

**REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, August 2, 2017**

SUBJECT **Quarterly Report from the Special Task Force on First Nations Relations**

ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on the activities of the Special Task Force and the First Nations Relations Division.

BACKGROUND

The 2016 year end Task Force (TF) report laid out a series of actions to be undertaken in support of strengthening relationships with First Nations, responding to the Truth and Reconciliation's (TRC) Calls to Action and providing direction to the First Nations Relations Division (FNRD).

The following activities were undertaken in the second quarter of this year:

Outreach

1. The proposed pilot project to explore an engagement framework among First Nations and CRD was successfully initiated with an inaugural W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Committee meeting on June 12, 2017. The Task Force was in attendance, including the CRD Chair and the SGI EA Director. The format provided an opportunity for the W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich) Nations and the CRD to keep current on each other's respective initiatives.
 - a. The co-developed agenda is attached as Appendix A.
 - b. At the time of writing, the jointly produced Record of Discussion (RoD) document had not been finalized. The approved RoD will be included in the 3rd Quarterly Report. A high level summary of the meeting is as follows:
 - i. The morning portion of the meeting was reserved for information sharing amongst the respective leaders; Tseycum, Tsartlip and Tsawout had representatives, however not all Chiefs were able to be in attendance. Pauquachin did not attend.
 - ii. The W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Committee conveyed that their people have a sacred trust to protect the lands in their territory and that the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations want to be involved in environmental restoration and stewardship efforts. They voiced a strong message that although many of the remedies require action from higher levels of government, municipalities and the Region have important roles and responsibilities regarding land use and the adverse impacts of development on the ecosystem.
 - iii. There is a desire to establish a referrals protocol to streamline engagement processes with local government in order to mitigate the administrative draw on First Nations resources. Additional resources may be needed to ensure First Nations are able to provide timely, meaningful comments.

- iv. The afternoon portion of the meeting was reserved for CRD staff to discuss projects of mutual interest.
 - v. All parties agreed that regular meetings would bring high value. Staff will work to arrange a follow-up meeting.
2. The proposed establishment of an Inter-governmental Working Group of local government and First Nations staff has been put on hold. A Terms of Reference for the group (developed by FNRD staff and reviewed by the Task Force) was presented to the regional CAO's Committee for their consideration and guidance on how to best launch the initiative. It was decided that the concept would not be effective at this time, because the First Nations relations file, for most municipalities, is held by CAOs; there are no designated staff positions at this time.
- a. The CAOs recommended that their work would benefit from CRD's support to facilitate a gathering with local government Administrators and their First Nations counterparts. FNRD will work towards a Regional CAO hosted luncheon and information sharing event in early winter.

Cultural Training

- 1) FNRD co-sponsored a series of cultural training events for the broader community involved in food advocacy, farming and agriculture. The CRD partnered with Aboriginal Health (Island Health) the Horner Foundation and CR-FAIR.
- Access to food is a critically important First Nations priority and there is a strong impetus amongst non-indigenous food security actors to become allies to First Nations communities in support of access to healthy, affordable and traditional foods. In preparation for this work, the cultural training program chosen and adapted for the food access context was the Blanket Exercise (originally developed by Kairos Canada). The exercise supports allies with the core competencies required to engage in a culturally safe way through deeper understanding and respect for Indigenous peoples, knowledge and traditions, and a deep appreciation and awareness of 150+ years of harmful colonial practices.
 - Four Blanket Exercise events were undertaken, with 61 people trained, of which 19 were youths. The training was undertaken in the newly established CRD's Center for Engagement.
- 2) The CRD's commitment to the TRC's Calls to Action involves a comprehensive engagement with each CRD Division to identify thoughtful changes to divisional activities and programming that support stronger relationships and reflect the spirit of Reconciliation.
- FNRD staff delivered the first of a series of cultural safety and acumen training exercises that build on the Blanket Exercise format and integrate a decolonizing exercise for the specific area of work of the division.
 - Based on this trial exercise, FNRD staff will develop a program that can be rolled out across the organization.
- 3) The CRD's commitment to the TRC also includes deeper cultural training for local government leaders. Staff will work closely with the Task Force to develop a program.

Other Action Items

1. A priority for the Task Force is to develop a stronger understanding of local government's relationship to the Douglas Treaties. The task was initiated with CRD's participation in the

Douglas Treaties Conference in February, hosted and sponsored by the University of Victoria and Songhees Nation. As stated in the Q1 report, the Task Force is working to explore an approach for bringing a complementary educational opportunity to the Board, with a focus on the potential impact of the Douglas Treaties on local government. The urgency of this topic has surfaced with the July 05, 2017 letter to the CRD Board from Tsawout First Nation, regarding the Island View Beach Draft management plan and referencing infringement on Douglas Treaty rights.

Division Activities

The following is a summary of the activities of the division organized by the three areas of the division's Reporting Framework:

1. Leadership

- a. Focus on relationship building at the leadership level is primarily undertaken through the Task Force outreach activities
- b. Chief and Council members from Tsawout Nation attended the Forum of Councils on Climate Action
- c. The CRD Board received a delegation from Pacheedaht First Nation regarding its interests in reclaiming lands in its original village, Dididaht, known today as Jordan River
- d. The CRD Chair and the Chair of the Task Force participated in a Protocol Canoe paddle as part of the Opening Ceremonies for the People's Cultural Festival celebrating National Indigenous Day.
- e. Elected leaders and staff from T'sou-ke, Esquimalt and Tsawout Nations respectively attended the Housing Affordability Summit on June 16, 2017
 - i. Esquimalt Chief Andy Thomas addressed the attendees with a Traditional Welcome and Opening Remarks.

2. Department Support

- a. Staff have been actively supporting the Wastewater Treatment Project team with Crown consultation requirements and archeology protocols
 - The two First Nations liaison positions have been established to support the project in the areas of communication, cultural protocols and employment opportunities.
 - Edward Thomas will be representing Esquimalt Nation and Florence Dick will be representing Songhees Nation.
- b. CRD Parks staff is working closely with T'Sou-ke First Nation to bring a draft cooperative approach to managing cultural access of the Sea to Sea Park lands, to the CRD Board in the fall.
- c. Staff continue to support other cooperative initiatives involving First Nations interests including:
 - Establishment of a First Nations Emergency Management Committee
 - In anticipation of the completion of the E&N Rail Trail, support and mentorship to Songhees Nation for an active transportation grant for a bike-share program called "Songhees Wheelness"
 - Information sharing on climate change mitigation and sea level rise
 - Engagement on various parks management plans including SGI – Trails Plan and Island View Beach
 - Working closely on strengthening relationships with Pacheedaht First Nation and accommodating their interests in Jordan River lands
 - Ongoing updates and renewals on outdated service agreements; active files include Tseycum, Pauquachin, Beecher Bay and Songhees.

3. Emerging Areas of Interest

- a. Staff is continuing to work through the complex issue of shellfish closures on the Peninsula. The CRD is working to bring all the agencies and authorities together to work towards some improvement in sourcing the pollution of the shoreline and identifying mitigating measures. CRD staff met with directly with Pauquachin at Coles Bay, exploring the possibility of a joint project for that beach.
- b. A special summer student position (First Nations Outreach) was created by Environmental Services to support effective outreach and education activities with First Nations communities regarding waste reduction and recycling

COMMENTS FROM THE TASK FORCE CHAIR

By empowering the Task Force to engage with First Nations in whatever manner is desired by them, the CRD is acting on its commitment to explore and build new relationships with First Nations. This somewhat unconventional approach has reaped rewards unhampered by traditional corporate structures. As a corporation, we have not done this kind of work before. As the work is new to us, so, often, will be the way we do the work.

In our next quarters, the Task Force will focus on creating further opportunities for deep cultural training and a greater understanding of the potential impacts of the Douglas Treaties on local governments. As the appetite grows for a meaningful journey of Reconciliation, such undertakings take on greater significance and urgency, and provide occasions for the CRD, its elected and staff leadership to demonstrate their commitment to truth, action, and creating strong, resilient bonds in the future.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Capital Regional District Board receive this report for information

Submitted by:	Sue Hallatt, Manager, First Nations Relations
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

WSANEC Leadership Cttee Agenda