



Eco-cultural Restoration of Wapato as a Traditional Food in Katzie Territory

With support from the Government of Canada's [Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk](#) (Prevention Stream), the Katzie First Nation (KFN) conducted a one-year project in 2014–2015 to assess wetland and riparian habitats, plan Wapato re-establishment, and build internal capacity to design and implement eco-cultural restoration projects.

WHY THIS PROJECT IS IMPORTANT

Wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), or Broadleaf Arrowhead, is a plant found in the Lower Fraser River watershed, British Columbia, and has cultural significance as a historical food source and sacred plant for the KFN. While Wapato used to be locally abundant in much of the Pitt River watershed and Alouette River, Wapato exists in only a few remnant patches today. The decline of Wapato is largely due to the loss of suitable wetland habitat.

WHAT WAS DONE

The KFN determined priority areas for restoration within the Pitt and Alouette River systems using both western scientific knowledge and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge from KFN Elders and other knowledge holders. Three KFN members and a hired restoration biologist collected Wapato tubers and experimentally planted them in containers to determine the best growing conditions. KFN members also began researching and writing an Eco-Cultural Restoration Plan for the Katzie Traditional Territory. Information gained will be documented to engage community groups in key restoration practices and to fill knowledge gaps about Wapato and other species of cultural value to Katzie and other First Nations.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS PROJECT

- Identified approximately 20 hectares of priority riparian habitat for restoration and re-establishment of Wapato.
- Designed a protocol for container cultivation experiments with details needed for current and future Wapato restoration activities.
- Planted and monitored 16 experimental containers with wild-collected Wapato tubers to determine optimal growing conditions.



▲ Wapato, or Broadleaf arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*)

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROJECT

The KFN increased community capacity to implement eco-cultural restoration projects to re-establish Wapato and other culturally valuable plants traditionally found in the Lower Fraser River basin.

INVESTMENT: 2014–2015

Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk Funds:	\$16,350
Partner Support Leveraged:	\$44,050
TOTAL:	\$60,400