

## SNUNEYMUXW NATION RECONCILIATION AGREEMENT

# Fact Sheet

On September 20, 2020, the Province of British Columbia and Snuneymuxw First Nation signed two agreements that will bring economic development opportunities to the Nanaimo region and support a strong and stable future for Snuneymuxw First Nation and its members.

These agreements are part of the important work the provincial government and Snuneymuxw First Nation are doing to advance reconciliation together. Families, businesses and governments across the region will benefit from added job opportunities and the legal clarity and predictability created through the reconciliation and land transfer agreements.

This fact sheet provides information about the agreements including land transfers, plans for community engagement and progress on the Snuneymuxw mid-island forestry initiative.

### RECONCILIATION IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

The Reconciliation Implementation Framework Agreement describes how the Province and Snuneymuxw First Nation will build upon the foundation provided by the Snuneymuxw Sarlequun Treaty of 1854 and work together to improve the lives of Snuneymuxw people. The agreement sets out a path toward implementing Snuneymuxw rights and title over time.

The framework agreement has several key components. One priority is promoting regional economic development through access to timber, partnerships with local businesses, and providing that timber to a local mill.

Also, the reconciliation agreement ensures that the engagement process between the Province and Snuneymuxw on coastal log storage

and log handling tenures is more effective. This creates predictability that will generate economic activity in the Nanaimo region because business operators are more likely to invest in business ventures when they know what to expect.

Resolving outstanding concerns in the Nanaimo River estuary is a vital part of the reconciliation agreement. In particular, Snuneymuxw First Nation will drop its litigation against B.C. over log booming impacts in this area.

Working together with Snuneymuxw First Nation to improve the culturally important Saysutshun - Newcastle Island Marine Provincial Park is also part of the agreement. This includes changing the name of the park to the traditional name: Say-sut-shun.

The reconciliation agreement also outlines several areas for future

negotiations. One priority is to find ways to make progress to support Snuneymuxw's right to self-government, and to work on new arrangements for decision making on water licences and coastal log storage.

This agreement is the second phase of a reconciliation agreement signed by Snuneymuxw First Nation and the provincial government in 2013.

### LAND TRANSFER AGREEMENT

The Land Transfer Agreement between Snuneymuxw First Nation and the provincial government includes approximately 3,100 ha of Crown lands near Nanaimo, on Mount Benson and Mount McKay, and returning these culturally and economically important lands to Snuneymuxw.

Snuneymuxw is one of the largest First Nations in the province by



population, but they have one of the smallest reserve land bases in B.C. relative to the number of people who belong to the Nation. Lands were chosen during negotiations, and based on Crown land that was available, current uses, and cultural and economic significance to Snuneymuxw. These lands are in the traditional core territory of the Snuneymuxw people.

The agreement sets out conditions for the transfer, including:

- consultation with impacted First Nations is complete;
- public use areas are confirmed;
- long term protection of key elk and deer habitat is in place;
- court action against the Province is discontinued by Snuneymuxw;
- neighboring land-owners continue to have road access;
- consultation on a lease held by Nanaimo Port Authority, and several log handling tenures, are complete.

The lands are expected to take up to three years to officially transfer to Snuneymuxw First Nation. Once transferred, they will be subject to the same laws, bylaws and regulations that apply on all privately-owned land.

## FORESTRY

Some of the lands that will be transferred under the agreement are currently designated as harvestable forest within the B.C. Timber Supply Area. Harvesting in this area has been avoided in the past 20 years while reconciliation

negotiations with Snuneymuxw were underway.

These lands will support the Mid-Island Regional Forestry Initiative, which is a Snuneymuxw project to increase forestry activity in the Nanaimo area. Through the initiative, timber harvesting will be carried out in a sustainable way, while creating up to 160 direct and indirect forestry jobs for the region.

The initiative will increase the flow of timber to local forestry companies for years to come and support important partnerships between Snuneymuxw, B.C., Nanaimo Port Authority, industry and Nanaimo River Estuary Log Storage Association.

## FINANCIAL COMPONENTS

The Province will contribute \$250,000 each year until 2026 to support Snuneymuxw with the staff and other resources needed to implement these agreements, and participate in future negotiations.

## PUBLIC ACCESS & ENGAGEMENT

Snuneymuxw First Nation and the Province recognize that many people in Nanaimo enjoy these lands for a variety of recreational purposes. Both governments are also taking into consideration the key wildlife habitats in this area that require protection.

Snuneymuxw First Nation will maintain public access to the TransCanada Trail, and the Spruston Staging Area. As well, 300 hectares on Mount McKay will be protected

to provide important winter habitat for deer and elk populations.

Snuneymuxw First Nation will be asking for public input on future plans for the Mount Benson and Mount McKay land parcels. This feedback will help Snuneymuxw First Nation understand what is important to the public, and help inform the plans for the lands once they are transferred.

## FIRST NATIONS CONSULTATION

Some of the parcels in the land transfer agreement overlap with other First Nations' traditional territories. The Mount McKay parcel overlaps with Stz'uminus (Chemainus) First Nation's traditional territory and each of the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group member First Nations' territories (Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Lyackson First Nation, Ts'uubaa-asatx First Nation, and Penelakut Tribe). The Mount Benson parcel overlaps with Snaw-naw-as First Nation.

Consultation with these Nations is underway and will be completed before the lands are transferred.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation:

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Copies of the 2020 agreements, and more information about previous agreements can be found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/first-nations-negotiations/first-nations-a-z-listing/snuneymuxw-first-nation>

