

SNTC Council of Chiefs Meeting Summary (February 3, 2010)

- **Opening and closing prayers** were said by Marion Lee.

Community Roundtable

- In December, Tk'emlups initiated their Douglas Reserve legal action. They have recently finished intensive strategic planning sessions.
- Simpcw has agreed to negotiate an Exploration Permit with a mining company. If completed, it would be the first such agreement in B.C.
- Visiting from the north, Elder Les Peters shared his deep concern about the impact of the Taseko mine on the watershed. He asked for the south's support in opposing this development.
- Chief Judy Wilson of Neskonlith said that ancestral burial sites are part of Secwepemc "collective memory." She has met the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure that the ancestors are protected from the highway development near Monte Creek.
- Splatsin is going to launch a Section 35 legal challenge about jurisdiction over children.
- Adams Lake has hired Sue Matthew as Event Coordinator for the Elders Gathering.
- Youth and drum groups from Bonaparte, Simpcw, Shuswap, Tk'emlups and Splatsin took part in the Olympic Torch Run.

Elders

Richard Billy and Les Peters asked for volunteers for the B.C. Elders Gathering. Chiefs Christian and Leon will hunt 12 animals. They'll need help skinning, gutting and wrapping.

The Chiefs set a minimum fundraising goal of \$5,000 for SNTC. They want to challenge each community to match that. Chief Wilson advised bands to get their regular vendors to donate supplies and services.

Elder Les Peters then talked about Aboriginal Rights and Title. He said that the Cree now see economic development as "the new buffalo." Chief Wilson followed that thought by saying that the Secwepemc "can't just think about programs and services. We have to think about economic development based on rights and title too."

Councilor Fred Fortier (Simpw) said that elder's knowledge is critically important to Traditional Use and Occupational Use studies. For example, how industrial development affects traditional food sources. Chief Paul Sam recommended that the SNTC bands bring together their Traditional Use Studies. It's important because, as Chief Leon asked, "When our food sources are gone, what rights will we have to practice?"

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This discussion led Chief Wilson to pose the question, "What does aboriginal rights and title mean to the Secwepemc people? We need to get this defined, because, governments are carving us up."

Chief Christian said that the Council of Chiefs will present SNTC's Rights and Title strategy to the elders for their thoughts.

Youth

Reanna Leonard is always looking for new ways to get youth involved in the community. In January, young people had a great time learning drum-making with Sam Saul (Simpcw). They had moose stew for lunch. They eagerly await the drums to dry.

In March, they will attend the Gathering Our Voices Youth Conference in Vancouver. There are a great many workshops, but, Reanna is looking forward to "Elders Don't Bite." This workshop connects youth with elders who want to connect with youth.

The chiefs said that they'd really enjoyed paintball last summer with the youth group and asked Reanna to set up an activity for this year. Ball hockey was a popular idea; Chiefs Leon and Christian started putting a team together right away. The Chair brought the meeting back to order.

Language and Culture

The Chiefs discussed cultural revitalization at the community level as a dynamic component of a Rights and Title strategy. Chief Gottfriedson said that the Secwepemc News is "more than a newspaper" because it connects communities. Chief Christian recommended a joint meeting of the Council of Chiefs and the SCES Board to take things forward.

Fisheries

The SFC Director's Report stirred up a kettle of fish on the question of strategic planning.

Councilor Fred Fortier said that separate strategies are needed for the Columbia and Fraser River basins. He believes that the Portfolio has to be organized so that the communities have input. Chief Wilson added that SFC should meet with the bands to get their input.

Chief Paul Sam pointed out that for a long time now the Shuswap Band has "needed a person, and support, from over here (SNTC)." It was noted that in January, SFC hired a Coordinator for the Columbia River. However, that person pulled out on short notice.

This discussion prompted Chief Gottfriedson to offer that "what we're missing as an organization is a clear strategic plan." He recommended a strategic planning session for SNTC.

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Portfolios

Child Welfare: Chief Porter reported that the Chiefs Working Group (Stsmamlt) had secured \$400,000 in funding from the Ministry of Family and Child Development to start the work on a nation-based approach. "I believe that we're heading in the right direction," said Chief Porter.

He added that he'd like to see more participation from the chiefs on the child welfare issue. "We're not talking about a load of lumber going down the road," Chief Porter said.

Rights and Title: Chief Christian reported that the All Chiefs Task Force public relations campaign had started and was focused on human rights, poverty, murdered and missing women and rights and title. The campaign targets the international media in Canada for the Olympics and will be used as a springboard for campaigns throughout the year.

Communications: Chief Wilson presented her planning document. She wants to build "a network of communications-minded people throughout the nation." Chief Wilson also wants to do a Needs Assessment of the technological infrastructure of each Band in order to pursue funding. The 2010 Memorial, Shuswap Gathering and Elders Gathering are coming up this summer.

Forestry: Councilor Fred Fortier spoke to the issues of harvesting wood for social needs (ex.: housing) and the high stumpage fees paid by First Nations.

Sports and Recreation: Chief Gottfriedson reported that nine communities are working together on the Portfolio. He is hosting a hockey tournament this April 15th to 17th.

Health: Chief Gottfriedson is concerned that changes to First Nations healthcare delivery is being "pushed along really fast. It's a top-down approach." The First Nations Health Council will host an Interior Region Governance Session in Kamloops on February 24-25.

Work at SNTC

- The Tribal Director has been working on: SNTC's Community Engagement Plan; the Stsmamlt project; and a variety of rights and title, financial and personnel files.
- SNTC has committed staff time to the Elders Gathering to help with planning, proposal writing, fundraising and communications.
- Secwepemc Fisheries Commission has received all outstanding funding from DFO.
- The final draft of the Financial Management Policy is completed and awaits the chief's signatures.
- The provisional budget for 2010 was adopted by the chiefs.

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- A standard Wage Grid for SNTC employees was developed and will be distributed to staff.
- A new Chiefs Travel Claim Form was created and will be tried out by the chiefs for a period of two months.
- The SNTC HR policy, revised to more closely reflect Secwepemc values and the SNTC Mission Statement, was adopted.
- CIPAHRD was appointed to the Training Committee of the new BC Aboriginal Mine Training Association.
- The Aboriginal Rights and Title department is now going through final edits of the Secwepemc book.

One last thing ...

Chief Sam expressed his disappointment that lateness on the part of chiefs caused the meeting to start one hour late. Despite his health concerns, he was on-time. He expects all chiefs to be on-time for the next Council of Chiefs meeting.

In Attendance:

- Chiefs Paul Sam, Terry Porter, Shane Gottfriedson, Judy Wilson, Wayne Christian and Nelson Leon.
- Councilors Fred Fortier (Simpcw) and Jean Brown (Splatsin)
- Richard Billy, Les Peters and Marion Lee (Elders), Reanna Leonard (Youth Representative)
- Bonnie Leonard (Tribal Director), Veronica Leonard, Walter Quinlan (SNTC)