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# First Nations Leadership Council

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

Feedback and inquiries on these monthly bulletins are welcome; contact information is provided in the column to the left.

### Fisheries

In a July 7 letter to the *Calgary Herald*, Prime Minister Stephen Harper wrote, "Let me be clear – in the coming months, we will strike a judicial inquiry into the collapse of the Fraser River salmon fishery and oppose racially divided fisheries programs."

There are no "race-based" fisheries – there are, however, rights-based fisheries. First Nations economic fisheries arise from their Aboriginal rights and historic relationship to the fisheries resources, as recognized in a unanimous decision of the BC Court of Appeal. The government has stated that it will support and honour court decisions, and the FNLC strongly urges the federal government to honour the rulings in *Kapp*, *Sparrow*, *Gladstone*, *Delgamuukw*, and *Marshall*.

Further, the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) questions the need for a judicial inquiry; a number of judicial inquiries have already been completed, which the government is choosing to ignore. In addition, DFO consulted industry, sports, and environmental groups and learned that there is little support for a judicial inquiry. Most said that the \$20 million set aside for a judicial inquiry should be used instead for fisheries management, scientific research, and recovery of endangered species. The FNLC believes that the \$20 million should be devoted to an independent study by scientists and First Nations Traditional Ecological Knowledge experts to ensure sustainability of the resource.

The FNLC will be holding a Fisheries Forum on October 4-6 2006 (Squamish Nation Recreation Centre), and hope that government

and others will join us in finding solutions to ensure the sustainability of the BC fishery and to work toward improved relationships.

The first day of this Forum will be joint with governments, and will focus on the political context, including agreements such as the New Relationship and Transformative Change Accord, and the visions of governments and First Nations as it relates to the Pacific fishery. The last two days will be internal to First Nations, and will be used to foster unity amongst themselves and develop a common vision for the fishery.

### Energy

The FNLC is planning a 4-day Energy Summit tentatively scheduled for October 22-25 at the Prince George Civic Centre.

The first two days of the Forum, joint with governments, will focus on information-sharing and discussion on various energy sectors, opportunities, and challenges. The final two days of the Forum will be for First Nations to develop an approach to energy issues in BC.

### New Relationship

The FNLC and the provincial government have been engaged in a series of meetings to achieve progress under the New Relationship. Agenda items through the fall include: approaches to consultation and accommodation; revenue-sharing models; denial/recognition strategy; land use planning; culture and heritage sites; communications; and others.

### Softwood Lumber

The FNLC has prepared a position paper on softwood lumber that raises concerns with the current Canada-United States softwood lumber agreement-in-principle (SLA) and

proposes solutions to ensure that First Nations forestry operations are not marginalized.

The critical issues and needs for BC First Nations as it relates to softwood lumber are:

- As forest products developments are key to economic development for most BC First Nations, unrestricted access to US market is essential;
- A lack of action by governments to address the quota problem faced by many First Nations will compromise the fair and timely settlement of the land question and efforts for forest-based economic development;
- The Government of Canada could resolve the First Nations' problems with the new SLA by pursuing an exemption for First Nations;
- In June 2000, the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly passed a resolution by consensus that, because of the difficulties experienced by developing First Nations forest products manufacturers, they are opposed to any new SLA which is based on quota.

The position paper makes the following recommendations to address the needs of BC First Nations:

- Ensure BC First Nations forest sector operations are exempted from the new SLA.
- Or, provide preferential marketing rights to First Nations loggers and provide First Nations sawmills and remanufacturers with sufficient quota for current operations and expansions.
- Include unrestricted log exports with both of the above.

The position paper can be found on the First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Working Group website at [www.fnmpb.ca](http://www.fnmpb.ca) or contact one of the FNLC member organizations for a copy.

## Transformative Change Accord

The *Transformative Change Accord* requires the parties to develop an implementation strategy – focused on the areas of relationships, education, housing and infrastructure, health, and economic opportunities – by December 2006. The FNLC has been working with the provincial government and First Nations organizations to develop a framework for this plan, and identify preliminary action areas and activities for the next 1-2 years. This framework will also provide a foundation for further discussions with First Nations, resulting eventually in a comprehensive 10-year implementation strategy.

## Health

British Columbia will be hosting a national Aboriginal health summit this fall. The FNLC is working with the provincial government on the planning and preparation for this event. This summit fulfills commitments to the Aboriginal health blueprint made at the First Ministers Meeting in November 2005.

## Post-Secondary Education

The provincial government has announced a review of the post-secondary system – “Campus 2020: Thinking Ahead”, designed to build on the strengths of BC’s post secondary education system while discovering new approaches to expand the network of learning opportunities across the province.

The FNLC will meet with Geoff Plant, (special advisor to the leadership team of Campus 2020) to ensure that First Nations are included in the initiative and that their suggestions and concerns are addressed.

## New Relationship Trust

The New Relationship Trust has scheduled regional consultation sessions to assist in developing the Trust strategic plan (all sessions run from 9am-3pm):

- **Masset:** August 21 (Old Massett Community Hall)

- **Terrace:** August 24 (Muks-kum-ol Housing Society)
- **Port Hardy:** August 29 (Kwakiutl Community Hall)
- **Fort St. John:** September 11 (Treaty 8 Association Boardroom)
- **Port Alberni:** September 12 (Maht Mahs Gym)
- **Prince George:** September 13 (Native Friendship Centre)
- **Vancouver:** September 14 (Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre)
- **Kamloops:** September 19 (Sk’elep School of Excellence)
- **Cranbrook:** September 22 (St. Eugene Mission Resort)
- **Atlin:** September 26 (Atlin Inn)

For further information, please visit [www.newrelationshiptrust.ca](http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca), or telephone 1-877-922-3338.

## Elders Gathering

The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual BC Elders Gathering was held on July 18-20, hosted in Port Alberni by Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and Tseshaht First Nation. More than 3,000 Elders attended the event, as did members of the FNLC and Premier Gordon Campbell.

## Other Notes

- Michael de Jong has been named the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation; Tom Christensen is now the Minister of Children and Family Development
- The FNLC-Province of BC New Relationship Progress Report will be issued this month.
- The new Forest & Range Opportunities (FRO) framework was provided to BC First Nations in June. Please contact us if your First Nation did not receive a copy.

### Calendar of Events

- **September 20-22:** UBCIC AGA (Vancouver)
- **September 27-29:** FNS Meeting (Kamloops)
- **October 4-6:** First Nations Fisheries Forum (Vancouver)
- **October 22-25 (tentative):** First Nations Energy Summit (Prince George)
- **November 27-28:** BCAFN Meeting (location TBD)