

Dear Duncan's First Nation members,

As they say time flies. Its election time at Duncan's First Nation. Those of you who know me, know that I am not a fan of the forced colonial systems. The way elections are conducted are not the cultural ways of our First Nation's people. The patriarchal system has a tendency to cause constant competition with each other. Women are subjected to male dominance and suffer inequality. This hierarchical structure has multiple similarities to a monarchy, where one person is in charge of the other and enjoys a special status because of their power. This is not the way of our people. It creates divisions when we need to be united, working together to deal with the political changes we are facing. Our elders tell us our people always got along. Clan families and the matriarchs of those families were highly respected. Leaders were chosen through the clan system which was fairer.

It is important for Duncan's First Nation to work towards an election system that unites and empowers our Nation. There is a lot of work that needs to be done at the Nations level to educate and protect our treaties, treaty rights and inherent rights, as the governments are working to terminate by municipalization. Treaty 8 and other Treaty Nations continue to advocate in protecting our treaties and inherent rights, our lands, waters and environment. Treaty 8 continues to strategize politically to deal with Health Care, Education, Child and Family Services, Policing, Justice, International Relations, Youth, Recreation, Support and Leadership, Language and Culture, Membership and Citizenship, Trades and Commerce, Land, Territory and Resources, Economic Development, Nation Building, Treaty 8 Constitutional Shield. Treaty 8 as directed by the Chiefs are doing what they can to advise and help educate our people on what is needed to become a sovereign Nation. Some nations have already started this work and it will not be difficult for Duncan's First Nation to do, we already have a new draft Financial Bylaw that can be ratified if we all work together and just get it done.

Our nation is in a good position now, we have good financial management, and we are accountable. Covid created a setback for 2 years, but we got through it, and we were able to help all our members who needed Covid supports. We took quick action to keep our community safe. During the 2+ years we continued to work through home and held meetings on Zoom, we still accomplished many of our goals. I strongly encourage you to read the DFN Ec Dev/ Lands newsletter that documents the Nations efforts to protect our lands, water, environment and treaty rights. It will help you understand the exertion of tasks involved and I also encourage you to read the letter that was sent to the Alberta Government regarding DFNs cumulative impacts. Without going into too many details, if you are interested in learning more about this let us know.

I continue to work hard for our Nation because the children, and grandchildren are our future. I am committed because our ancestors were committed, and for the elders and members that are committed. Shared responsibility in leadership and in the workplace is very important, I give credit to the Councillors, Consultants, DFN finance and staff for contributing to DFN's successes.

I commend all the candidates for their courage, dedication and willingness to accept the responsibility for leadership in this election. No one is ever prepared for what it takes to fulfil the responsibility of being a leader. It is relentless. You will be judged and criticized. It is life-changing, and it will affect your families time and commitments. You will be dealing with resistance to change, Leader & Management differences, Leadership Style differences. You may have to stand alone at times and not depend on people or follow the crowd (just to name a few) It's important you keep informed with Current Events, Be prepared for emergencies, perhaps late night calls from members who may need your help.

Values don't matter if people don't understand them or what's expected of them, or if they feel it don't apply to them. Guiding principles are what guides us to our own truths and integrity. Our ancestors traditional teachings tell us we are all related and everything that dwells upon Mother Earth, or flies above it, possesses a Spirit. We been given teachings on how to relate and to apply these principles Truth, Honesty, Respect, Humility, Courage, Wisdom and Love. That has been the cultural ways of our people. We had our own systems and laws until Governments laws separated our families through residential schools and took ownership of our lands. Our people only agreed to share the lands. Only now through reconciliation the truth of what happened to our people is being recognized, but there's still a growing number of graves being discovered at former residential schools across Canada. There is no Justice on the harms that's been done. An apology is not enough, there must be actions for changed behaviours, truth in the schools curriculum to help put an end to racism. Long term treatment and support programs for those who still suffer. Our women/men are still going missing and found murdered. I could go on and on about the injustice that's been done to our nations people. How I see it, we are still in recovery, some of us are still grieving, some of us are still dealing and healing from the intergenerational trauma's, it's up to us to heal, support each other to grow and succeed. It is in our ancestors prayers and it is our responsibility, life's purpose. We hear that trauma is woven in our DNA, but we cannot forget we also have the strength and resiliency. I am not in competition with anyone, I hope we all win and come together to develop a system, our own laws, natural laws, and kookum's laws towards good governance for a sovereign Nation we can all be proud of. I pray for an end to division, I hope you will engage, participate and help to improve our Nation. To the members who give back to the community, Thank you for all that you do. You are a leader, let's not let titles separate us.

I hope to be re elected. a vote for Gladue is a vote that is engaged, a vote for continued improvement a vote that will help our Nation thrive.

Respectfully,

Virginia M. Gladue