

**Fraser Valley Treaty Advisory Committee  
First Nations Media Monitor - Excerpts  
January 23, 2009**

*Summary of news events reported on First Nations, Aboriginal communities, and rights & title issues.  
This report can also be found on the FVTAC website at the following link:  
<http://www.fvrd.com/AboutUs/FVTAC/Pages/Reports.aspx>*

**AROUND THE PROVINCE**

**Legislation for New Relationship Discussed  
With Aboriginal Leaders**

Premier Gordon Campbell assigned B.C.'s Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Michael de Jong to lead talks with Grand Chief Edward John of the First Nations Summit, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, and Shawn Atleo of the B.C. Assembly of First Nations in an effort to avert future protests. In November, the First Nations Leadership Council sent Campbell a letter warning that if the "New Relationship" isn't soon backed by legislation "a series of on the ground actions" by First Nations groups would begin. In December, the provincial team met with the Aboriginal leaders in Vancouver for three days of meetings where the parties discussed reaching an agreement to introduce legislation that would recognize Aboriginal title and rights. Campbell noted that lawyers from the Ministry of the Attorney General were left out of the meetings and that each First Nations leader was also requested not to include their legal advisers so that all parties could "enter into these discussions with the view that compromise will be necessary." Commitment to the New Relationship is promised to be part of Campbell's campaign platform for the upcoming May 12 provincial election. Campbell said that since B.C. signed a transformative change accord with First Nations three years ago, the provincial government has made a "real effort" to improve the lives of First Nations people. However, he admits that some reserves are "not places I'm proud are in British Columbia or in Canada" and much remains to be done.

*(Globe and Mail, December 17; Times Colonist, December 29, 2008)*

**Chief's Committees Formed to Push Aboriginal Title**

Three committees have been created to develop the three key aspects of a draft Action Plan on ways to move forward on Aboriginal title issues. The plan was the result of a meeting held for the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) in November 2008 where over 60 chiefs attended. The three areas of development include communications, public education, and direct action. During the meeting, the chiefs also discussed the possibility of legal strategies involving joint action through a collective of communities and leaderships. FNLC is the political executive of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, the B.C. Assembly of First Nations, and the First Nations Summit.

*(St'at'imc Runner, January 2009)*

## FORESTS

### **St'at'imc Foresters Develop Strategy**

Technicians from the forestry departments of the northern St'at'imc communities of Xaxl'ip, Tskwaylacw, Sekwelwas, Tsal'alh, and Xwisten met with forestry management company Forsite Consultants Ltd. to discuss the development of a five-year strategic plan. Forsite is the contract winner of the provincial government Forests For Tomorrow (FFT), a program that funds the development stages of timber considered to be otherwise not commercially viable such as mountain pine beetle killed forests. Topics of discussion included the current lack of capacity or certification among the St'at'imc technicians and plans on how to utilize the FFT funds for training. Under the Community Integrated Investment Plan, the FFT program targets 25 per cent of employment to go to local First Nations. The local Aboriginal communities see this as a minimum; Forsite agrees and will work with them on increasing the percentage.

*(St'at'imc Runner, January 2009)*

## FISHERIES

### **DFO Continues Fishery Consultation With Aboriginal Groups**

Last year the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) held a series of consultation meetings with Aboriginal communities that access Fraser River sockeye, which was followed with the creation of an Interim Working Group to continue communications throughout the fishing season. DFO plans to continue the First Nations meetings and consultations for the 2009 fisheries to cover the topics of key management issues for Early Timed Chinook and Early Stuart sockeye, and the Pacific Salmon Treaty Chapter 4, which expires December 2010. Meetings last year were designed in consultation with the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat (FRAFS), an arm of DFO. This year, representatives from FNFC and the Inter Tribal Fishing Treaty have been invited to join the executive council of FRAFS.

*(St'at'imc Runner, January 2009)*

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### **Duncan Seeks Forum with Cowichan Tribes**

The City of Duncan council agreed to meet with Cowichan Tribes to discuss a community-to-community project. Last year, the city worked with the Cowichan Valley Regional District on a community-to-community forum with Cowichan Tribes, but this time they want to have more one-on-one discussions with the First Nation. Mayor Phil Kent plans to meet with Cowichan Tribes Chief Lydia Hwitsum and the Tribes band council to find out what topics need to be addressed and then contact the Union of British Columbia Municipalities for funding.

*(Cowichan Valley Citizen, January 2)*

## TREATIES

**New Chief For Treaty Commission**

Sophie Pierre, outgoing chief of the St. Mary's Indian Band (SMIB), has been appointed as the new chief commissioner of the British Columbia Treaty Commission. Pierre replaces Grand Chief Steven Point who left the position in 2007. The BCTC chief commissioner is a joint appointment by the provincial and federal governments, and the First Nations Summit and requires ratification by all three parties. Pierre is a highly regarded First Nations leader who held the position as SMIB's elected chief for more than 20 years. She still holds a position as Ktunaxa Nation chair, but did not seek re-election in the recent band elections.

*(Cranbrook Daily Townsman, December 17)*

## EDITORIAL EDITS

**Powell River Peak, December 17 – Bill Smith wrote, in part:**

“On a rainy night in late November, with as little notice as possible, provincial negotiators slipped into Lund to inform us of their decision to include Lund Hotel properties as treaty lands in their attempt to finalize an agreement with the Tla’Amin (Sliammon) First Nation.

Patrick Brabazon, Electoral Area A director, was quick to explain the Powell River Regional District board position: that the transfer is not a good idea for the community of Lund or for the tax base of the district.

I believe it is simply wrong to include private property holdings in this treaty. The land in question, which is in the heart of the community of Lund, is not adjacent to other proposed treaty lands and such a contentious issue that it both amazes and grieves me that on the one hand the province is so willing to go against the populace and on the other, that Tla’Amin negotiators would repeat the wrongs done to their own community.

For example, on Savary Island, generous land owners donated a parcel to the province to insure some green and open space. This too is under threat of being engulfed by the treaty.

I believe in treaty rights and look forward to settlements that are fair and balanced. Unfortunately this is where things fall apart because it appears the government is more interested in getting the job done, at whatever cost to society.”