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## First Nations Leadership Council

### INFORMATION BULLETIN

#### Children & Families

On January 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 the Political Executives of the First Nations Summit, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the BC Assembly of First Nations (the First Nations Leadership Council) convened a First Nations Chiefs' Indigenous Child at the Centre Forum. The primary purpose of the Forum was to continue political dialogue concerning the health, safety and well-being of our children, youth, families and communities. Central to this dialogue was the direction from the Chiefs to move towards the establishment of a common vision, goals and principles that would provide choices and focus for our activities.

Since the January Forum, we have been collectively challenged by the breadth and scope of this issue, particularly recent developments concerning Enabling Legislation. Members of the FNLC continue to respond to the fall-out of Minister Christensen's decision to not present the draft Legislation for consideration by the Provincial Legislature. Solution-oriented dialogue is being pursued in earnest to ensure we remain united and that our focus remains clearly on the needs of our children. We cannot allow ourselves to embark on a negative cycle of debate and discourse that will only serve to divide us at the local, regional and provincial levels.

With this in mind, the FNLC is planning the second Indigenous **Child at the Centre Forum to be held July 21-23, 2008** at the Chief Joe Mathias Centre. Prior to this gathering a draft Action Plan will be sent to all Chiefs in British Columbia with a request for value-added responses to be provided by June 30, 2008. Your comments will serve to strengthen the draft Action Plan. It is our hope that we will be able to finalize the Action Plan at the July Forum and establish the Terms of Reference for the Indigenous

Caucus that was agreed to at the January Forum.

#### Recognition Legislation

A joint FNLC-BC Recognition Working Group is tasked with a number of 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 a priority.

The Province has appointed Geoff Plant to lead the BC negotiating team. There have been meetings since April to discuss the FNLC's recognition legislation proposal. This is an opportunity for the Provincial government to provide real, on-the-ground results of the New Relationship across the province. The FNLC has expressed its expectation that recognition legislation will be announced in the upcoming Fall or Spring session.

#### Housing and Infrastructure

On May 21, 2008, the FNLC, Province of BC and the Government of Canada signed a Housing Memorandum of Understanding to improve coordination and collaboration, and commit the parties to develop complementary on- and off-reserve housing and infrastructure action plans.

A committee representing all parties to the MoU will be formed within three months to collaboratively develop a plan for interlinked on and off reserve housing strategies in support of First Nations individuals and families. The Government of Canada, Province of BC and FNLC will then meet annually to discuss progress in implementing the MoU.

The province hosted a series of regional engagement sessions on off-reserve Aboriginal housing across the province and a final report will

soon be released. Based on its findings, the FNLC and other key partners will work with the Province of BC to develop its off-reserve Aboriginal housing plan.

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.

The FNLC is hoping to secure support to hold a province-wide housing and infrastructure forum to receive direction and advice on the implementation of the MoU.

### **Economic Development**

In February 2008, a province-wide First Nations Economic Development Forum was held to review and provide feedback into a draft BC First Nations Economic Development Action Plan. This feedback has now been incorporated, and a revised draft available to all BC First Nations and organizations with an interest and expertise in economic development. We encourage you to comment on this draft, which will be revised again before being considered for approval by resolution in the fall. Please contact one of our offices for a copy of the draft Action Plan.

### **Frank Paul Inquiry**

The Frank Paul inquiry, which began in November, 2007, wrapped up in early May, 2008.

After sitting for over fifty days, the Frank Paul inquiry wrapped up in early May, 2008. Over the course of the inquiry the Commissioner was unable to evaluate all evidence and call all witnesses forward. This was due to the Crown Criminal Justice Branch appealing a decision made by the Commissioner compelling the Crown prosecutors, involved in the Frank Paul case, to testify at the Inquiry. The Criminal Justice Branch believes that no Crown prosecutor should have to testify at this inquiry, as it would have a "chilling effect" on the administration of justice. The appeal of this decision was heard in

BC Supreme Court on May 26-28, 2008. In a decision handed down on June 24, Supreme Court Justice Melnick ruled that the Crown had waved immunity and solicitor-client privilege thus allowing the Commissioner discretion as to whether or not Crown prosecutors should have to testify. It is anticipated that, barring any further appeal, the inquiry will resume shortly to allow testimony and evidence from Crown prosecutors. Once this has concluded the inquiry Commissioner is expected to release his report, which would include his findings and recommendations.

Updates on the Frank Paul inquiry can be found at the website [www.frankpaulinquiry.ca](http://www.frankpaulinquiry.ca).

### **Health**

In June, the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs passed resolutions supporting the Health Governance work of the First Nations Health Council. Specifically, the Chiefs supported the establishment of a Governance Caucus within each of five regions - North, Interior, Fraser, Vancouver Coastal, and Vancouver Island. Each Caucus will be composed of two representatives per First Nation within that region for a total of 406 Caucus members. In addition, each region will appoint a representative to the First Nations Interim Health Governance Committee (FNIHGC) to work alongside representatives from BCAFN, UBCIC and FNS. This will bring total membership of the FNIHGC from 3 members to 8 members.

Regional Governance Caucus meetings will be conducted throughout the late summer and fall of 2008. A provincial meeting of the entire Governance Caucus will take place in fall or winter of 2008 in order to review the findings and direction of the regional sessions and to determine an approach to a new governing structure for First Nations health in BC.

The First Nations Health Council launched a Fit Leadership Program

at recent FNS and UBCIC Assemblies. At these assemblies, Chiefs received step-counters and wellness diaries to track their fitness progress as leadership. Physical Activity Specialist Dr. Rosalin Hanna introduced the wellness diaries and discussed fitness with the Chiefs.

On July 2 & 3, in the wake of the federal apology to residential school survivors, the First Nations Health Council, in partnership with Indian Residential School Survivors Society and First Nations and Inuit Health, hosted a two-day forum to map out existing mental health services available to survivors and survivors' families. The purpose of the forum was to find out what is available, what is working, and where regional and absolute gaps in service exist. The forum is the first of several dialogues aimed at addressing the needs of survivors and intergenerational survivors. The data collected will inform a 10-year mental health plan for First Nations in BC.

### **BC First Nations Fisheries Council**

The three priorities for the Council are: 1) engaging with First Nations with respect to organizational development options for the future of the Fisheries Council, 2) short term work plan priorities for the Council, and 3) addressing important advocacy issues for First Nations. Some of the specific work the Council has been involved in includes: meeting with DFO on the protection of First Nations' FSC access; supporting a First Nations working group which is developing responses to the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative; meeting with DFO with respect to C-32; participation in the development of a high level results-based management framework for salmon and watershed sustainability initiatives in B.C.; and facilitating communications among First Nations on important fisheries issues.

The Fisheries Council held community meetings in June 2008 seeking feedback into the organizational development options and workplanning for the Fisheries Council. A report on these meetings

will be produced and available. Follow up sessions with communities will be held in the fall.

The First Nations Fisheries Council has initiated a bi-weekly conference call for regional aggregate First Nations Fisheries organizations. If your organization would like to be included on the list which receives information related to the calls, please contact Brenda McCorquodale at [fishcouncil@bcfn.ca](mailto:fishcouncil@bcfn.ca), 604-922-7733 or 778-835-2496.

### **BC First Nations Forestry Council**

In June the BC First Nations Forestry Council stepped up its campaign to draw attention to the fire threat facing 103 first Nations communities living in the Mountain Pine Beetle devastation zone. A press release was issued dealing with the growing number of forest fires in Canada and the US this year and the threat of even greater disasters in BC. This resulted in coverage of our situation in the Globe and Mail.

A second release was sent out after the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources unanimously called on the federal government to work with First Nations and the Province to address the forest fire threat. The all-party report also called on the government to provide the necessary resources to fund effective wild fire response and evacuation plans and permit firebreak work to proceed. This prompted CBC coverage and supportive action from the federal NDP.

The month ended with a letter from BC's First Nation leaders to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, which was copied to Premier Gordon Campbell, federal and provincial opposition leaders, senior ministers and the media. It was signed on behalf of the First Nations Summit by Grand Chief Ed John, Grand Chief Doug Kelly and Dan Smith; on behalf of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs by Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Chief Robert Shintah and Chief Lynda Price; on behalf of the BC Assembly of First Nations by Regional Chief A-in-chut

(Shawn Atleo); and by FNFC President Leonard Thomas.

The letter directly appealed to have the government live up to its commitments and responsibilities. It reiterated the many warnings that have been raised about the fire threats. It also listed the repeated calls on the federal government to live up to its commitment to provide funding including the latest all-party recommendation by the Commons Natural Resources committee.

Meanwhile, the FNFC has called on all First Nations to help with the campaign to ensure the governments address the crisis facing so many communities. It has requested that community elders, band councils and youth write personal letters to the Prime Minister, Premier, local politicians and media describing the dangers their communities face.

An email providing information on the campaign, tips on how to reach politicians and media, and pointers on the key messages for any letters, has been sent to all communities. Copies can be obtained by emailing [admin@fnforestrycouncil.ca](mailto:admin@fnforestrycouncil.ca)

### **BC First Nations Energy Working Group**

In April 2006 First Nations gathered at the Chief Joe Mathias Centre to develop an 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: Chief Roland Willson - West Moberly First Nations, Chief Nelson Leon - Adams Lake Indian Band, Vice President Arnie Bellis - Council of the Haida Nation and Dave Porter, 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.

### **BC First Nations Mining Summit**

The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Kaska Tribal Council, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, and BC First Nations Leadership Council are co-hosting a mining summit open to all BC First Nations.

**When:** October 7-9, 2008

**Where:** Prince George Civic Centre

**Why:** 1) High mineral prices are fuelling intensive exploration activities across our traditional territories; 2) currently there are about two dozen mine applications in the provincial environmental review process, 3) these pose opportunities to First Nations to engage to develop new approaches to mining engagement, and 4) together we can collectively address the mining sector in a way that takes care of our rights and interests.

- *Day 1 will be open to government and industry presentations, followed by in-camera First Nations strategic planning on days 2 & 3.*
- *Consider sharing your Nation's land and resource management policies and principles for distribution and consideration at this event.*
- *Planned outcome of the Summit is a BC First Nations Mining Action Plan (draft discussion paper to be*

prepared and distributed in advance).

- An agenda and registration information is pending. Watch for further developments at [www.bcfnms.ca](http://www.bcfnms.ca)

For more information, contact Paul Blom, Natural Resources Director, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council at 250-562-6279 or email [info@bcfnms.ca](mailto:info@bcfnms.ca) or Chris Lewis at BC Assembly of First Nations 604 922-7733.

### Walk4Justice Campaign

The “walk4justice” campaign seeks to stand for justice, closure, equality, basic human rights and accountability for missing and murdered women and the families and children they left behind.

The National “walk4justice” campaign left Vancouver, BC, on June 25, 2008 with plans to arrive in Ottawa, ON in September for opening day of the fall sessions of parliament.

The “walk4justice” campaign is currently seeking support and funding for gas and food. UBCIC will be accepting donations on behalf of the “walk4justice” campaign. Please contact Bernie Williams at 1-604-880-3650 or Don Bain at 604-684-0231 for further information.

### Technology/Information Management

FNTC has received funding from both GeoConnections and the Integrated Land Management Bureau to develop a Strategy and Action Plan for the development, deployment and long-term maintenance of shared land and resource information services to support First Nations in BC. The project consists of 4 main sections:

- 1: Research and documentation of current IM/IT initiatives, mandates, policies, legislation and relationships affecting the Natural Resources sector within the BC provincial government and BC First Nations.
- 2: Analysis of the policies and legislations that hinder and/or support information management in

the natural resource sector between First Nations and BC.

3: Analysis of the key existing systems First Nations in BC have developed for information management in the natural resource sector.

4: Develop a Strategy and Action Plan that will document land and resource IM/IT requirements to be submitted as a Phase II proposal to GeoConnections, ILMB and other funding partners.

### The First Nations Leadership Council

The FNLC 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, Grand Chief Doug Kelly, Dan Smith
- Union of BC Indian Chiefs President Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Vice-President Chief Robert Shintah, Chief Lynda Price

The FNLC, through the *Leadership Accord*, 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.

### 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. 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 20, 2007 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.

### Calendar of Events

- **July 21-23:** Indigenous Child at the Centre Forum II (North Vancouver)
- **September 17-19:** UBCIC Annual General Assembly (Vancouver)
- **September 24-26:** First Nations Summit Meeting (North Vancouver)
- **October 7-9:** BC First Nations Mining Summit (Prince George)