



Snuneymuxw

First Nation

www.snuneymuxw.ca

September 20, 2020

Dear Snuneymuxw,

Over the past couple of years, I've updated you periodically on the progress of important negotiations between our Nation and the Province of British Columbia.

Today, on behalf of Chief and Council, I am honoured to share with you that our Nation has signed a Reconciliation Implementation Framework Agreement and a Land Transfer Agreement. These two agreements combined serve to recognize our Snuneymuxw rights, implement our Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854, and return over 3,000 hectares of our traditional territory back to us. The land coming back to us is located in the Mount Benson and Mount McKay areas. Almost two years ago, Premier John Horgan gave me a commitment to get these agreements done providing stability and predictability in the region. I am proud of all the work that has taken place to get us to this historic day. These two agreements combined are amongst the largest comprehensive reconciliation agreements in B.C that will breathe life through the generations.

I want to acknowledge that this day is made possible by the leadership of our people for many generations. These lands that are being returned to us are important to Snuneymuxw culture and way of life. Our children and grandchildren are reassured that our identity, Nation and lands are recognized and supported by all.

Snuneymuxw continues to be very clear. Through recognition of Snuneymuxw rights and respect for Snuneymuxw People, collaborative and cooperative partnerships will flourish and strengthen the economy. Our Nation looks forward to further stimulating economic growth, fostering equitable partnerships and supporting our people with equal access to employment, education, housing, health care and much more.

As we celebrate this historic day, I am mindful of Snuneymuxw families who are in sorrow. With a strong heart and a strong mind, we will get through it, together.

Congratulations Snuneymuxw on the great achievement!

Sincerely,

Chief Mike Wyse



Snuneymuxw First Nation, B.C. advance reconciliation through new agreements

News Release

Sunday, September 20, 2020 2:00 PM

The Province of British Columbia and Snuneymuxw First Nation have reached two agreements that foster economic development and support a strong and stable future for Snuneymuxw and its members.

“Today is an historic day for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and specifically for Snuneymuxw First Nation as they move forward their work and vision to grow the economy in Nanaimo in partnership with forest companies,” said Premier John Horgan. “I committed to the Snuneymuxw First Nation to help resolve a long-standing desire for a greater stake in the economic development of Crown lands in their territory, and I’m pleased to act on that commitment now.”

Together, the Reconciliation and Land Transfer Agreements set out a plan for strengthening the relationship between Snuneymuxw and the Province and to provide clarity and predictability for people, business and governments across the Nation’s traditional territory.

“The agreements signed today with Snuneymuxw and British Columbia mark a major step forward in a journey that goes back to the important promises and understandings that formed the basis of our Treaty relationship with the Crown when Sir James Douglas entered into a Treaty with our people in 1854,” said Snuneymuxw First Nation Chief Mike Wyse. “Today, we are working with British

Columbia in a relationship based on recognition and respect for our Treaty of 1854, and a renewed government-to-government relationship. This is an improved relationship that opens the door to meaningful cooperation and collaboration based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including steps for land reconciliation in relation to a return of our traditional territory. Our shared commitment to stewardship and protection of the lands and waters of British Columbia and protection of endangered species and habitat is an essential element of our values to protect our lands and resources for this and future generations. Like we have always done, Snuneymuxw people welcome new relationships, support prosperity and business development in the mid-Island area, and will work with all of our partners to bring new opportunities. This step today was made possible by the leadership of our people for many generations, and will serve to support our children and grandchildren to know our identity, Nation and lands are recognized and supported by all.”

The Land Transfer Agreement includes a land package of more than 3,000 hectares of Crown lands near the City of Nanaimo, providing Snuneymuxw with culturally and economically significant lands at Mount Benson and Mount McKay. The agreement will result in economic growth and as many as 160 new jobs through innovative forestry partnerships that build on the Mid-Island Regional Forestry Initiative signed in 2017 between Snuneymuxw and industry.

Public engagement on Snuneymuxw’s future planning for the Mount Benson and Mount McKay lands will be a priority leading up to the eventual transfer of the lands. This engagement will inform future land use after the parcels are transferred. These lands are home to key wildlife habitats and popular recreational spots for the public. Snuneymuxw has confirmed that access to The Great Trail of Canada will remain in place and 300 hectares on Mount McKay will be conserved to provide habitat for elk and deer populations.

As part of the agreements, Snuneymuxw has agreed to discontinue litigation launched against the Province in 2001 over concerns that log booming in the Nanaimo River estuary impacts its Douglas Treaty rights to fish – an example of the benefits of reconciliation through negotiation instead of resolution through the courts.

Quotes:

Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation –

“These agreements represent a significant step forward in reconciliation with Snuneymuxw First Nation and a further strengthening of our government-to-government relationship based on recognition of rights. Snuneymuxw has been working with local forestry companies on a strategy to reinvigorate the forest industry in the region and these agreements support this work – helping to create jobs and ensure stability and economic growth throughout the region, which will benefit everyone living in the central Island.”

Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development –

“We’ve been making changes to enhance the benefits that local First Nations derive from forestry and these agreements will increase First Nations’ participation in the forest economy. This is an important step forward for long-term reconciliation between Snuneymuxw and the Province and in this case will also provide predictability for log storage operations in the Nanaimo River estuary.

Jeff Zweig, CEO, Mosaic –

“Congratulations to Snuneymuxw on concluding these important new agreements that create welcomed opportunities to the mid-Island forestry sector. Snuneymuxw has been working with us for many years to strengthen prosperity and sustainable development in the region, and these agreements provide a path to significantly accelerating the positive outcomes.”

Quick Facts:

- The land parcels include 1,003 hectares at Mount Benson and 2,097 hectares at Mount McKay.
- The Mount McKay parcel overlaps with Stz’uminus First Nation’s traditional territory, and each of the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group member First Nations (Cowichan Tribes, Halalt, Lyackson, Ts’uubaa-asatx, and Penelakut). Consultation with each of these First Nations has started and will conclude prior to the land transfers taking place.
- The Mount Benson parcel overlaps with Snaw-naw-as First Nation. Consultation has been initiated and will conclude prior to the land transfers taking place.
- The Snuneymuxw First Nation is a large Coast Salish, Hul’q’umi’num-speaking Nation located in and around Nanaimo and Gabriola Island.
- Snuneymuxw has over 1,700 members and six reserves covering 266 hectares.

Learn More:

Snuneymuxw First Nation: <https://www.snuneymuxw.ca/>

Link to Reconciliation Implementation Framework Agreement:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/download/BC0190806ED04D7FBBDBCAB9404F661F>

Link to Land Transfer Agreement:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/download/0583431F80F9413B8CB15E0038583FC9>

CONTRACT STORY

Media Contacts

Cale Cowan

Media Relations

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

250 812-4510

Erralyn Thomas

Snuneymuxw First Nation

Erralynt@snuneymuxw.ca

250 740-2300