:** NVCJSS begins Nicola Valley Indigenous Court Navigator Program
- **2019:** NVCJSS begins Indigenous Justice Centre

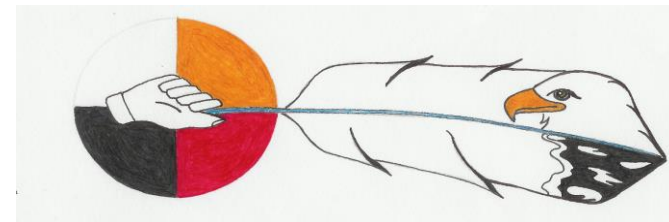


# Programs

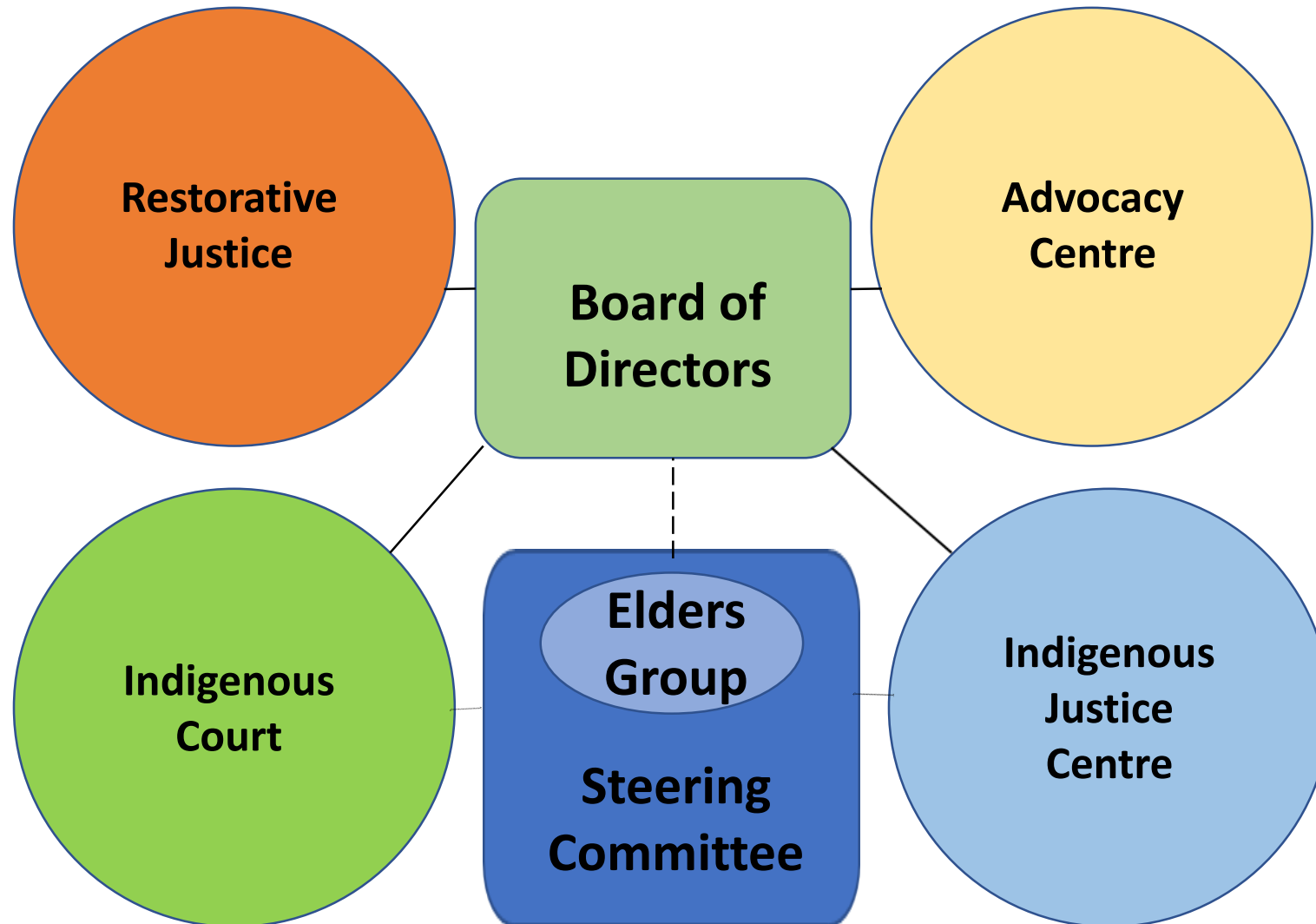


## NVCJSS Constitution

*The purpose of the Society is to enhance and provide a wide range of quality justice and advocacy services to the people of the Nicola Valley, with an emphasis on addressing the individual needs of Aboriginal clients and those living in poverty.*



# Governance



## Current Board Members

Coldwater IB: **Leona Andrew**

Lower Nicola IB: Vacant

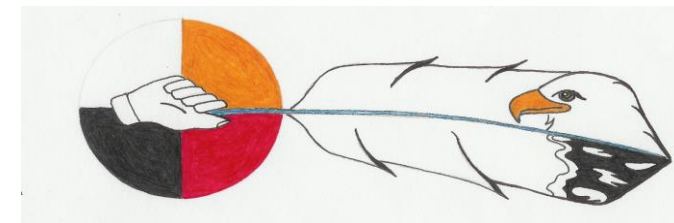
Nooaitch IB: Vacant

Shackan IB: **Lee Seymour**

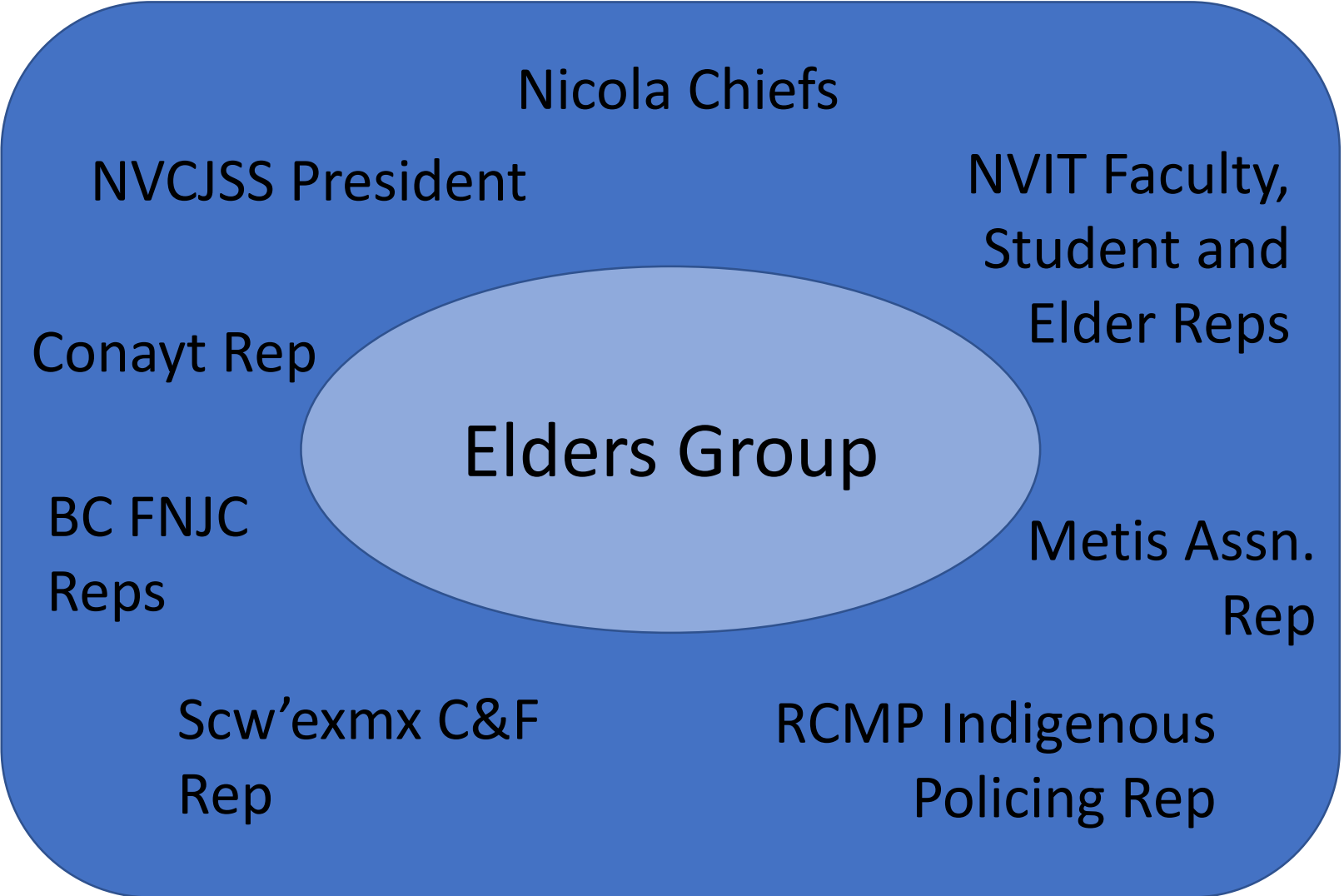
Upper Nicola IB: **Brian Holmes**  
(President and Chair), **Loretta Holmes** (alternate)

Conayt Friendship Society: **Kelly L'Hirondelle**, **Brenda Dunstan**  
(alternate)

Community Reps: **Edna Blankinship**, **Rose Grant**,  
**Brock Hedrick**, **Tracy Dunsmore** (alternate)

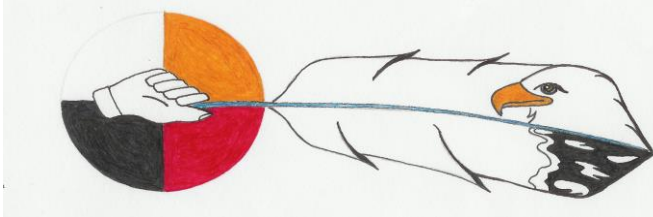


# NVCJSS Steering Committee



## Elders Group Members

- Mary Angus (Shackan)
- Leonard Antoine (Coldwater)
- Pearl Hewitt (Cook's Ferry)
- Casey Holmes (Upper Nic)
- Johnny Jackson (Lower Nic)
- Sharon Lindley (Upper Nic)
- Kika Mowry (Urban)
- Dolly Odinson (Metis)
- Lou Paul (Upper Nic)
- Esther Shackelly (Nooaitch)
- Amelia Washington (Nooaitch)



# Restorative Justice Program

- Restorative Justice Circles, Healing Circles
- Supervision of criminal diversion and alternative measures
- Supervision of Indigenous adult probation orders for lower-risk offenders
- Co-facilitation of probation-ordered programs such as Respectful Relationships

(All clients)

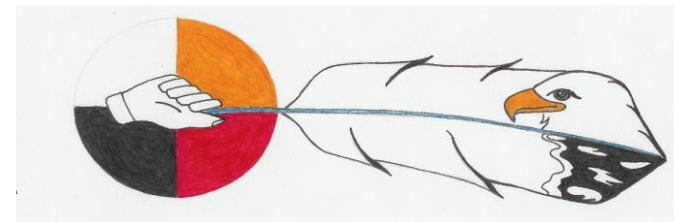
(Indigenous clients)

## Staff

Chris Stokes, Coordinator  
Colleen Twan (on leave)

## Funders

Public Safety Canada  
Solicitor General BC



# Advocacy Centre Program

- “Poverty” law advocacy (eg housing, income assistance, CPP, EI, family)
- Legal aid intake
  - all youth facing criminal charges
  - financially qualifying adults with criminal charges where a prison sentence is likely or there is a financially qualifying clients with serious family issues or child protection matters

*Allowable income levels for child protection matters and early resolution of criminal matters are significantly higher than for other services.*

(All clients)

## Staff

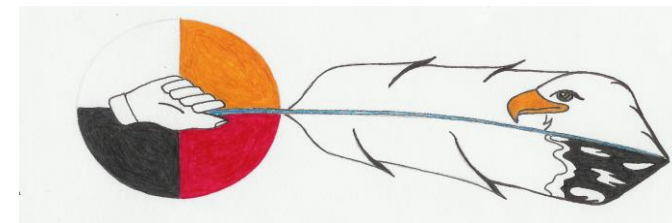
Andree Harley, Coordinator

Cliff Thorstenson,  
Supervising Lawyer

## Funders

Law Foundation BC

Legal Services Society



# Indigenous Court Program

- Elder involvement on Indigenous Court panels
- Coordination of Elders for Indigenous Court panels
- Facilitating recruitment of Court Elders
- Arranging ongoing professional development for the Elders;
- “Navigation” services for Indigenous Court clients to assist them in completing their healing plans

(Indigenous clients)

## Staff

Roberta Moses, Coordinator and Navigator

Cliff Thorstenson, Supervising Lawyer/Duty Counsel

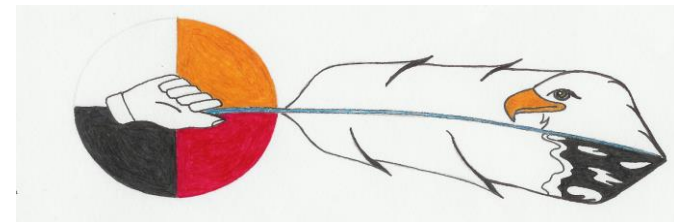
## Resources

NVIC Elders, Steering Committee

## Funders

Public Safety Canada

Law Foundation of BC





# Indigenous Justice Centre Program

- Enhanced legal services for Indigenous clients facing jail or removal of children
- Support for Indigenous communities reclaiming justice processes and institutions
- Work with other agencies to coordinate and enhance justice-related services for Indigenous individuals, families and communities

(Indigenous clients)

## Staff

Cliff Thorstenson, Supervising Lawyer

Aaron Sumexheltza, Lawyer

Christina Leo, Criminal/Corrections Outreach Worker

Stephanie Archie, Child, Youth and Family Outreach Worker

On-site Elder

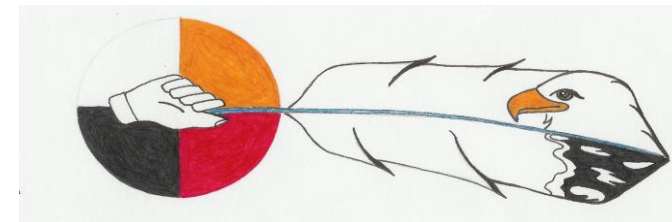
[Vacant] Gladue Report Writer (part-time)

## Resources

NVIC Elders, Steering Committee

## Funders

BC First Nations Justice Council



# Allies and Related Initiatives

Funders (FNJC, LSS, LFBC, Fed&Prov Govt.)

Traditional Cultural and Healing Justice Resources

Nicola Chiefs (political support; FNJC MoU)

Bands, Friendship Centre, Indigenous and other Service Providers

Duty Counsel (Criminal, Family, Indigenous Court)

Scw'exmx and LMO Child and Family Services

Unlocking the Gates Services Society (prisoner peer mentoring)

Merritt Situation Table (information/wrap-around support for most vulnerable)

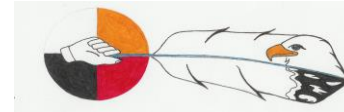
Indigenous Victim Services Initiative

NVIT (Social Work, Criminology, IC Elders Orientation)

Indigenous Policing

Corrections BC MoU (prisoner support/community reintegration)

NVCJSS



# NVCJSS- Program Goals and Priorities

## Restorative Justice

- Staff orientation and training
- Building community relationships
- Incorporating Indigenous values and practices in RJ processes

## Advocacy Centre

- Increased advocacy staffing
- Succession planning
- Enhanced community outreach and public legal education

## Indigenous Court

- Building client base and lawyer buy-in
- Professional development/training for Elders
- Identifying and enhancing local cultural healing services
- Helping develop a “continuum of healing” for court clients

## NVCJS Society Goals

- Building networks to enhance justice-related services for Indigenous people in the Nicola Valley
- Recruiting and retaining Board members
- Improving Society processes and policies (financial, human resources)
- Assisting Indigenous communities in re-claiming justice
- Raising community awareness of NVCJSS services

## Indigenous Justice Centre

- Staff recruitment
- Identifying and renovating office space
- Enhanced legal services for Indigenous criminal and child protection clients
- Enhanced elder and community involvement in child protection matters
- Enhanced support and re-integration services for Indigenous clients in and leaving prison
- Identifying and “standing up” Indigenous justice practices, laws and institutions
- Enhancing and “Indigenizing” services for victims of crime

