

May 8, 2020

TAHLTAN NATION COVID-19 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Important Message from Tahltan Leadership:

Despite the Provincial Government's announcement of a "BC Restart Plan" it is critical for every Tahltan to understand that the Tahltan Nation's fight against COVID-19 is not over.

By setting and following strict preventive measures, the Tahltan Nation has stopped COVID-19 from reaching our Territory and devastating our communities. It should be clear to every Tahltan, what we have been doing – in unison – has been working.

Tahltan Leadership (Iskut Band, Tahltan Band, and the Tahltan Central Government) is very proud of our Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek Emergency Management Committees, who work tirelessly to keep us safe.

From Tahltan parents homeschooling their kids to those unable to see loved ones, from those underemployed to those unable to exercise their inherent rights to hunt and fish, Tahltan Leadership understands how challenging and difficult these unprecedented times are.

The Provincial Government is responsible for doing what they think is best for the Province and Tahltan Leadership is responsible for doing what they think is best for the Tahltan Nation.

Tahltan Leadership would like to remind everyone that the situation we continue to be faced with is fluid and changing everyday. Leadership will continue to review and adapt as new information comes available. It is important we remain united.

The Province's restart plan is comprised of four phases which provide next steps to move BC through the COVID-19 pandemic. We are currently in Phase 1 and expected to enter Phase 2 in mid May. **Non-essential travel is not recommended during Phase 1 or 2.** It is important to understand that Phase 2 is an experimental stage, as Phase 3 is expected to start in June provided transmission rates remain low or decline.

Medical professionals speculate it could be 12 to 18 months before a vaccine is developed.

Keeping our Elders, those with compromised immune systems and all our Nation members safe remains our top priority. That is why Tahltan Leadership will keep in place the strict preventive measures that have kept COVID-19 outside of our Territory and our people safe.

While this may disappoint some, we understand that the right decision is not always the popular decision. We believe the right decision is to stay the course, maintain our strict preventive measures and ensure our Nation remains safe from the scourge of COVID-19.

What does this mean? It means the following measures remain in place in Tahltan Territory:

1. Non-territory residents are asked to assist the Tahltan Nation in our efforts to stay at home and to not travel to Tahltan Territory;
2. No hunting, camping, or recreational activity in Tahltan Territory;
3. Essential travel only;

In addition, the following personal measures remain in place in Tahltan Territory:

1. Stay Home: Unless you must go to work, or you are going onto the land to exercise with those in your household (people you live with);
2. Avoid ALL Non-Essential Trips In Your Community: Stop going to other communities. Limit the number of times you go to high traffic areas such as the store or post office;
3. Physical Distancing: Do not gather in groups. Ensure you stay a minimum of 6 feet away from other people;
4. Wash Hands Regularly: Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds or more. Soap is the best-known remedy for killing this virus so wash frequently;
5. Cough or Sneeze Into Your Elbow or a Tissue: Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put your tissue in a waste basket. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands;
6. Don't Touch Your Face: Don't transfer the virus into your body by touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Self Isolation: Anyone returning to the Tahltan Territory must go directly to their home and self-isolate for no less than 14 days – so bring supplies with you. YOU MUST avoid any and all situations where you can accidentally or unknowingly pass the virus to our community members. Importantly, anyone can be a carrier, not have symptoms, and pass the virus to others. It is strongly recommended that those at higher risk, with compromised immunity including Elders, self-isolate. **IMPORTANT:** Brucejack and Red Chris employees are not required to self isolate upon returning home, if they return home directly and do not stop anywhere.

EVENT CANCELLATIONS:

Tahltan Leadership would like to announce the following cancellations due to COVID-19:

May:

Healthy Active Tahltan School Events – Dease Lake, Iskut and Telegraph Creek

Iskut Baby Welcoming

TCG Update Meetings

June:

Tahltan Band Chief and Council Election Postponed until end of November

June 21: National Indigenous Peoples Day

School and Headstart Sports/Awards/Grad Day

TCG Update Meetings

July:

Iskut Music Festival

Iskut Literacy Camp

Glenora Literacy Camp

Telegraph Creek Grad

August:

Tahltan Music Fest

Iskut Cultural Camp Kawdy

October:

110th Declaration Celebration

Red Chris (Newcrest)

Newcrest Red Chris provided cleaning supplies to Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek the week of May 4th. Cleaning supplies provided included bleach, hand gloves, multi-surface cleaner, bathroom cleaner and hand soap. Additional no-touch thermometers were also provided to each community.

Thank you to Lorraine Callbreath and Newcrest (Red Chris) who are working on the distribution of new board-games, indoor activities, and other entertainment such crosswords/books for our three local community residents. Items are set to be delivered very soon.

Newcrest is working with local community members to commission the sewing of 500-1,000 face masks to be used by the Red Chris workforce during travel. There could be a need for additional masks on top of this providing some continued economic benefits to those that may have to stay home.

Newcrest Provided each of the communities with no touch thermometers that can be used to screen people before the enter the community and at local clinic or offices. On April 16th, two were provided to each community with additional thermometers ordered and awaiting delivery.

Newcrest has placed an advanced care paramedic - 16 years work experience predominantly in the North - to provide rotating services in our three local communities for the next six weeks. The paramedic will assist with outreach work in the communities, wellness checks, educational services, ambulance training, preparations for transportation, and community response abilities related to COVID-19. Newcrest is covering all costs associated with this service.

Newcrest provided 30 loads of firewood logs split equally between Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek. Tahltan Forestry Ltd. was engaged to do this work. Newcrest also covered the costs of delivery to the three communities.

Newcrest delivered a 200-litre drum of hand sanitizer, on April 16th, to each of our three communities.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the new measures put in place at Red Chris please contact either:

Lorraine Callbreath

Email: lcallbreath@redchrismine.ca

Phone: 250-771-4200

Shannon Wilson

Email: swilson@redchrismine.ca

Phone: 604-800-9200 ext 162

Dease Lake Update

The Dease Lake Emergency Management Committee has ordered oximeters and thermometers which will be distributed to elders and families once they have arrived. Food hampers will be distributed to elders in our community the middle of next week. Red Chris and the Dease Lake Canadian Ranger Patrol will be assisting with this effort.

The EMC has also decided to continue providing Super A gift cards to the community throughout the month of June. Masks are available at People's Haven, please call 250-771-5577 to arrange for pickup. We know the weather is warmer and people are beginning to move around more so please always practice social/physical distancing. If you leave Dease Lake and travel outside of our territory you must self-isolate for 14 days when you return home. Stay safe everyone.

Iskut Update

The community completed a successful 'Social distancing garbage community pick up'. The staff of the Iskut Band, Iskut Valley Health and the Klappan School all pitched in to clean the community, a nice way to get out and beautify where we live and play. Thank you to everyone who participated, and it was great to all the kids who decided to lend a hand. Meduh

We have a few activities planned for this weekend: 'Social Distancing Mother's Day Cake Decorating' and a 'Social Distancing Mother's Day Walk'.

Thank you to our Headstart/Daycare workers for always having crafts available for our kids, including extra for older siblings every week. Thank you for always checking in and communicating during this challenging time. Our children sure miss you and please know that you are all appreciated! A big thank you to Hazel Quash and Jessica Henry!

Iskut still has our gate monitors on duty and we are thankful for our hardworking team. Please respect them and be kind.

A reminder that our Kluachon Centre will remain closed to the public to protect our community and at-risk members and our elders.

Our cafe has been keeping lots of our people happy with the great meals they have been making. Thank you to our Kluachon Centre staff and café.

Telegraph Creek Update

Education remains a priority and another education package went out early in the week to our community. Staff also delivered the hand sanitizer in spray bottles for households that needed it and used this opportunity to provide education regarding the type of liquid sanitizer that was donated to us by Newcrest (Red Chris).

Our store Manager reports that we had sufficient fresh veggies and dairy products for the week and was able to bag up veggies, such as peppers, and offer them at a great sale price two days before our next freight truck was due. This week we may have a double order of meat, this is because of the earlier shortage of meat with the regular supplier. Wait times for access to the store on Thursdays have decreased with the increase in store hours on Thursday and Friday. The store staff also provides shopping and delivering to residents that are isolating and cannot access the store. Health and Social staff are also available to assist with this service for community Elders and residents who require assistance.

Our Store Manager asks community to please abide by the strict safety measures she has at the store: **HAND WASHING UPON ENTRY AND FOLLOW THE ARROWS ON THE ISLES FOR YOUR SHOPPING** (this helps to decrease the close contact of other shoppers and store staff). She also has implemented that all people entering the store will have to wear a mask (homemade is ok to use). Please be advised that the Store is following the Provincial Safety Measure being implemented.

A huge thank you to our Social Team that continues to provide services to our community. This week they delivered beautiful food hampers to our Elders which was well received. The team used the advice of a couple of the Elders of what should be included in their hampers. We have ordered another shipment of groceries and meat and will be delivering more food hampers within a short while.

Octopus bag kits will be distributed this week for another great sewing project. Several residents are utilizing our puzzle collection and may exchange when they are finished. We also have games, Lego, and craft kits that go out to households. A Mother's Day walk is planned for early next week.

Congratulations to Pauline Hawkins who won the jackpot of \$780 for last week's Bingo. Facebook Bingo is held every second week. We continue to make masks and distribute as needed.

A Mother's Day project is being delivered to the kids to put together for their Moms. Happy Mother's Day! Packages are being planned for all women of the community and will be distributed when these supplies arrive.

Prenatal "Good Food Box" was distributed and will be on-going monthly for our young families.

Our beautiful community garden has been tilled and ready for planting near May long weekend. This is another great opportunity for residents to be outside and "On the Land" assisting with the community garden.

River Song is now open as an isolation/quarantine facility for those requiring 14 day isolation.

If you are travelling outside the Territory, please call Sheila at the Band office, 250-235-3151, to inform her of your dates of travel.

BE KIND, BE CALM, BE SAFE - HAVE A WONDERFUL MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND

TNDC

TNDC continues to work with Tahltan leadership and Newcrest Red Chris Mining management to coordinate response to COVID-19, to protect and support employees, their families, the communities, and everyone we work with.

At the request of the Tahltan Nation, Newcrest Red Chris, **is moving to a 3 week on/3 week off rotation for all employees at the Red Chris Mine jobsite.** This modification will **begin for TNDC employees with the upcoming roster change on Monday, May 11.** The next rotation will happen on Monday, June 1, 2020.

This rotation change is a temporary measure being implemented during the pandemic and follows the decision by Newcrest Red Chris to implement the same rotation across operations, in guidance with health authorities and government departments. The goal is to ensure that our rotation exceeds the incubation period of the COVID-19 virus and enables our workers to return to their families without the need for further isolation.

We will continue to work with Newcrest Red Chris to monitor the impacts of this change and follow other measures that have been put in place. Our collective goal is to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission for all employees, contractors, and communities.

TNDC is also continuing to work with the Tahltan leadership to protect the local communities and support measures being put in place. By working collaboratively, we will get through this together.

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