

FROM THE DESK OF THE GITXSAN CHIEF NEGOTIATOR
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Timber Sales chart areas and volume.

May 31, 2006

Oil and Gas; Other Minerals

Gitxsan Chiefs

Gimlitzwit

Gitxsan Treaty Society Board

Members of the Gitxsan Nation
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An Update on Stuff; Some New Stuff
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Short Term Forestry Agreement

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The most recent news from Victoria is that a new Short Term Forestry
Agreement offer is forthcoming from the Ministry of Forests. The changes
from the last offer are as follows. The wording reflects the New Relationship
document that British Columbia signed with the Leadership Council. New
funds are included that would enable the Watersheds to undertake the
planning work that they have started. jeopardize the future of the unborn
Gitxsan.

In the event that the new offer provides sufficient resources to the
Watersheds to enable proper planning to take place I will sign the
Agreement and bring it back for the House groups to ratify or reject. The
opinion of our legal counsel will again be confirmed.

When we make the declaration that we are open for the mineral business

If the House groups ratify the Agreement then we will have some new
money to apply to priority needs and if the House groups reject the offer
from BC then we will close the file.

The Investment Community

Carnaby

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Gordon Sebastian and I will be meeting with Susanna Xsu, the negotiator for
the Chinese government, to make arrangements as to how we can secure the
Carnaby forest license and other assets. With the fibre situation that northern
BC faces when all the bug kill wood is used up we know that the forest

licenses on our territories will be extremely valuable. We will continue to work towards acquiring all the licenses in our territories including the BC Timber Sales chart areas and volume.

Oil and Gas; Other Minerals

You will recall that the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that we continued to have our mineral rights when the Delgamuukw decision came down in 1997. I have had a number of sessions with our legal counsel about exercising our mineral rights.

What I have proposed to our legal counsel is to implement our Oil and Gas policy and establish our own management regime for oil and gas exploration. This process would directly challenge the authority of the Crown.

The initial response of our legal counsel was to ask how far we would take the challenge. I told them that we would have to be kept out of jail.

The purpose of our effort would have to be explicit. We have to state that our interest is to improve the economy of northwestern BC and to enable the people living here to earn a modest living. As we step forward we have to ensure that everything we do does not jeopardize the future of the unborn Gitksan.

What we would then do is to tell the investment community that we are open for business.

When we make the declaration that we are open for the mineral business then the Crown will be ready for and will begin to engage us in serious negotiations.

The Investment Community

We cannot leave to chance the possibility of not being asked to dance when we say that the dance is on. That is why we have been courting people from the investment community. Our target has been the non Canadian investors. We have been talking to investors from South Africa and mainland China.

A small investment group has established a very small capital pool in the amount of \$400,000 on the Toronto Stock Exchange. This money can be used to attract the larger investment pools that can be used to enable House groups to begin exercising their mineral rights. I realize that \$400,000 is not a lot of money when all the preparatory work costs in the millions.

Exploration work can be done by Gitxsan people. We should begin with the necessary training as soon as possible.

Fish Farms

As you know our Gitxsan Watershed Authorities has been valiantly fighting the proposed fish farm development on the coast. Chris Barnes and his staff have continued to hold the lines tight on saying no to anything that can kill our food supply. We simply cannot allow bad decisions by the Crown to wipe out the salmon that we all depend on for our sustenance.

The fight has been taken to Norway by the Lax walaams with our support. I have signed a declaration that will be taken to Victoria by a group that Gerald Amos from Kitamaat village is leading.

On the Gitxsan Nation website you will find photos of Rod Sampare and Bev Clifton Percival that was carried on a European newspaper.

Northern Native Fishing Corporation

The NNFC Board and Management have executed direction that was given by the owners. Licenses are now only made available to fisherman from the owner groups. The Gitxsan fishermen need to utilize more commercial licenses. Those of you that can fish and have access to a boat should apply to NNFC as soon as possible.

Being Gitxsan

The University of Northern British Columbia conducted graduation ceremonies in Gitanmaax yesterday. Six very hard working Gitxsan women

earned their diplomas in language teaching. Congratulations go to these women who will enable generations of Gitxsan people to be very Gitxsan.

Richard Sampson of our office will be posting the names of recent Gitxsan graduates on our website. If you have any family members that are celebrating successful completion of any programs or have graduated from any schools please let Richard know so that we can all celebrate their success.

Disputes

Several disputes have surfaced among a number of House groups. I realize that it is very difficult for Chiefs to protect what is rightfully theirs. The only counsel that I can give right now is to keep these disputes on our own turf. The Crown's court should not be engaged when the disputes are internal. All the disputes are resolvable. It may take some time.

Kemess

The dispute about Northgate Minerals dumping tailings into a lake has escalated. Rena Benson, on behalf of NiiKyap, has written a strongly worded letter to the Government of BC. Our fundamental position is that we have to protect water for its life giving values.

We may have to pick a legal fight with the Crown on water. We cannot allow the Crown to conveniently allow developers to kill a lake for convenience or economics. House groups have to adopt the proposed Ax policy as soon as possible.

As a part of takings steps to get ready for a possible court fight I have been talking to other aboriginal groups that have been working with Indigenous groups around the Pacific Rim. There is a Gitxsan person that lives in the United States who works at the national level in an American organization. He keeps me well informed. They have a treaty that enables them to work together on environmental issues. We are investigating becoming signatories to that treaty. You will recall that we did a lot of groundwork when we hosted the Eagle and the Condor conference several years ago.

BCTC

One of my roles is to stay on course with our primary funding agency which is the British Columbia Treaty Commission. They sing – I dance. Our funding is secure for this fiscal year.

Federal Public Policy

The election of a new Stephen Harper government is bringing changes to federal public policy. Priority has been given to accountability. The Gitksan are more open and transparent than any other Canadian public organization.

The Harper government wants to make changes to aboriginal public policy. Harper believes that better results can be achieved from the \$8.3 billion investment with better public policy. I wholeheartedly agree. Tweaking can work on some policies. Others require drastic changes.

Senator Gerry St. Germaine is working on setting up a political meeting between Minister Jim Prentice and our group so that we can present some new ideas.

A friend of mine by the name of Suzanne Tining will be meeting with us shortly so that we can exchange perspectives on possible new policy initiatives that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada can look into. Suzanne is the Associate Deputy Minister of INAC and is also responsible for Residential School settlements.

I volunteer as a member on an AFN committee that is focusing on accountability for results matters. I stay in contact with people across Canada through this committee. National Chief Phil Fontaine has been working closely with BC Premier Gordon Campbell to keep the Kelowna Accord on the national table. They are doing good work.

Elmer Derrick