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Forestry

The First Nations Leadership Council and the First Nations Forestry Council hosted a BC First Nations Forestry Forum on March 11-13, 2008. The outcome of the Forum is a draft "BC First Nations Forestry Action Plan" that will serve to guide the activities of the First Nations Forestry Council in the coming years. The First Nations Forestry Council is encouraging First Nations and their forestry professionals to provide us with further input into the draft Action Plan until May 16, 2008. After this time, it will go for resolution of the BCAFN, FNS and UBCIC. To obtain a copy of the draft Action Plan, and/or a copy of the transcript of the First Nations Forestry Forum, please contact:
admin@fnforestrycouncil.ca.

In January 2008, Premier Campbell announced the creation of a Forestry Roundtable which will hold discussions around the province and develop recommendations to improve forestry in British Columbia. Dave Porter and Chief Lynda Price have been appointed to this Roundtable, which will be chaired by Minister Coleman and include members from government, labour, academia, and other groups.

The First Nations Forestry Council, as part of its ongoing lobbying efforts regarding the mountain pine beetle, recently presented to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, and stressed the need to provide immediate support to First Nations facing risks of wildfire, and requiring support for economic, social, and cultural sustainability.

Indigenous Child-at-the-Centre Forum

On Jan. 23-25th, the FNLC hosted a three day Indigenous Child-at-the-Centre Forum in Vancouver, which brought together Chiefs, leaders and political and technical partners to develop a First Nations Indigenous Child at the Centre Action Plan. This forum was an opportunity for First

Nations leaders and key political and technical partners to determine what is needed to ensure First Nations can fully exercise self-determination in relation to children and families and to develop a draft Action Plan that sets out a vision, principles, key topics and actions items.

A follow-up forum is planned for Fall 2008.

Economic Opportunities Forum

On Feb. 13-15th, the BC Regional Chief hosted an Economic Opportunities Forum in Vancouver. The main objective of this Economic Opportunities Forum was for Chiefs and other delegates to come together in order to create strategies and direction for BC First Nations to work together in unity in the area of sustainable economic development and human resource development to ensure that First Nations title and rights are recognized and accommodated in British Columbia.

During this forum the FNLC and Province of British Columbia released their joint report entitled "Journey to Economic Independence: BC First Nations Perspectives". This report was commissioned with the goal of gathering information from various First Nations in order to provide an overview of successful approaches to creating economic opportunities in First Nations communities

Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

On September 13, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Fundamental rights which have been upheld in this Declaration include the inherent rights related to our traditional lands, territories and natural resources, our self-determination, our unqualified recognition as Peoples, our own cultures, languages and identities.

The FNLC and the AFN hosted a conference on February 19-21, at the Chief Joe Mathias Centre, to raise awareness about the Declaration and counter the misconceptions advanced by the Canadian government. Numerous leading scholars, diplomats and leaders attended and presented at this conference.

New Relationship

In the New Relationship, commitments were made to a new government-to-government relationship based on respect, recognition and accommodation of aboriginal title and rights and to reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdictions. First Nations and the Province also agreed to establish processes and institutions for shared decision-making about the land and resources and for revenue and benefit sharing. The New Relationship acknowledges that aboriginal title includes the inherent right for the *community* to make decisions as to the use of the land.

On September 20th, the FNLC and the Province of BC issued a Joint Statement on the New Relationship highlighting that the Province and FNLC are undertaking work to develop frameworks and tools to assist the Province and BC First Nations to implement the New Relationship. The FNLC and Province respect First Nations autonomy and recognize that First Nations are the holders of Aboriginal Title and Rights. The purpose of the New Relationship is to bring about policy changes and set a course forward that will be of benefit to all First Nations.

The New Relationship must not be used as an excuse not to engage with First Nations directly and the policy level discussions are not intended to impede upon or displace First Nations negotiations with the Crown. In fact, these community-level government-to-government negotiations provide valuable insights and guidance to broader discussions.

Each First Nation has the right to a government-to-government relationship with the Crown, and the authority to enter into negotiations and agreements to suit the unique circumstances of the community.

For more information go to: www.ubcic.bc.ca/News_Releases/UBCICNews09210701.htm

New Relationship Working Groups

A joint FNLC-BC Recognition Working Group is tasked with the main deliverables from the New Relationship document – producing principles & mechanisms for: recognition & Honour of the Crown, consultation/accommodation, shared decision-making, revenue & benefit sharing, and other matters. This group is currently focused on Recognition legislation as the first priority. On Feb. 9th, the FNLC had an opportunity meet with Premier Campbell and Minister De Jong to discuss the Recognition Legislation proposal. It has become increasingly clear that this is an opportunity for the Provincial government to provide real, on-the-ground results of the New Relationship.

Other working groups under the New Relationship include the Resolutions Strategy Side Table; Aquaculture Working Group; Working Group on First Nations Heritage Conservation and the Ecosystem Stewardship Planning Working Group.

BC First Nations Fisheries Council

The BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs (the “First Nations Leadership Council”) have adopted a *BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan*. The BC First Nations Fisheries Council has recently been appointed by the First Nations Leadership Council to lead the implementation of this *Action Plan*. The interim members of the BC First Nations Council are Grand Chief Doug Kelly (Tseem Th’ewali) (Stó:lô Tribal Council) – Chairman, Michelle Corfield (Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council), Percy Starr (Kitasoo Nation), Howie Wright, M.Sc., R.P.Bio., (Gitxsan Nation/Okanagan Nation Alliance Fisheries

Department), Chief Allan Claxton (Tsaowut First Nations) and Chief Thomas Alexis (Tl’azt’en Nation)

The appointments to the Fisheries Council were approved by resolution at the BCAFN Regional Chiefs Assembly, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. The mandate from the Chiefs in Assembly is to direct the council to complete a work plan, pursuant to the Fisheries Action Plan and immediate issues, to be reviewed by the Chiefs in Assembly at a future time.

The Fisheries Council is also pleased to introduce Brenda McCorquodale as their new Executive Director. Brenda brings vast fisheries experience and knowledge to her new role and it is an honour to have her as a part of the Council. The Fisheries Council would like to thank everyone who applied for this position.

The *Action Plan* establishes an ambitious agenda for First Nations and the fishery. One of the fundamental components of this agenda is establishing and maintaining relationships with governments, partner organizations and others in our efforts to achieve true recognition and reconciliation. After the Councils inaugural meeting in early January 2008, the Fisheries Council reached out to First Nations from across the province to listen to First Nations’ perspectives on the issues listed below:

1. Priority issues in the BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan;
2. How to best work together for the benefit of BC First Nations; and
3. What a permanent First Nations Fisheries Council would look like.

The Fisheries Council looks forward to working in partnership with you to achieve our common goals, and ensure a healthy, sustainable fishery for all of our communities. Please do not hesitate to contact us to begin the process of relationship-building through information exchange and dialogue at BCAFN Ph: 604-902-7733

BC First Nations Energy Working Group

In April 2006 First Nations gathered at the Chief Joe Mathias Centre to develop a united action plan on energy. This action plan was developed by nearly 200 First Nations in attendance and was ratified through resolutions at the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit, and BC Assembly of First Nations assemblies.

Representatives on the First Nations Energy Working Group are as follows: Chief Roland Willson (West Moberly First Nations) – Appointed by the BC Assembly of First Nations, Chief Nelson Leon (Adams Lake Indian Band) – Appointed by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Vice President Arnie Bellis (Council of the Haida Nation) – Appointed by the First Nations Summit and Dave Porter – (First Nations Leadership Council) Appointed by the First Nations Leadership Council.

Progress to date:

- 1) A 5-year budget proposal has been prepared and provided to the federal and provincial governments to create a First Nations Energy Council. This structure and mandate of this council will be brought to the Chiefs in BC to seek their input and feedback.
- 2) A research proposal, has been prepared.
- 3) A background paper on carbon credits has been prepared for all the First Nations communities in BC.
- 4) A presentation was made by the FNLC to the BC Cabinet Committee on Climate Change.
- 5) Regular meetings are scheduled with the BC government climate action secretariat to discuss First Nations rights to carbon credits.
- 6) Inaugural meeting of the First Nations Energy Working Group in Ft. St. John on February 20-21, 2008.
- 7) Presentation of the two proposals including the budgets and work plan to the deputy minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, the deputy minister of Energy and Mines and the

deputy minister of the BC Climate Action Secretariat on March 14th.

First Nations Heritage Conservation Working Group

A joint working group on First Nations Heritage Conservation has been created to work with BC to a) make recommendations with respect to amendments to the *Heritage Conservation Act*, b) identify culture and heritage site management possibilities within the existing legislative regime and c) improve the protection and conservation of First Nations heritage sites, cultural property, ancient human remains and sacred and spiritual sites.

One of the action items outlined in our workplan is to engage with key partners and/or organizations. This has resulted in a working relationship between the working group and the Archeological Society of BC (ASBC). The ASBC is currently compiling real examples that demonstrate the current threats to First Nations heritage sites across the Province to assist in a public awareness campaign. To gain public support, real examples are needed to clearly demonstrate the current threats to First Nations heritage sites. The ASBC invites you to submit accounts of unauthorized archaeological site destruction, loss, disturbance and looting that you may have experienced. While detailed accounts are important, requested confidentiality of any information will be respected. Anonymous submissions are welcome. The information will be compiled by the ASBC Public Education and Outreach Committee into a summary report, which will be available to participants. A selection of examples, facts and information may be more broadly shared and communicated in public forums, websites, news articles and other public educational forums.

Submissions, as well as any questions about this or any part of the ASBC's public awareness campaign can be directed to asbc.president@gmail.com or at PO Box 520, Bentall Station, Vancouver, BC, V6C 2W3.

Housing and Infrastructure

The FNLC, Province of BC and the Government of Canada are currently developing a Housing and Infrastructure Memorandum of Understanding to improve coordination and collaboration, and commit the parties to develop complementary on- and off-reserve housing and infrastructure action plans.

The FNLC is working with the Province of BC to develop its off-reserve Aboriginal housing plan. The province is currently hosting a series of regional engagement sessions on this issue across the province. Invitations to these sessions were sent to each First Nation in BC.

The off-reserve Aboriginal housing plan will be coordinated with an on-reserve housing and infrastructure action plan that will be collaboratively developed between First Nations and the federal government in the coming months.

Technology

The First Nations Information Technology Society (FNITS), the common services organization that is being set up to support technology in communities, is in the final stages of registration. Members of the Founding Board are Keith Matthew, Chief Judy Wilson, Chief Bill Cranmer, Chief Darren Blaney, Katherine Teneese, Norm Leech, Chief Shawn Atleo, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip and Grand Chief Ed John. Some of the first tasks will be to define the relationship between FNLC and FNITS, to design an organizational structure, and to develop a governance structure.

The 4th annual First Nations Technology Council Forum was held February 21-24, 2008. The theme for this year was Collaboration and Digital Literacy. First Nations participation over the four years has grown and this year the 320 person event was over 50% First Nations representing all parts of the Province.

Two full-day events - one on E-health and one on Land Referral Information management began the Conference. They were followed by two and a half days of a variety of sessions ranging from Engaging Youth Using ICT, to using technology for better educational outcomes, to new visions for collaborating to develop systems that help First Nations economic development and community sustainability, to 'what NOT to do' when building a community network, to informing participants about the new First Nations Information Technology Society - the common services organization recently mandated by the Chiefs to support information and technology related initiatives.

The opportunities for collaboration are there and the willingness to engage communities in this process is there. The mandate of the FNLC is to get the road (industrial grade connectivity) built to support the delivery of programs and services in and out of communities. They are getting closer with the work of the FIT -Fully Integrated Technologies Partners - a working group made up of FNLC -including a number of First Nations organizations, BC and Canada.

FNLC will continue to work to ensure that all 203 First Nations have the essential service and related support. This includes an integrated strategy for Information Management. Considerable work is being done in this area as witnessed by some of the sessions at the Conference that ranged from policy issues, to IM systems, to hands on Records Management.

Frank Paul Inquiry

The Frank Paul inquiry began on November 13, 2007 and is expected to run well into 2008. The final report and recommendations are to be presented to the Attorney General no later than May 31, 2008. A rally is being planned to coincide with the release date of the report. Further updates will be provided.

Recently the Crown has argued that those prosecutors who were involved

in the decision not to charge anyone with respect to the death of Frank Paul should be immune to testifying. A ruling was made by the Commissioner of the inquiry that those prosecutors should have to testify as was set out in the terms of reference of the inquiry. The Crown has now indicated it will appeal this decision. The FNLC has met with the Attorney General on this matter and has indicated that this appeal should be stopped and those prosecutors should have to testify.

Updates on the Frank Paul inquiry can be found at the website www.frankpaulinquiry.ca.

FNLC Meeting Notes

At the recommendation of First Nations, this section of the information bulletin is to describe FNLC discussion and meetings.

- FNLC met with Minister Barry Penner, Attorney General Wally Oppal and Minister Mike De Jong on Feb. 21st to discuss the aboriginal right to possess eagle and other animal parts for societal and ceremonial purposes. It was agreed that a protocol would be developed on this issue between the province and First Nations
- FNLC met with Attorney General Wally Oppal on 7th to discuss recent events at the Frank Paul inquiry. The FNLC expressed concern over any appeal by the Crown to overturn the inquiry Commissioner's ruling to allow Crown prosecutors testify at the inquiry.

FNLC News Releases

On March 7, 2008 the FNLC released a joint press statement expressing their relief that Canada and British Columbia are formally rejecting Northgate Minerals' Kemess North mine expansion project.

Calendar of Events

- **June 4-5:** UBCIC Chiefs' Council
- **June 11-13:** First Nations Summit Meeting

The First Nations Leadership Council

The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs:

- BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief A-in-chut, Shawn Atleo;
- First Nations Summit Task Group members Grand Chief Edward John, Chief Judith Sayers, Dave Porter;
- Union of BC Indian Chiefs President Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Vice-President Chief Robert Shintah; Chief Lynda Price

The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in BC and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.

On March 17, 2005, the Regional Chief of the BCAFN, the Task Group of the FNS, and the political executive of the UBCIC signed the *Leadership Accord*.

For further details on the Accord, please visit www.bcafn.ca