



## MEMBERSHIP CODE

Approved: July 26, 2025

Adopted: July 30, 2025

Certified a true copy of the original

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A NOTARY PUBLIC IN AND FOR THE  
PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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**CERTIFICATION OF LAW**

I certify that the Amended Membership Code was passed by Peters First Nation on:

July 30, 2025  
July 30, 2025  
Norma J. Wehli  
Chief

**CERTIFICATION OF LAW**

I certify that the Amended Membership Code was passed by Peters First Nation on:

July 30, 2025  
July 30, 2025  
Victor P.  
Councillor

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Councillor

	<b>CHIEF &amp; COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION</b>

### REVISION HISTORY:

DATE:	VERSION:	CHANGES:	AUTHOR:
<b>Adopted:</b> June 25, 1987	1.0	Original Peters Indian Band Membership Code (PIB Code)	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>Approved:</b> April 5, 2025 <b>Amended:</b> June 20, 2025	2.0	Sections 4 & 5 of Part XI - Amendments to Membership Code were approved by the membership to be struck from the PIB Code in accordance with Section 1(B) of Part VII – Administrative Remedies, at a referendum vote held on April 5, 2025.	<b>Jennifer D. Trotti</b> Stevens & Company/ <b>Rory Morahan</b> Morahan & Company
<b>Approved:</b> July 26, 2025 <b>Adopted:</b> July 30, 2025	3.0	Peters First Nation Membership approved at a referendum vote on July 25 & 26, 2025 that the Amended Membership Code by adopted (PFN Code).	<b>Jennifer D. Trotti</b> Stevens & Company/ <b>Rory Morahan</b> Morahan & Company

## PART 1 - DECLARATION OF ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

We, the people of the Peters First Nation, exercise our Aboriginal rights to protect, exercise and preserve our Aboriginal rights traditions and customs.

On June 25, 1987, the Peters First Nation assumed control of our Membership, adopted the Peters Indian Band Membership Code and affirmed our continued inherent right to exercise our Aboriginal right to self-government, self-determination and the determination of the membership of our Nation herein after is referred to as "Aboriginal Rights".

In all determinations of membership, Aboriginal Rights shall be the primary consideration when determining membership of the Peters First Nation and, where any discrepancy between Aboriginal Rights and the Peters First Nation Membership Code arises, the Aboriginal Rights of the Peters First Nation shall always assume primacy.

The Aboriginal Rights to determine membership includes the promotion of harmony, cohesion and safety of our members, the protection against potential conflict and disharmony in our community, and protection of our assets and resources.

Our Peters First Nation community requires close kinship ties, continuous communication of kinship ties, a continued association with our extended family and village and the shared belief in the primacy of our Aboriginal Rights.

The principles of our Aboriginal Right to determine membership are incorporated into our Peters First Nation Membership Code and each applicant, must meet the requirements within this Code, and fulfil the obligations and responsibilities of our Aboriginal Rights.

We affirm that our Aboriginal Right to determine membership of the Peters First Nation are conferred and we rely on section 35 of the *Constitution Act*.

In addition, we rely on section 25 of the *Constitution Act* that our community's Aboriginal Rights are not diminished, abrogated or derogated as a result of the rights of individuals conferred by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* or any other statute.

Our Aboriginal Right to define our membership is defined by **Part 4 – Application of Aboriginal Rights** and also by the **Proclamation of the Nation's Aboriginal Rights** attached as **Schedule 'A'** which are directed to protect the cultural integrity and social harmony, maintain, and enhance Peters First Nation's economic stability and to ensure the continued harmony, peace, and good order among the members of the Nation.



## PART 2 – SHORT TITLE

### Short Title

- 2.1. This enactment may be cited as the Peters First Nation (the “Nation”) Membership Code (hereinafter this “Membership Code”).

## PART 3 – DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. In this Membership Code and all other laws enacted pursuant to it, the following words and phrases, unless there is something in the context inconsistent with them, shall have the following meanings:

“**Appeal Board**” means the board appointed by Council to hear appeals concerning this Membership Code;

“**Band**” means the Peters Indian Band;

“**Chief**” (siyá:m) means the person duly elected by a majority of the Nation’s electorate to represent the Nation and who works jointly with Council in the role historically assumed by the headman of the Nation;

“**Child**” (*méle*) means a child under the age of 18 years and born in or out of wedlock to a Member, or legally adopted by a Member; OR means any individual who has not reached the age of 18 years;

“**Common Law Relationship**” means two (2) persons who are not married to each other who have lived in a conjugal relationship for a period of not less than two (2) years;

“**Community**” means the members of the Nation also known as the socio-economic group;

“**Continuity of Association**” means regular communication or action by a person with members and leadership of the community which includes participation and investment in:

- The daily and seasonal practices of the community;
- Social relations of the community; AND
- Subsistence activities of the community.

AND with reciprocal acknowledgment of association by the community and its leadership.

**“Council”** means the persons duly elected by a majority of the Nation’s electorate to represent the Nation and who works jointly with the Chief in the role historically assumed by the headman of the Nation; OR may also mean the Chief and Councillors of the Nation;

**“Days”** means consecutive days in a calendar month and includes weekends, holidays and business days.

**“Disassociation”** means a person who does not or has not been in continuous association with the membership and leadership of the community;

**“Elector”** means a person who is:

- registered on the Membership List;
- of the full age of eighteen (18); and
- not disqualified from voting at elections of the Nation;

**“Enactment”** means a law ratified by a majority electorate of the Nation;

**“Kinship ties”** are the relationships between people based on biological descent, marriage, or fictive ties. Kinship requires continuity of communication of kinship ties, reciprocal acceptance, shared beliefs of the priority of the Nation’s Aboriginal Rights, the distinct identity of the Nation and participation in the community;

**“Marriage”** means a legal union between two (2) individuals;

**“Member”** means a person whose name lawfully appears on the Nation’s Membership List;

**“Membership Administrator”** means the individual appointed/ hired by the Nation to carry out the duties described within this Membership Code;

**“Membership Committee”** means the Chief and Council;

**“Membership Advisory Committee”** means the collective body of individuals appointed by Council carry out a defined role within this Membership Code;

**“Membership Code”** means the law developed by the Nation and adopted by it containing the following provisions:

- a. The criteria for determining eligibility for membership within the Nation;
- b. Terms and conditions under which membership may be renounced, revoked and/or reinstated by the electors of the Nation;

**“Membership List”** means a list of persons who are Members of the Nation that is maintained under section 10 of the *Indian Act* R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5 (the “*Indian Act*”) by the Nation; OR refers to the list of persons enrolled in the Nation pursuant to this Membership Code;

**“Nation”** means the Peters First Nation, previously known as the Peters Indian Band;

**“Parent”** or **“Parents”** (*shxwewá:y* or *shxwewáli*) means the biological or legally adoptive parents of a Child;

**“Peters First Nation”** means the collective of those individuals who recognize each other as members of a community traditionally connected to its Lands, which includes IR1, IR1A and IR2 and which is also an Indian Band within the meaning of the *Indian Act*, and is also referred to as the community;

**“Quorum”** refers to the required number of the Nation’s eligible electors to convene a Special General Meeting; and the required number of Councillors to pass a resolution;

**“Ratification Officer”** means a qualified impartial person to conduct a ratification or referendum vote and who has training and experience in conducting ratification or referendum votes, appointed or retained under this law;

**“Reserve”** means Peters Indian Reserve No. 1, Peters Indian Reserve No. 1A and Peters Indian Reserve No. 2, all of which have been set apart for the use and benefit of the Nation;

**“Renouncement”** means to give up the rights to be a member of the Nation;

**“Resolution”** means a resolution passed by a quorum of Council at a duly convened meeting and evidenced in writing;



**“Socio-Economic Group”** means the existing members of the Nation and is also referred to as the community;

**“Special General Meeting”** means a meeting convened to address urgent or special matters that cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting;

**“Spouse”** means an individual who is married to another, whether by custom, religious or civil ceremony, and includes a spouse by common-law marriage; and

**“Transfer of membership”** means when an applicant has ceased to be a member of another First Nation, accepted as a Member of the Nation and lawfully added to the Membership List.

#### **PART 4 - APPLICATION OF ABORIGINAL RIGHTS**

##### **Application**

- 4.1. This Membership Code may be interpreted and applied in accordance with the following Aboriginal Rights which have primacy and priority to any other considerations:
  - a. Aboriginal Rights are the Nation’s right of self-determination, self-government and determination of membership exercised for the sole benefit of the Nation who are Aboriginal people of Canada, and who have recognized Aboriginal governance and social structures, traditions and customs which have existed since time immemorial, and which are guaranteed and protected from diminishment, abrogation or derogation by the laws of Canada, as stated explicitly in sections 25 and 35 of the *Constitution Act*, as well as those rights the content and extent of which are listed below and attached at Schedule ‘A’, and which are subject to the evolution of Aboriginal communities’ cultural practices.
  - b. The exercise of the modern Aboriginal Rights of self-determination, self-government and the determination of the Nations membership by the Chief and Council, or the Membership Advisory Committee, i, and decisions in respect of resources and membership includes but is not limited to:
    - i. Consideration of the closeness of kinship ties of the applicant with the community and leadership of the community;



- ii. Consideration of the continuity of association of the applicant with the community and leadership which includes the communication of kinship ties with the community and leadership;
- iii. Consideration of the disassociation of the applicant with the community and leadership of the community;
- iv. Consideration of the values and principles that the community holds to identify itself which includes the Aboriginal Rights of self-determination, self-governance and determination of membership;
- v. Consideration of the promotion of harmony, cohesion, and safety of the community;
- vi. Consideration of the protection of resources of the community; and
- vii. Consideration of the protection against potential conflict or disharmony within the community.

## **PART 5 - MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA**

- 5.1 Membership in the Nation shall consist of persons who have satisfied the Chief and Council or the Membership Advisory Committee, in their complete discretion, that he or she is a person:
- a. Whose name appeared on the Membership List on April 17, 1985;
  - b. Who is a registered Indian under the *Indian Act* and everyone who is a natural child of a parent whose name is registered on the Band List;
  - c. Who has close kinship ties to the community;
  - d. Who has continuity of association with the community which includes a continuity of communication of kinship ties;
  - e. Who has demonstrated that he or she has not disassociated from the community;
  - f. Who shares the 'identifying features' which are the values and principles that the community holds to determine its identity;
  - g. Who promotes harmony, cohesion and safety within the community;

- h. Who does not pose a threat to the protection of the resources of the community; and
- i. Who does not pose a threat to the harmony, cohesion and safety or create a potential conflict within the community.

## **PART 6 – MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION**

- 6.1. The Council shall appoint a Membership Administrator to carry out the following duties:
- a. maintain the Membership List;
  - b. make additions and deletions to the Membership List in accordance with this Membership Code;
  - c. record dates of Membership List additions and deletions;
  - d. update addresses and contact information whenever new information becomes available;
  - e. maintain a secure and organized filing system for all documents and correspondence pertaining to membership;
  - f. cooperate with Electoral Officers and Ratification Officers in relation to Nation elections, referendums and ratification votes;
  - g. carry out any other duties related to membership administration as authorized by the Council; and
  - h. cooperate and assist the Membership Advisory Committee in carrying out its obligations and duties.
- 6.2. The Membership Administrator shall carry out his or her duties in a fair, unbiased and diligent manner that protects the confidentiality and integrity of the membership program.

## **PART 7 - MEMBERSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- 7.1. The Council may perform the role of the Membership Committee or appoint a Membership Advisory Committee and delegate its responsibilities in making all membership decisions on behalf of the Nation.

- 7.2. If appointed, the Membership Advisory Committee shall have the authority to carry out the following duties:
- a. process membership applications;
  - b. make all membership decisions pursuant with this Membership Code and any other related guidelines, policies or by-laws;
  - c. prepare a written decision with reasons of an applicant's membership application;
  - d. consult with Council on membership decisions in advance of delivering a copy of the written decision to the applicant;
  - e. notify and provide the applicant with a copy of the Nation's written decision in respect of their membership;
  - f. notify the applicant of any decisions, upon receiving the application and depending on the complexity of the application;
  - g. review and comply with amendments to this Membership Code; and
  - h. carry out any delegated duties related to processing membership applications as authorized by the Council.
- 7.3. The Membership Advisory Committee shall carry out its duties in a fair, unbiased and diligent manner that protects the confidentiality and integrity of the membership program.

## **PART 8 – MEMBERSHIP LIST**

- 8.1. The Nation's administration office shall maintain a Membership List that contains, among other things, the full name, address, Indian Status pursuant to the *Indian Act*, and date of birth of every Member.
- 8.2. No disclosure or use of the information contained in the Membership List shall be made for any purpose other than:
- a. for the purposes of the Nation;
  - b. as may be required by law or pursuant to an agreement between the Nation and a government body; or



- c. confirming the membership status of a person upon request by that person or his or her legal guardian or representative.
- 8.3. The Membership Administrator shall, as soon as practicable, after a person becomes a Member, add the name of that person to the Membership List and indicate the date on which that person became a Member.
- 8.4. The Membership Administrator shall, as soon as practicable, after a person ceases to be a Member, delete the name of that person from the Membership List and indicate the date on which that person ceased to be a Member.

#### **PART 9 - FEES**

- 9.1. Council may prescribe, by regulation, a fee for any of the following processes under this Code:
  - a. Membership applications;
  - b. applications to revoke a Membership; and
  - c. appeals.
- 9.2. All fees shall be paid by cheque, made payable to the Nation.

#### **PART 10 - PERSONS NOT ENTITLED TO BE MEMBERS**

- 10.1. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Membership Code, as of the Effective Date, the following persons are not entitled to be enrolled as Members:
  - a. any person who is not, or is not entitled to be, a registered Indian under the *Indian Act*;
  - b. any person who has not satisfied Chief and Council or the Membership Advisory Committee, as the case may be, pursuant to this Membership Code Parts 4 and 5 and Schedule "A" hereof; or
  - c. any person who is a member or citizen of another First Nation in Canada.

## PART 11 - APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

- 11.1. All applications for Membership shall be submitted in accordance with this Membership Code and the Nations guidelines, policies and bylaws.
- 11.2. All applications for Membership shall be submitted in accordance with this Membership Code and the Nations guidelines, policies and bylaws.
- 11.3. Each applicant shall individually complete the application for membership and provide the required documentation.
- 11.4. Everyone seeking Membership after enactment of this Membership Code shall submit a written application to Membership Administrator in the form prescribed by Council, setting out the ground(s) upon which the application is based, as set forth in Parts 1, 4 and 5 and Schedule "A" and attach all documentation required by the Nation's guidelines, policy and bylaws.
- 11.5. An application for Membership shall be dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable, having regard to the need to make a full and proper investigation of the application. Applications will have varying complexity and will take varying lengths of time to render a decision. However, no application shall remain longer than **sixty (60) days** in the possession of the Membership Administrator or Advisory Committee without the applicant being given an interim reply with respect to his or her application
- 11.6. The applicant must provide certified copies of all supporting, verifying or identifying documentation, including:
  - a. Proof of Indian Status with an Indian Status Number pursuant to the *Indian Act*;
  - b. Birth certificate of the applicant that verifies that at least one Parent is a Member;
  - c. Court adoption documentation (if applicable);
  - d. Valid photo Identification; and
  - e. Any other documentation requested by the Advisory Committee or Chief and Council.
- 11.7. Council, the Membership Administrator, or the Membership Advisory Committee shall not be responsible for ensuring that an applicant has submitted all requisite documentation, that

the documentation submitted by the applicant is complete or that the applicant is notified of any deficiencies.

- 11.8. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant or Parent/ Guardian to provide full and complete documentation and notify the Membership Advisory Committee of any changes to their address, phone number, email address or any other contact information.

## **PART 12 – LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP**

- 12.1. A Member may renounce his or her Membership in the Nation by submitting a written statement of renunciation to the Council requesting that his or her name be stricken from the Membership List on a date to be specified by the Member, but this period shall not exceed a period of **sixty (60) days** from the date of the request.
- 12.2. Where the Nation has reason to believe that a person became a Member as a result of an error or on the basis of false or inaccurate information, the Membership Administrator shall advise the Member in writing of the error or inaccurate information and allow the Member **thirty (30) days** from the date notice was given, to make submissions and to provide additional information.
- 12.3. Upon expiration of the time limit referred to in section 12.2, the Membership Administrator shall forward any submission and additional information received from the Member to Chief and Council, or the Membership Advisory Committee, which shall render a written decision with reasons and provide notice to the affected Member.
- 12.4. If Chief and Council or the Membership Advisory Committee, as the case may be, has made a decision that the person is no longer a Member, the Membership Administrator shall remove that person's name from the Membership List immediately.
- 12.5. A person's entitlement to be a Member, and all the benefits that accrue as a result of being a Member, ceases immediately upon:
- a. death;
  - b. he or she applying for membership in another First Nation and his or her application for membership being accepted;
  - c. a final determination being made that the person became a Member as a result of an error or on the basis of false or inaccurate information;



- d. a woman who became a Member prior to April 17, 1985, due to a Marriage to a Member, and she is now divorced or legally separated from that Member; or
  - e. a woman who became a Member prior to April 17, 1985, due to Marriage to a Member and the Member whom she married becoming deceased (the "Widow") and her marrying or entering into a Common Law Relationship with a person who is not a Member. For greater certainty, the Widow shall remain a Member until her Marriage or entering into a Common Law Relationship to a person who is not a Member.
- 12.6. The Membership Administrator shall provide written notice to the affected Member advising them that they are no longer a Member of the Nation.

## **PART 13 – APPEALS**

### **Who May Appeal**

- 13.1. A person whose application for Membership has been denied pursuant to this Membership Code may submit a written appeal of the decision to the Appeal Board, addressed to the Membership Administrator.
- 13.2. A parent or guardian of a person whose application for Membership has been denied pursuant to this Membership Code may submit a written appeal of the decision to the Appeal Board, addressed to the Membership Administrator.
- 13.3. A person may submit to Council an appeal of a decision made by the Membership Administrator or the Membership Advisory Committee that is alleged to be inconsistent with this Membership Code.

### **Time Limit**

- 13.4. All appeals must be in writing and delivered within **thirty (30) days** of the membership decision.

### **Delivery of Notice to Appeal**

- 13.5. Notice of appeal shall be delivered to the Membership Administrator by registered mail or by hand.

### **Limits of Appeal**

- 13.6. Only one appeal per decision shall be permitted.

### **Appeal Board**

- 13.7. The Appeal Board shall be appointed, as soon as reasonably practicable, after the Membership Administrator has received the appeal.
- 13.8. The Appeal Board must comply with any enacted Nation guidelines, policy, and bylaws.
- 13.9. Members must faithfully, honestly and impartially perform their duties to the best of their judgment, skill and abilities, and must not, except in the proper performance of those duties, disclose to any person any information obtained in the course of their duties.
- 13.10. The Appeal Board shall set a hearing date for the appeal within **sixty (60) days** of the date that the Appeal Board is appointed by Council.
- 13.11. The Appeal Board shall hear both sides of the appeal, including written statements and information from any relevant witnesses and shall consider all relevant information.
- 13.12. Any participant in an appeal may be represented by a lawyer but the cost for any such legal representation is at the sole expense of the individual participant and will not be subsidized or paid for by the Nation.
- 13.13. Within **thirty (30) days** of the hearing, the Appeal Board shall render a written decision and give written reasons for the decision.
- 13.14. A failure to fulfil the time requirements of set out in Sections 13.10 and 13.13 will not invalidate any decision or the process under this part.

### **PART 14 – AMENDMENTS TO THE MEMBERSHIP CODE**

- 14.1. This Membership Code may be amended or replaced from time to time by the Membership or by Council.
- 14.2. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Membership Administrator, with a copy to Council, by:

- a. any elector or group of electors provided that they include a recent petition signed by **50%** of the electors and evidence that the signatures were obtained by persons who were fully informed of the circumstances;
  - b. at any time, by Council Resolution requesting that an amendment (s) be made to the Membership Code or that this Membership Code be replaced by a new membership code;
  - c. the proposed amendment(s) or replacement membership code shall be electronically published and posted at the administration office of the Nation; and
  - d. the Council shall deliver notice of amendment(s) or replacement to the last known address of each elector at least at least **thirty (30) days** in advance of the Special General Meeting of the Nation (“Special General Meeting”) convened to consider the proposed amendment(s).
- 14.3. The Council shall send a notice to its electors, at least **thirty (30) days** in advance of the Special General Meeting by stating the date, time and location of the meeting to consider an amendment to, or replacement of, this Membership Code.
- 14.4. Where a Special General Meeting has been convened to consider the proposed amendment(s) to this Membership Code, a quorum of **51%** of the eligible electorate is required to convene the meeting and shall be determined by a ratification vote.
- 14.5. The ratification vote to amend this Membership Code shall be conducted by an appointed ratification officer and shall be decided by a simple majority (50%+1) of quorum.
- 14.6. Amendments to this Membership Code which have been approved by electors come into force on the day after the date of the Special General Meeting.
- 14.7. Notwithstanding Part 15 or any other provision in this Membership Code, Council may, by Band Council Resolution, make amendments to this Membership Code which are non-substantive or clerical in nature.

## **PART 15 - SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

- 15.1 In the event that there is proposed amendment to this Membership Code or any other membership issue that is not addressed by this Membership Code, the Council may, by Band Council Resolution, call a duly convened Special General Meeting of the electors



with at least **thirty (30) days'** notice posted and mailed or emailed to all electors for whom the Membership Administrator has current contact information.

- 15.2 The notice for the Special General Meeting of electors shall state the date, time and location for the meeting and shall include a summary and a list of the issue(s) or question(s) to be decided.
- 15.3 The Chief or a chairperson appointed by Council shall chair the Special General Meeting and shall ensure that the agenda is focused only on the questions stated on the notice of the Special General Meeting.
- 15.4 No motions from the floor or other proposals or motions shall be permitted at the Special General Meeting.
- 15.5 After electors have had a reasonable opportunity to discuss and comment on the proposed amendments or questions stated within the Special General Meeting notice, the Chief or chairperson shall hold a referendum for each policy question or ratification of amendments and shall inform membership of the results.
- 15.6 The Chief or Chairperson shall declare the result and direct the Chief and Council or person taking minutes of the Special General Meeting to record the results.
- 15.7 The minutes from each Special General Meeting shall be:
  - a. presented at the next Council meeting following the Special General Meeting and entered into the Council minutes;
  - b. posted or circulated to Members by the Membership Administrator; and
  - c. added as a schedule or appendix to this Code by the Membership Administrator.

## **PART 16 - GENERAL**

- 16.1. Words importing the singular number include the plural and vice versa and words importing gender include the masculine, feminine and neutral genders.

## **PART 17 – SEVERABILITY**

- 17.1. Each section of this Membership Code must be interpreted in a way that is valid under applicable law. If any section is held invalid, the rest of this Membership Code shall remain in full effect.

## **PART 18 - DISCRETIONARY POWER**

- 18.1. The discretionary powers of Chief and Council may be conferred upon anyone, including the Membership Administrator, under this Membership Code, and shall be exercised in good faith, without discrimination, using best judgment, exercising the Nation's Aboriginal rights and in the best interests of the Nation.

## **PART 19 – COMING INTO FORCE**

- 19.1 This amended Membership Code replaces the Peters Indian Band Membership Code (1987), shall come into force and be enacted on the day after the majority of the eligible electors give their consent to this Membership Code.
- 19.2 On and after the day this Membership Code comes into force, the Membership List shall be maintained by the Membership Administrator, and only those persons whose names are included therein, or who are entitled to have his or her name entered therein pursuant to this Membership Code, shall be Members of the Nation.
- 19.3 This Membership Code comes into force on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of July 2025.

## **Schedule A**

### **Proclamation of the Nation's Aboriginal Rights**

We, the Peters First Nation, exercise our Aboriginal right to determine membership in our collective local group, to protect our existing local group, social order, harmony within our existing membership, and to manage resources.

We, the Peters First Nation, exercise our collective rights of freedom of association, self-governance, and self-determination affirmed by UNDRIP in determining the membership within our extended family, and in determining the use of our resources.

#### **Our Kinship Group**

We, the Peters First Nation, are a kinship group of 83 members who are connected to the traditional territories and waters located in Peters 1, Peters 1A and Peters 2. Our Nation is made up of an extended family which occupies the main village (Peters 1), living in 15 homes on the reserve. We continue our practice of harvesting at aboriginal fishing sites adjacent to the village and we continue to exercise our decision-making from our cultural order, laws, activities and rights from the time before contact.

#### **Our Historic Origins**

We, the Peters First Nation have lived in our existing village on the lands on the left bank of the Fraser River between Nicomen and Yale and have fished in its waters since time immemorial. Our Nation is part of the Tait or "Te-it" Tribe and is known as "Those up river". We are part of the Stó:Lō Nation and speak Halkomelem.

Our societal culture is made up of three (3) circles: the extended family, the village, and the tribe which have existed prior to the exercise of sovereignty in 1846.

Our extended family is both a kinship network and a local unit. Historically, our extended family occupied one large or several houses and cooperated socially and economically.

Our village was primarily a residential and local unit comprised of one or several houses. The Tait Tribe was a unit of related villages within our region. We shared culture, language and other organizing principles. Our extended family continues to live the same day-to-day reality as our ancestors (*shtun'ni'iws*).

Our existing village and extended family were similar to many extended family groups dwelling at traditional village locations along the Fraser River. The size and location of local groups like ours were an expression of the relationship between population, available resources, and traditional



village location. On the Fraser River, we were known to harvest fish at our fishing sites, hunt, and collect other resources in our villages and nearby. Each small village was autonomous from one another, especially among the Tait or Upper Stó:Lō, although sometimes we operated cooperatively.

Our extended family was and continues to be the most important social and economic unit. Important decisions of our extended family were made by a headman, in consultation with family members. We continue to use the same system by electing a headman, who is now referred to as chief (*siyá:m*).

Our rules of membership, inheritance, law and order, and governance were applied by our headman taking into consideration our existing social and economic circumstances.

The headman would oversee our membership within our local group, and residency within the village, and make decisions that promoted harmony, cohesion and safety within the group, and made decisions about how our resources would be used. Managing conflict was one of the most important tasks of the local group and the headman. Particularly divisive people could be expelled from the community, or the community could divide and relocate.

Our Kinship between the local extended family group and other nearby local groups, or with distant communities, was configured through both parental lines and carried with it some customary access to resources and property. The status of kinfolk differed from those who were part of the closely-knit economic and social unit which was identified as the extended family and village. A person with kinship ties would have to make a request to the headman to have access to resources or membership within the village. The headman was the person to make the decisions but would most often take into consideration the cultural expectations and norms of our extended family and kinship group.

Decisions related to belonging, membership and residency in the local group and village would have included many considerations, notably the relative closeness of the kinship with the applicant individual, ethical obligations of the local group to the individual, the effect of the absorption on available resources, on social order, and on harmony.

### **Our Right to Control Our Membership, Self-Determination and Self-Government**

Our declared Aboriginal right is derived from our culture and our practices before contact.

The functions of our headman of our extended family and our practices are identifiable as derived from the Stó:Lō, and are consistent with other Coast Salish groups. Our historic governance system is the same as our present-day governance, now exercised by the Chief and Council.

The continuity of culture within our extended family and village has been preserved, in part by our relatively isolated location and our reliance on each other, and we continue to live on our lands passed down to us by our ancestors, who lived within our village since before contact.

Our modern right to determine membership and to exercise self-determination, self-governance, and decisions and respect of resources includes, but is not limited to:

1. Consideration of the closeness of kinship ties of the applicant.
2. The continuous association of the applicant with the socio-economic group, which includes the communication of kinship ties.
3. The disassociation of the applicant with the socio-economic group.
4. The identifying boundaries of the socio-economic group to determine its identity.
5. The promotion of harmony, cohesion, and safety of the socio-economic group.
6. The protection of resources of the socio-economic group.
7. The protection against potential conflict or disharmony within the group.