



Sayt-K'ilim-Goot

one heart, one path, one nation



Nisga'a Lisims Government Newsletter

December 2011

NLG Executive Christmas Message

In the spirit of the Christmas season, family and friends will cherish each other with a renewed spirit of love, sharing and forgiveness.

We will remember those who have left us this past year. As we grieve, we should acknowledge the core values and principles of the Nisga'a culture and the rich heritage of our faith that will guide us through our sorrow.

Many significant events took centre stage this year. In spring of this year the Nisga'a Nation entered into a benefits agreement with BC Hydro for the construction of the Northwest Transmission Line and it provides for financial benefits, as well as other contracting and economic opportunities to the Nisga'a Nation.

The Nisga'a Museum opening which took place on May 11th, 2011 in Laxgalts'ap is a state of the art facility and was officially named Hli G'oothl Wilp Adokshl Nisga'a – the Nisga'a Museum. The completion of this facility is the realization of a long-standing dream of many generations of Nisga'a leaders.

In May of this year NESS music students went on a field trip to Beijing, China for two weeks. The trip to Beijing was a tremendous success. It was an experience that they will never forget. It opened their eyes to the rest of the world and to the opportunities that are available to our students. We hope some of them will

continue to travel out of country to experience how other nations of people live.

The continuing work on the Nisga'a Landholding Transition Act ensures a process which will ultimately enable Nisga'a citizens in the Nass Valley to use the investment in their homes to pursue new opportunities.

Our Settlement Trust, while not immune to the economic challenges of the times, continues to increase in value for the benefit of future generations.

In the true Spirit of Sayt-K'ilim-Goot, we encourage you to unite, embrace your spirituality and foster understanding and hope.

Sim'oogit K'aw'een, (H. Mitchell Stevens), President

Sim'oogit K'amluugidis, (Edmond Wright), Secretary-Treasurer

Wii Ajiksim Gibaygum X'sgaak, (Kevin McKay), Chairperson

Sim'oogit Ksim X'saan (Oscar Mercer), Chairperson, Council of Elders

Nisga'a Lisims Government Staff

Amaa wii-t'isim Ganuutkw ii amaa sii k'uuhl as nisim
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all

Historic Amendment To Nisga'a Treaty

On November 25th an important milestone in the history of the Nisga'a Final Agreement was reached this week as British Columbia passed a resolution in the Provincial Legislature on November 23, 2011 to give its consent to agreed-upon amendments of the Nisga'a Treaty for the first time.

The President of NLG Mitchell Stevens stated, "For the first time, Nisga'a Nation has consented to changing the language of our Treaty, something that took years to negotiate." President Stevens, Secretary-Treasurer Edmond Wright and Executive Chair Kevin McKay, and CEO Frederic Tolmie were in attendance at the Provincial Legislature in Victoria to observe the introduction and passage of the resolution and related legislation.

The Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, introduced the amendment. During the debate, opposition critic for Aboriginal Relations Scott Fraser commented that the amendment was an affirmation of the UN Declaration of Indigenous rights which provides that Indigenous peoples have the right to recognition and observance of their Treaties, and access to prompt decisions and fair procedures. Doug Donaldson, MLA Stikine, welcomed the Nisga'a officials in attendance in the Gitksan language. Robin Austin, MLA Skeena, supported the resolution as it reflected the right of the Nisga'a Nation to make such decisions which is an important change from the past.

Nisga'a Nation agreed to the Treaty amendments to adjust the boundaries to the Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park to enable the Northwest Transmission Line to pass through a small portion of the Park. Now that BC has provided its consent, it remains for the federal government of Canada and the Nisga'a Nation to provide their respective final consents.

"This amendment is important for two reasons"

said President Stevens. "It illustrates how modern-day treaties and their amendment provisions can work to the mutual benefit of a First Nation and their Treaty partners. It was a test for BC to demonstrate its commitment to a government-to-government relationship with Nisga'a Nation."

"Second, it's an important step forward in bringing economic opportunity not only to our people, but to the entire northwest region of BC. This transmission line will open the region to millions of dollars in mining, hydro and other economic benefits. It's proof that Nisga'a Nation is open for business when we are properly consulted and accommodated in accordance with our Treaty" stated President Stevens.

Nass Camp Upgrade

Its been over a year since the Nisga'a Nation purchased Nass Camp and some significant improvements have been made.

Nass Camp was always viewed as a strategically located property which could provide a base of operations for the upcoming projects in the region.

The first project to present an opportunity is the Northwest Transmission Line which is ramping up for a spring 2012 construction start. Valard Construction is the company constructing the powerline and has been in discussions with the Nisga'a Nation for the use of the Nass Camp for their towers, equipment and camp facilities.

In order to prepare Nass Camp for potential NTL opportunities to using it in September, work began to clean up the property.

There was an abundance of abandoned buildings from the sixties and seventies which needed to be

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NLG Launches Its Facebook Page

On Thursday December 1, 2011, the Communications Department at Nisga'a Lisims Government launched its first facebook page. NLG recognizes the rapid pace of communication with online networking sites, and has responded by creating an online space for Nisga'a citizens to gather, discuss, and connect with other Nisga'a citizens, and other online communities. NLG hopes to engage all Nisga'a citizens, in particular

Nisga'a youth who use social media, to provide government information in a familiar, online format. The page is titled Nisga'a Lisims Government – Nisga'a Nation. Click the 'Like' button today!

Of course, you can still find information on Nisga'a government at our official sites www.nnkn.ca and at www.nisgaalisims.ca We want to hear from you!

Youth Treaty Training At Kitsault

In total 18 Nisga'a youth attended Nisga'a Treaty Training and Employment Awareness workshop held in Kitsault B.C on October 14-16, 2011. This was organized by the Youth Organizing Youth Department (YOY) in partnership with SD 92. Nisga'a Elementary Secondary School (NESS) students were also able to receive some course credit for participation. This weekend allowed youth an opportunity to learn about our treaty, culture and history. There is a gap between the elders and youth and this small gathering was a great example how the two groups can come together to share a meaningful experience. In this case elders shared their views on the Nisga'a Treaty and stories with the youth on Nisga'a culture and language.

This event was made possible through a small grant from Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association (PGNATA). At the end of the gathering each youth was acknowledged for their participation with a certificate of completion. I would like to take the time to thank all the youth who committed themselves for the weekend of learning. A huge thank-you goes out to the Principal of NESS working in a partnership with NLG to make this trip successful. The youth expressed they all enjoyed the scenery and the time spent in Kitsault. For the majority of us the Kitsault trip was the first time being in the area. Out of the Kitsault Training youth have indentified they would like to see more opportunities to have elder and youth interaction. A recommendation that arose from the discussions was for a Nisga'a Healing Center on Nisga'a Lands. Student started a petition to gather youth signatures to date we have 94 in total to present to the Programs and Services Committee in the New Year. The last activity that occurred at Kitsault was the tour of Avanti Mines and we were presented with a range of employment opportunities that will be available.

The YOY Dept. has been working to capture the ideas from the youth and in part exists to give youth a voice in ensuring their ideas may be considered by using the Nisga'a government structure. Youth are learning about the successes and challenges that come as a result of in living in a modern day treaty such as the Nisga'a Treaty.
By Kim Azak, Acting YOY Coordinator

Nass Camp Upgrade (Continued from Page 2)

removed and much of the grounds became overgrown.

In early October, heavy equipment arrived and then began tearing down structures and trucking the debris to the local landfill.

Approximately 15 acres was stripped and leveled to be ready for whatever plans were being made. Local contractors and labourers were utilized to carry out much of the work and the Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government was instrumental in handling the nearly 500 dump trucks of debris which needed to be properly handled.

The clean up activity ended with the arrival of the snow with only the 18 houses, ice arena, motel, kitchen, and three steel buildings remaining.

Some concrete foundations were constructed in anticipation of adding some log homes that were built in Laxgalts'ap. This activity will resume in the spring when Valard is scheduled to arrive with their crew. A camp facility will be located at Nass Camp for approximately 60-80 workers.

A new fibre optic line is being considered from Nass Camp to provide the broadband needed for administration and camp facilities.

Nass Camp received a long overdue clean up and its ready to play a key role in one of the most important projects in the region and help the Nisga'a Nation capitalize on the upcoming economic opportunities.

Nisga'a Museum

The Nisga'a Museum will be open during the Christmas holidays on December 28th, 29th & 30th, 2011 from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily.

Phone: (250) 633-3050

Email: nisgaamuseum@nisgaa.net

Important Dates

All Native Basketball Tournament – February 5 – 11, 2012

Hobiyee in Gitlaxt'aamiks, BC – February 24 & 25, 2012

Nisga'a Government Makes Changes To Nisga'a Elections Legislation

Wilp Si'ayuukhl Nisga'a passed several amendments to the Nisga'a Elections Act (the "Act"). In part, the amendments were in response to feedback received from Nisga'a citizens by the Nisga'a Elections Officer and also as a result of concerns raised by Nisga'a citizens at the 2010 Special Assembly of the Nisga'a Nation. It is intended that the amendments will set higher standards for elected officials and will make voting more accessible for Nisga'a citizens.

The changes will result in increased accessibility for Nisga'a citizens to vote. The Nisga'a Elections Amendment Act, 2011 (the "Amendment Act") creates the possibility of designating a location other than the seven existing voting areas as an additional voting location. Given the high number of Nisga'a citizens residing in Prince George, the Nisga'a Elections Amendment Regulation, 2011 (the "Amendment Regulation") designated the City of Prince George as an additional voting location for Nisga'a elections and referenda. The Amendment Act also gives the Nisga'a Lisims Government Executive the option of establishing additional voting locations as may be required and in accordance with the prescribed procedures set out in the Act and the Nisga'a Elections Regulation (the "Regulation").

Furthermore, if a Nisga'a citizen with special needs is in a hospital, a nursing home or other care facilities and is unable to leave in order to attend a voting place on voting day, Nisga'a elections officials will be able to arrange for ballots to be brought to them.

The Amendment Act and the Amendment Regulation also identify prescribed debts which along with the other qualifications to stand for office set out in section 15 of the Act, including the list of criminal offences prescribed in the Regulation may affect a Nisga'a citizen's ability to qualify as a candidate in an election.

Perhaps the most significant of the changes are the

amendments made by the Amendment Act to the Nisga'a Government Act and the Members' Code of Conduct. These changes prohibit a Nisga'a representative from holding specified offices and positions, including employment positions with the Nisga'a Nation, a Nisga'a Village or a Nisga'a Urban Local or employment, trustee, director or officer positions with School District No. 92, the Nisga'a Valley Health Authority and Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a. A Nisga'a citizen who currently serves in one of the positions or offices identified in the Nisga'a Government Act or the Members' Code of Conduct and is seeking to be elected to an elected office of Nisga'a Government will now have to resign from that position or office prior to taking the oath of office as an elected Nisga'a representative.

Under the previous legislation, a Nisga'a citizen employed by the Nisga'a Nation, a Nisga'a Village or a Nisga'a Urban Local who was elected to public office was entitled a leave of absence from their employment for the duration of their first term of office. This is no longer the case. Under the new Act and Regulation, a Nisga'a citizen who is elected to an elected office of Nisga'a Government must now resign from any employment position they hold with the Nisga'a Nation, a Nisga'a Village or a Nisga'a Urban Local. In addition, the Amendment Act has also amended the Nisga'a Personnel Administration Act so that once an employee of the Nisga'a Nation or a Nisga'a Village is elected they will be deemed to have resigned from their employment upon taking the oath of office.

For further information on these and other changes to Nisga'a elections legislation, visit www.nnkn.ca or contact the Nisga'a Elections Office at (250) 633 2715.



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