



# Connecting *the Drops* Planning for Prosperity

## Summary of Forum

### Activities and participants

More than 72 people attended the April 7 forum at Gitanmaax Hall. The majority were representing Gitksan, Wet'suwet'en and Tahltan organizations and non-governmental, non-profit groups in the Skeena River watershed (Participant list: <http://www.upperskeena.ca/Drops/Attendance.pdf>).

Forum participants started with an interactive mapping session where they broke into small groups and shared their knowledge, with each other and then with all assembled, about development on the traditional territories (Maps created: <http://www.upperskeena.ca/Drops/maps-c.pdf>).

Forest ecologist Karen Price gave a presentation on cumulative effects and associated concepts such as critical threshold, non-linear effects, connectivity, precautionary principle and keystone species. (Karen's Powerpoint: <http://www.upperskeena.ca/Drops/effects-c.pdf> – 10 Mb)

Pembina Institute's (<http://www.pembina.org/>) Greg Brown and Jaisel Vadgama presented material on the Alberta Tar Sands development and Gitksan Nass watershed coordinator George Muldoe and Wet'suwet'en hereditary chief Alphonse Gagnon described their recent visit to the Tar Sands and discussions with the Fort Chippewan people (Greg and Jaisel's Powerpoint: <http://www.upperskeena.ca/Drops/impacts.pdf> – 102 Mb)

Storytellers' Foundation's Bridie O'Brien lead a group exercise called 'the big picture' that gave participants an opportunity, in an interactive way, to consider the diversity of approaches we all take in working towards the same goal (group feedback: <http://www.upperskeena.ca/Drops/puzzle.pdf>)

Tribal 8 Treaty Association (<http://www.treaty8.bc.ca/>) lead negotiator Don Ryan made a presentation on levels ('tiers') of engagement First Nations can employ to deal with the Crown and industry on issues surrounding cumulative effects. He spoke on T8TA experiences with oil and gas development in BC's northeast and provided a document called Modeling Cumulative Impacts in the Peace-Moberly Tract (contact <mailto:doug@upperskeena.ca> for a copy).

The day was wrapped up with an exercise where participants met within their groups and reflected on three questions that helped in defining reaction to information received during the day and encouraged discussion about what they would like to do as a result of the forum (Compiled results: <http://www.upperskeena.ca/Drops/results.pdf>)

Networking between participants occurred throughout the day. (Media coverage: Interior News: <http://www.upperskeena.ca/Drops/forum.pdf>  
CFTK TV: <http://www.cftk.com/media/collection/694114/April+2008+CFTK+News+Coverage> and click on Gitksan Energy Forum April 8  
Photos: <http://www.upperskeena.ca/Drops/photos-c.pdf>)

### Next steps

Based on the presentations made by each group at the end of the day there is a strong desire expressed by those in attendance to find a way to move quickly, and in a collective manner, to address the issue of cumulative effects of development on First Nation traditional territories in the northwest. As one participant noted: "We are all connected and we are still in a position to do things together compared to other areas in BC. We need to continue to stay together on this." Efforts are now under way to move the energy created at the forum into action. Contact people identified by the groups during the summing up exercise at the forum are being reached to determine a technical working group terms of reference. For more information contact Doug Donaldson <mailto:doug@upperskeena.ca>

