TAHLTAN Central Council

June | Eyãze isã 2014
'Young animals' month

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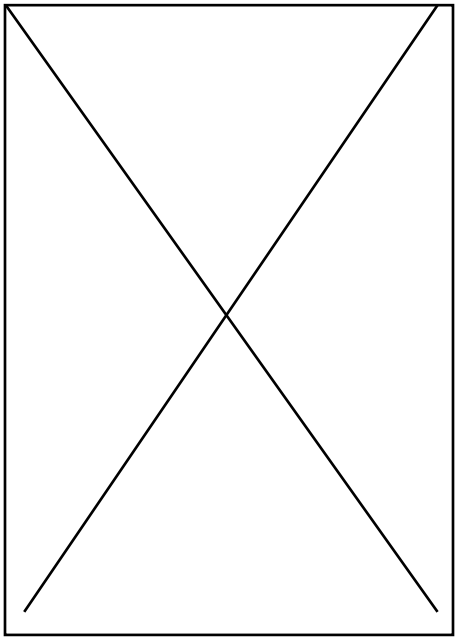
President's Message

Chad Day, President of Tahltan Central Council

Find out how a legal case 1,000 km away affects the Klappan - see page 4!



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Annual General Assembly

AGA Update HERE

Tsilqhot'in Case Opens Door for Klappan Legal Action

"The Province and Canada will now have to respect that title and stop unilaterally making decisions without our consent."

As the June edition of the TCC Newsletter was being finished, a landmark legal case made it possible for Tahltan Central Council to begin preparing a legal action against Fortune Minerals and the Arctos Anthracite project.

The announcement from the Supreme Court of Canada in the Tsilqhot'in Nation's Aboriginal title case is a major victory for Aboriginal peoples of BC, and the Tsilqhot'in have fought a long, hard battle to have their Aboriginal title upheld by the highest Court in the land.

The Tsilqhot'in case means that a case to assert Tahltan title in the Klappan and stop Fortune Minerals' Arctos Anthracite open-pit coal mine is now being prepared.

Tahltan Central Council president Annita McPhee said: "The Tsilqhot'in have fought a long, hard battle to have their Aboriginal title upheld by the highest Court in the land. This ruling re-affirms what the Tahltan people have been saying for over a hundred years – this is our territory, and we have never surrendered our title. The Province and Canada will now have to respect that title and stop unilaterally making decisions without our consent."

Answers to the Latest Questions on Red Chris

Community and Elders' meetings were held from June 17 to 19 in Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek to discuss the potential impact benefit agreement (IBA) for the Red Chris Mine.

At the meetings, members asked questions about the mine, as well as requesting more details about the proposed IBA.

Held after a draft of a potential IBA was submitted to the Tahltan negotiations team on June 13, the meetings are the result of a long process to date. This has included Elders' meetings, community meetings and legal representation.

While consulting with Tahltan communities, six areas of focus were identified. These have all been included in the draft IBA. They are:

- Jobs
- Environment
- Relationship
- Financial
- Contracting
- Release

It is intended that all of these elements will, where possible, link with other existing Tahltan projects such as the Socio-Cultural Working Group and THREAT. This includes hiring a Tahltan employment coordinator, which is expected to be announced soon with details of a broader Tahltan employment strategy to be confirmed in the coming months.

Tahltan Freda Diesing Graduates Showcase Their Artwork

The Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art was created by the Northwest Community College to “honour, recognize and continue the legacy of Haida artist Freda Diesing.”

The school sets high standards for future artists and is the only school in Canada that focuses on the skills needed to produce traditional First Nations Pacific Northwest Coast art. Through its work, the school has brought together amazing artists from many nations to instruct and mentor future artists, including world-renowned Dempsey Bob (Tahltan/Tlingit), Stan Bevan (Tahltan/Tlingit/Tsimshian), and Ken McNeil (Tahltan/Tlingit/Nisga’a).

This year, three Tahltan artists – Loretta Quock Sort, Lyle Quock Jr., and Roberta Quock - completed the program and exhibited their artwork at the 2014 Student Art Exhibition - Arts of the North.

Top: Loretta Quock Sort - Crest Spoon, “How the Salmon Was Put into the River.”
Middle: Lyle Quock Jr. - "Moon Mask" (red) and "Crow Speaker and Bear Whisperer" Mask (blue).
Bottom: Roberta Quock - Thunderbird Portrait Mask & Grizzly Bear and Eagle Mask.

Positive Progress for Dzimēs Chō T'oh - the Iskut Language Nest

"Every time I hear one of the children repeat a Tahltan phrase that I'm saying, it gives me so much joy and hope for the future of our Tahltan language. I believe every Aboriginal community should open a language nest in their community."

The Dzimēs Chē T'oh - The Iskut Language Nest, an immersion home-like setting in which only the Tahltan language is spoken, was opened on May 20. It operates Mondays to Wednesdays from 9am to 3pm. There are currently five children attending the language nest, which is located in the house behind the Iskut Band Council office. Angela and Regina Dennis are the program's fluent speakers, and Iskut's language research assistant Ryan Dennis also helps with the program. The language nest coordinator is Odelia Dennis. One month into the program, Odelia said she is inspired by the positive results from the language nest so far.

Planning for the Iskut Language Nest began in April 2013 when Angela and Odelia had the opportunity to visit a language nest in Chase, BC. The trip was both amazing and inspiring for them, and allowed them to see the results of daily immersion. It also helped them realize that a Tahltan language nest was possible.

"It was great to see that everyday normal conversations with the children while taking care of them and having playtime and reading time with them was all it took to be able to open our very own language nest in our home community," said Odelia. "The children are learning the Tahltan language. They understand and some are even beginning to speak Tahltan. My son Arden is speaking more and more Tahltan language every day. The children enjoy being there with us and they feel comfortable in their environment.

"Every time I hear one of the children repeat a Tahltan phrase that I'm saying, it gives me so much joy and hope for the future of our Tahltan language. I believe every Aboriginal community should open a language nest in their community."

"The families of the language nest children have proven to be so important in the revitalization of the language. We receive so much support on a daily basis from the families. The siblings stop in to help their parents in picking up their brother or sister and learn one or two words in Tahltan. When parents are there to pick up their child they do their best to speak the language too. They are also learning phrases that we use repetitively with the children. Some grandparents come in and sit with their grandchild and watch our interactions with the children. These past four weeks have been a good beginning to something amazing that is happening in our community."

Plans are in place to open a language nest in Dease Lake in the fall of 2014 and one in Telegraph Creek in 2015.

The Iskut Language Nest gratefully acknowledges the support of several people and organizations, without whom the language nest would not be possible:

- Dr. Kathryn Michel
- First Peoples' Cultural Council
- Iskut Band Council and staff
- Iskut Valley Health Services
- Iskut Valley Head Start Program
- Klappan School
- Regina Louie and Angela Dennis (fluent speakers)

Introducing the Dah Dzahge Nodesidē/ Tahltan Language and Culture Council

Left to right: Judy Thompson, Tahltan Language and Culture Lead | Patrick Etzerza, Dease Lake representative | Melva Quock, TCC representative | Pauline Hawkins, Tahltan School Language Teacher, Chair of DDN | Ryan Dennis, Tahlan Language Research Assistant | Odelia Dennis, Tahltan Language Revitalization Coordinator (Dease Lake) and Language Nest Coordinator (Iskut) | Regina Louie, Iskut representative | Angela Dennis, Klappan School Language Teacher | Patrick Carlick, Telegraph Creek representative

The Dah Dzahge Nodesidē/Tahltan Language and Culture Council has been created to provide guidance in the creation of short- and long-term language and culture revitalization plans, to serve as the decision-making body for Tahltan language and culture revitalization, and to act as a language authority in the certification of Tahltan language teachers for the BC Teacher regulation branch. The council is made up of a Tahltan speaker from each community, a TCC representative, the language teacher from each community, and members of the Tahltan Language Revitalization Team.

The Tahltan language is an essential part of who we are as Tahltan people. It is stated clearly in the language and culture vision statement from the March 2012 Socio-Cultural Working Group Leadership Forum: "Didene E Kune Mehōdihi Eku Desijihi – All Tahltan people are living the Tahltan way of life."

Promoting our language and culture, and creating awareness among our people about the importance of our language and how it connects us to our land, our Elders, our Ancestors, our culture, our identity as Tahltan people, our well-being and health, will serve as a form of empowerment for our nation.

Purpose of Dah Dzahge Nodesidē:

• To document, preserve, promote, and revitalize the Tahltan language and culture.

• To bring our communities together into one strong nation in order to work together to revitalize the Tahltan language and culture.

• To increase the number of fluent speakers.

Roles and responsibilities of Dah Dzahge Nodesidē:

• Provide guidance in the promotion of the Tahltan language to our Tahltan people living within and outside our territory, as well as to non-Tahltans living within our territory.

• Provide guidance in the creation of short- and long-term language plans.

• Provide guidance in the development of a language policy.

• Serve as the decision-making body for language and culture revitalization.

• Act as a language authority in the cetification of Tahltan language teachers for the BC Teacher Regulation Branch.

• Address language issues of orthography and new vocabulary.

• Be the nation's point of contact for individuals and/or groups researching Tahltan language and culture.

• Advertise the existence and role of Dah Dzahge Nodesidē on a website with links to contacts and resources.

• Research and recommend traditional and cultural protocols.

• Review language curriculum, plans, guides, materials, resources, documentation, and teaching strategies prior to implementation in schools or communities.

The committee will exist until all Tahltan people can speak the language.

Exiciting Updates from the SWCG's Language Program

Indigitization project - documenting and digitizing our language
The Language and Culture Council received funding from University of British Columbia to purchase equipment and take part in workshops to learn how to digitize audio-cassettes. Members of the Tahltan Revitalization Team will be able to digitize audiotapes for Tahltan organizations and Tahltan individuals. Team members are also recording speech and conversations with fluent speakers on a continual basis. Transcripts from these interviews are continually being added to the dictionary and grammar guide.

Through Simon Fraser University's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) partnership grant, members of the Tahltan Language Revitalization team have been in meetings with Simon Fraser University about the development of apps as one method to teach the Tahltan language.

Recording equipment has been donated by Galore Creek Mining Corporation (MacBook Pro, 2 iTVs) and Simon Fraser University's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Grant(MacBook Air, PC laptop for dictionary work, Roland recorder, three headsets).

Tahltan Children's books coming soon
The Dah Dzahge Nodesidē - Tahltan Language and Culture Council is working on children's books featuring stories told by our Ancestors. Once the books are printed, copies will be given out to all members of the Tahltan Nation, as well as to organizations and institutions within our Nation working with our children.

In January 2014, the Language and Culture Council applied for funding through Success by 6 - a provincial initiative dedicated to ensuring that children from birth to six years have the support they need to ensure their healthy growth and development.

As part of Simon Fraser University's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Grant, Angela Dennis will be transcribing and translating three recorded stories told by Robert Quock, which were recorded by John Alderete. These stories will be used as a basis for three children's books.

Tahltan Participation in First Peoples Cultural Council's Mentor-Apprentice Program

Mentor-Apprentice Program participants:
Front (L to R): Patrick Carlick, Edith Carlick, Cathryn Thompson
Back (L to R): Pauline Hawkins, Verna Vance, Judy Thompson

The Master-Apprentice (MA) Program is a method that provides a way for individuals to learn their Indigenous language from a native speaker. Unlike other methods, it can be more individually based. The program usually involves one speaker and one learner working together for 10 to 20 hours a week for several years. The master is a fluent speaker and the apprentice is the language learner.

Our Nation currently has one Master-Apprentice team that is already in their second year - Odelia Dennis and Angela Dennis. This past October, three more teams were trained to start working together.

"I have always been interested in learning to speak the Tahltan Language," said Odelia. "But it wasn't until I began the MA Program that the actual commitment to learning and speaking my language began. I am very grateful to the First Peoples' Cultural Council for giving me the opportunity to learn my language from the Elders here. I feel there is a value that has been placed on revitalizing the Tahltan language.

"In the beginning when I was learning the small conversational phrases, I was amazed at how easy it was. I asked myself why I had not learned this before but the important thing is that I started to learn. The MA Program gave me the push to realize this is something I wanted in my everyday life. I then began to seek out employment in the language revitalization field in my home territory. I got a job with the Tahltan Language Revitalization Program for the Dease Lake office. Language revitalization efforts have been my passion for the last two years now, and I really enjoy working in this field.

Tahltan Youth Representing the Nation at the North American Indigenous Games

In the March edition of our newsletter, we shared the story of Jaylene Soeguard representing the Tahltan Nation in the upcoming North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) taking place from July 20 to 27 in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Our Tahltan Nation has two more youth who will also be representing our people at the NAIG. From the Tahltan Band Newsletter (May 2014):

Taylor Viik is the great-granddaughter of Eva Callbreath, and will be representing the Tahltan Nation on the U16 (under 16) BC Girls' volleyball team. She is a keen athlete who has been involved in volleyball for several years, and was the Grade 9 recipient of the all-around athlete award for her school last year. Taylor not only demonstrates ability on the court but in the classroom as well. She attributes her success and versatility to her work ethic: "I put 100% into everything I do." Last year her achievements also included making the principal's list for academic performance.

Lilia Martinez is the granddaughter of Minnie Dennis, and will be representing the Tahltan Nation on the U15 (Under 15) BC Girls' soccer team. After competing in the 2013 BC Aboriginal Provincial Soccer Championships with the Interior Region team, she was selected by the champion Fraser River Region team as one of their all-star pick-ups. While at the games, Lilia will proudly wear both the Tahltan sweater handed down to her by her late grandmother and a ceremonial cape given to her by the Tahltan Band.

Good luck Tahltans! We know you will play hard, have fun and make our Nation proud!

Congrats to the Grads of the Emergency Medical Responder Course!

The Emergency Medical Responder course, hosted by the Justice Institute of BC, took place in Dease Lake at the Northern Lights College from February 22 to April 1, 2014. Ten students were successful in completing the course!

According to Teneal Nole, "We had a great instructor, and he made every effort to ensure a great success rate for the class, including tutoring. The class was very interesting!"

She also felt that the course was very helpful in enhancing her skills. "Now with the proper training I feel very confident with my skills. I have been able to use what I've learned with a few minor trauma calls and then a medical call. It was very rewarding knowing that I was able to help someone in need."

2014 TCC Executive Committee Election Results HERE

Calling all Tahltan Graduates!

In next month's (July) TCC newsletter, we will be honouring all Tahltan graduates from high school and post-secondary school. If you or someone you know recently graduated, please get in touch with us so we can share your/their success with the rest of the Nation.

For each graduate, we would like to include his or her name, clan/family, the school they attended, the program they graduated from, a photo, and a brief bio (no more than 100 words).

Graduate information can be sent to Lindsay at lindsay@coppermoon.ca and/or 604-336-8802.

Save the Date

July 18 - 21, 2014: 9th Annual Sacred Headwaters Music Festival - Iskut, BC
Vendors and musicians welcome.

July 7-18: Tahltan Literacy Camp

July 7-18: Glenora Fish Camp

Congratulations Tahltans!

Meranda Creyke and Mason Ewing, along with big brother Carter Ewing, are pleased to share:

Laurelynn Elise Louise Ewing

Born on June 1, 2014 in Whitehorse, Yukon

Weight: 6 lbs, 4 oz

Proud Grandparents: Chris and Louise Creyke, and John Ewing and Debbie Buyke

Cassandra Woodward and Dakota Williams are proud to announce:

Callum Mark Peter Williams

Born on June 19, 2014

Weight: 8 lbs, 13 oz

Have a story idea, event, or announcement for the next TCC newsletter?

Contact us at:

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