

STAFF LETTER - MELISSA BATES

Our Staff Letter this month is from Community Analyst Melissa Bates, reflecting on her first few months here at Strategies North

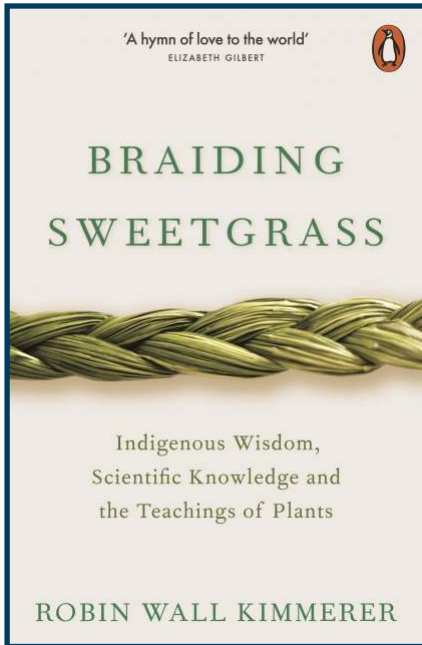


If you've ever had the chance to talk to Anna and Grant about their team at Strategies North it wouldn't take long until you hear them mention the necessity of the "why" of working here. Their dedication to build a community of people who are personally invested to play a part in authentic positive change was the first thing that sparked my drive to join this organization. Since beginning here in March that fact has become abundantly more clear. You would be hard pressed to find a more diverse background of knowledge than the Strategies North staff - from policy buffs to long-time construction professionals to Haskap berry enthusiasts - whose main common thread is the deep desire to do work that matters in the real lives of community members. By creating a team of professionals with varied backgrounds whose knowledge base complements each other, it provides the ability to analyze obstacles through multiple lenses so every project can be optimally executed. As I move forward with Strategies North, I continue to be excited about the work that's being done with communities throughout the country. As someone with a settler heritage, I firmly believe that decolonization cannot stop with Indigenous communities and I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of a community with the collective goal to empower and support our clients. As we shift out of this pandemic and begin to work towards a just and fair economic recovery, I'm proud to be a part of these exciting new projects and look forward to witnessing the positive impact that we can create together.

- *Melissa Bates*

SN READING CORNER

Emily's Book Review: *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer



Braiding Sweetgrass, written by Robin Wall Kimmerer, is a lighthearted, informative, and stunning collection of intimate personal stories, Indigenous history from time immemorial, and captivating stories from close friends. Kimmerer gracefully intertwines her vast scientific knowledge with her traditional cultural knowledge to share her deep understanding of the teachings of plants. She is able to transport her readers into unique ecosystems where she conducts heartfelt thesis studies, hosts life changing field trips, plants her roots as a single mother, weaves Black Ash baskets, rekindles her relationship with the Potawatomi language and much more. *Braiding Sweetgrass* has allowed me to revisit my understanding of the interconnectedness of the systems that nourish both body, mind, and spirit. Kimmerer emphasizes attentively watching and listening to our teachers that come in the varying forms of people, plants, animals, and microorganisms. There is a great importance and need to honour their selflessness and sacrifices by offering our services in return.

Introducing Strategies North Book Club!

In an attempt to broaden the horizons of our understanding of Indigenous culture and history Strategies North has started a monthly book club focusing on the work of Indigenous authors. The review for June's book *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer is above. Strategies North will strive to include a review for each book in our monthly newsletter. If you are interested in reading along with our team we will be reading *Firewater* by Harold R Johnson this month. We also welcome recommendations or suggestions for books we should include in our reading. We hope to cover a variety of topics and genres from traditional medicine to memoirs to everything in between and we hope you enjoy our monthly reviews!

SPUZZUM SITE VISIT

A letter from Jason Fisher, Senior Advisor & Corporate Counsel here at Strategies North on his first community visit with SN

Last Tuesday, Anna and I travelled to Spuzzum First Nation to meet with the CAO. This was my first trip to community as a member of Strategies North. After our meetings, we were taken on a quick tour of some recent projects, including a beautiful gateway designed by a local artist in the historic cemetery and the nearly completed, modular fish hatchery. It was a great example of Spuzzum looking to its future while celebrating its past.

I have a lot of previous experience working with Indigenous communities on specific projects. What opened my eyes was the first hand experience of the range of projects that even small Indigenous communities deliver on in addition to all the day-to-day responsibilities of a local government, major employer and community services provider. I raise my hands to all of the people working in communities meeting today's needs while making a better future.

- Jason Fisher



*Photo from SN trip to Spuzzum BC
June 2021*

Daylu Dena Council: Residential School Demolished

After a decades-long fight, the last piece of this B.C. residential school is coming down



'They were monsters,' says survivor of her time at Lower Post residential school

CBC News · Posted: Jun 30, 2021 2:00 AM CT | Last Updated: July 1



A scene from the ceremonial demolition on Wednesday at the Lower Post residential school. The rest of the structure will be burned when it is safe to do so. (Sandy Silver/Twitter)

Open from 1951-1975 the Lower Post residential school was demolished in Northern BC on June 30. This is part of a larger project as the construction of a new community centre which will house government services and much more is underway to replace the building which had previously housed the band office and other services. Many community members attended as well as visitors from across BC and the Yukon to show support.

A photo take by JJ Fellers of the gathered crowd in attendance for the demolition ceremony in Lower Post.



You can read the full article on the CBC's website here:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/lower-post-demolition-1.6084652>

National Indigenous History Month

Although National Indigenous History Month has ended, it is important to the team here at Strategies North to celebrate and recognize the diversity and resilience of Indigenous cultures across Canada all year long.

We want to thank Frank Busch for his virtual presentation with our team on Monday, July 21st for National Indigenous Peoples Day where he shared his expertise with us and helped to further our understanding and recognition of Indigenous history and residential schools. Frank is the founder and CEO of NationFUND, a company that helps match Nations across Canada with private equity, debt capital and investment strategy.

Thank you for taking time out of your day to share your knowledge and history of Indigenous peoples throughout North America and the evolution of National Indigenous Peoples Day with our staff.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FUND (SIF)

The purpose of the Strategic Initiatives Fund is to allow communities the opportunity to drive and decide their own future of economic growth, supported by SIF's broad nature and desire to support economic development and transformation however possible. The primary goals of SIF applications are centered around:

- Supporting the development of resilient and profitable businesses.
- Stimulating welcoming, thriving communities.
- Enhancing regional capacity, investment and opportunities for growth.

Eligible applicants include:

- Local governments
- Registered First Nation bands
- Partnerships with not-for-profit corporations or private sector businesses where a local government or registered First Nation band is the lead applicant

All located in central and Northern BC.

Funding limit: no maximum, cannot exceed 80% of project costs

Deadline to apply: July 31, 2021

KEY DATES

July 6: Green and Inclusive Community Buildings - Infrastructure Canada deadline to apply

July 7: Indigenous Forestry Initiative - NRCAN deadline to apply

July 9: Nunavut Day

July 30: International Day of Friendship

July 31: Strategic Initiatives Fund - Northern Development Initiative Trust deadline to apply