Summary of the Iskut On-Reserve Land Code (March 19, 2026):

What This Land Code Does

This Land Code allows Iskut First Nation to manage and control its own reserve lands and natural resources, instead of relying on the land sections of the Indian Act. It follows the Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management.

It becomes Iskut's main law for governing reserve lands.

Key Points in Plain Language

1. It Protects Iskut's Rights

- It does not take away Aboriginal title, treaty rights, or inherent rights.
- It does not weaken Iskut's relationship with Canada.
- It confirms Iskut's authority to govern its lands.

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2. What Lands It Applies To

- All current Iskut reserve lands.
- Any new lands added to reserve.
- Any lands received through land exchanges.
- Includes water, natural resources (like timber, gravel, minerals), and related rights.

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3. How Land Is Governed

Council has the power to:

- Make land laws.
- Approve leases and land interests.
- Protect the environment and heritage sites.
- Regulate development, zoning, housing, and businesses.
- Manage natural resources.

There will also be:

- A Lands Office (staff who manage daily land matters).
- A Lands Committee (advises Council on land issues).

Elders and Knowledge Keepers are recognized as important in decision-making.

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4. When Members Get to Vote

A community vote is required for major decisions such as:

- Land use plans.
- Major amendments to land use plans.
- Land exchanges.
- Long-term leases (over 10 years) to non-members.
- Major changes to the Land Code.
- Expropriation.

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5. Land Protection

- Iskut can only expropriate land interests if proper laws and procedures are followed.
- Land exchanges must be equal or greater in value.
- Environmental protection is required.
- Members can gather renewable resources (like berries and medicines) for personal use.

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6. Financial Management

- All land revenues must go into special land accounts.
- At least two signing officers are required for payments.
- Annual budgets must be approved.
- Annual audited financial statements must be prepared and published.
- Members have access to financial reports.

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7. Conflict of Interest Rules

- Council members, staff, and committee members must declare conflicts.
- They cannot participate in decisions where they or family benefit.
- Serious penalties apply for violations.

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8. Interests and Leases

- All land interests and leases must be registered.
- Non-members cannot hold Member Only Interests.
- Most leases to non-members cannot exceed 10 years without community approval.
- Mortgages and seizure rules protect the land.

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9. Residency and Access

- Members have rights to live on lands where they hold an interest.
- Council can temporarily restrict access for safety or protection.
- Trespassing is an offence.

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10. Enforcement

Penalties for breaking Land Laws can include:

- Fines (up to $5,000 or more under Criminal Code limits)
- Imprisonment
- Restitution
- Community service
- Traditional or healing justice measures

In One Sentence

This Land Code gives Iskut the legal authority and structure to manage, protect, develop, and govern its reserve lands in accordance with Tahltan values, while ensuring accountability, transparency, and community involvement.