
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Office of the Wet'suwet'en

Province supports Wet'suwet'en Nation MOU on title and rights negotiations

WET'SUWET'EN YINTAH - The Province is providing Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs with \$7.22 million to support work to implement Wet'suwet'en title and rights. The funding will be used to support Wet'suwet'en governance, engage in unity-building activities and facilitate ongoing discussions related to the 2020 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The three-year funding commitment will support the Wet'suwet'en in their work on governance and the shared goal of reunification within Wet'suwet'en Nation. The Office of the Wet'suwet'en, Houses and Clans will undertake an internal engagement process to advance unity-building, which will be inclusive of all Wet'suwet'en House members.

The new provincial funding will also support more resources for Wet'suwet'en Nation to revitalize Wet'suwet'en governance structures for water stewardship, wildlife programs, ecosystem monitoring and other initiatives to enhance collaborative stewardship and management of land and resources in the Yintah (Wet'suwet'en territory).

Some of the new funding will be used to renovate the former Lake Kathlyn school property, which Wet'suwet'en Nation bought in 2020 through a \$1.23-million grant from the Province. The historical site to the Wet'suwet'en will be used for a Wet'suwet'en Nation governance centre, with space for administration offices and Wet'suwet'en resources.

The provision of this grant funding is not a repayable loan or treaty payment.

The Province and Office of the Wet'suwet'en launched external engagement with non-Indigenous communities in the Wet'suwet'en Yintah on the ongoing negotiations under the MOU in September 2020 through a Regional Engagement Group. A Core Advisory Council also has been meeting regularly since February 2021. Both are intended to provide critical input and ensure transparency and openness with stakeholders and local government throughout the negotiations.

In support of meaningful reconciliation, the goal in reaching out to neighbouring communities, interested parties and stakeholders is to build understanding of the Wet'suwet'en distinct relations to the Yintah. This includes how implementation of Wet'suwet'en title and rights contributes to a vibrant economy and strong local relationships that will benefit the entire region. There is also ongoing work within the provincial government to support reconciliation and recognition of Wet'suwet'en title and rights.

All parties remain committed to the negotiations under the MOU. The negotiations are active and ongoing.

Quotes:

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs –

“Wiggus Tset At'awt At'en" Respect first, then work. It's been a challenge with the pandemic, and unexpected delays along the way. We have ongoing responsibilities and this will support our Clans and House Groups in our formal negotiations.”

Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation –

"This funding will support the unity-building work within Wet'suwet'en Nation that is critical to move forward in successfully implementing the MOU. Openness and transparency continue to be a key focus in the negotiations, and I am pleased that negotiators are giving regular updates to our regional engagement group and external community advisory council."

Quick Facts:

- The MOU was signed in May 2020 by the provincial and federal governments and Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs.
- The MOU creates a framework for tripartite negotiations on an agreement to affirm Wet'suwet'en title and rights, as well as on jurisdictional matters in the areas of reunification, children and families, water, wildlife, fish, land use planning, revenue sharing and decision-making.
- Under the MOU, the provincial and federal governments committed to providing the necessary resources to the Wet'suwet'en Nation for the negotiations.

Learn More:

- Community engagement strategy: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/22878>
- Wet'suwet'en, B.C. and Canada MOU: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/agreements/signed_mou_bc_canada_and_wetsuweten_may_14_2020.pdf

Contacts:

Cale Cowan
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
250 356-7324

Sandra Harris
Office of the Wet'suwet'en
250 877-9674

Dini'ze Woos (Frank Alec)
778-669-0070