

Joint Statement – Draft Section 7 Agreement

'Namgis First Nation and the Ministries of Forests / Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (FOR/IRR) are pleased to share that, following the authorization of a Section 7 joint decision-making agreement negotiation mandate on April 8, 2024, the parties have collaboratively developed a draft agreement. This agreement is currently being targeted for the Province's and 'Namgis First Nation's leadership consideration in fall 2025.

The proposed agreement would establish a framework for joint decision-making authority between the Province of British Columbia and 'Namgis First Nation, specifically, in relation to key decisions under the Forest Landscape Planning (FLP) framework. This represents a significant step forward in advancing shared governance and affirming 'Namgis First Nation and the Province as partners in forestry decisions.

Throughout October, the parties will be engaging and consulting with impacted groups to gather feedback, answer questions, and address any concerns.

Questions or comments can be directed to forestlandscapeplanning@gov.bc.ca until November 2, 2025.

Q&A – Key Messages

Q: What is a Section 7 agreement?

A: It is an agreement using a joint decision-making framework found under Section 7 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act). It enables the Province and Indigenous governing bodies to enter into agreements that recognize Indigenous jurisdiction and decision-making.

Q: How do Section 7 Agreement function?

A: Section 7 agreements outline a process for joint decision-making while clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the Province and the Indigenous governing body.

Q: Have other Section 7 Agreements been completed?

A: To date, the Province has authorized two consent-based decision-making agreements under Section 7 of the Declaration Act, both with Tahltan Central Government. This draft agreement is the first-of-its-kind for the forestry sector under the Declaration Act and the Forest Range and Practices Act.

Q: Where does the agreement apply?

A: It would apply to the portion of Tree Farm License (TFL) 37, located near the towns of Port McNeill and Woss, that overlaps with 'Namgis territory on Northern Vancouver Island.

Q: Who is involved in the forest planning process?

A: Western Forest Products, the current license holder for TFL 37, has been actively collaborating with 'Namgis First Nation on the development of a forest landscape plan (FLP) and forest operations plan since 2021.

A first draft of the FLP was shared for public review and input in spring 2024. After addressing the feedback received, an updated draft FLP was submitted to the Province earlier this year.

Q: Has there been any public consultation on the Section 7 agreement before this?

A: Once the decision to begin negotiations on a Section 7 agreement is made, the Declaration Act requires the Province to publish a list of those who will be engaged. The act also sets out provisions for ensuring local governments and potentially affected external parties to be consulted during negotiations.

When the negotiation mandate was announced in April last year, the list of parties identified for engagement on the 'Namgis agreement was also shared. Those included were:

- Regional District of Mount Waddington
- Town of Port McNeill
- Atli Resources Corporation
- Mosaic
- United Steel Workers
- Lemare Lake Logging
- Cochrane Contracting
- Blue Collar Industries
- Nimpkish Lake Logging
- Holbrook Dyson Logging
- JF Trucking
- R.M.B Trucking
- Steel Creek Pole Corp
- Van Isle Falling

In addition to these North Island groups, feedback is also being sought from neighbouring First Nations, industry, local governments, stakeholder organizations and the public.

Q: What legislation supports this draft agreement?

A: The draft agreement has been developed in accordance with the Declaration Act and the Forest Range and Practices Act.

Q: What happens after engagement?

A: Feedback from the October engagement phase will inform revisions to the draft agreement before it returns to the Province and 'Namgis First Nation's leadership for final approval.

Q: What are the benefits of the joint decision-making framework?

A: The joint decision-making framework reflects a meaningful shift toward shared governance, affirming that 'Namgis First Nation are partners in land-based decisions that directly affect their territories, communities, and futures. It is designed to advance collaboration while:

- Enhancing transparency and accountability;
- Supporting fair and stable administrative processes;
- Providing certainty for industry and enable long-term planning and job creation.

Q: Can you share more about the forest landscape plan?

Tree Farm License (TFL) 37 is located in the Nimpkish Valley on northern Vancouver Island. Communities located within the vicinity of the TFL include Woss, Port McNeill, and Alert Bay.

The Nimpkish Valley is the territory of the 'Namgis First Nation and includes portions of territories of the Kwakiutl, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, K'ómoks, Tlowitsis, and We Wai Kum Nations.

The TFL 37 FLP Pilot Project is the only pilot involving an area-based tree farm licence tenure. The licensee for TFL 37 is Western Forest Products.

'Namgis and Western Forest Products (WFP) established a technical team to bring together local First Nations knowledge and experienced forest professionals to collaboratively lead the planning process. Subject matter experts, including staff from the Province, also assisted the technical team. The plan's development was informed through engagement with the 'Namgis community, and through information sessions with employees, contractors, local, and regional government and the Nimpkish Woodlands Advisory

Committee. The Province, in conjunction with WFP, has provided the necessary financial and in-kind support.

The development of this made-in-the-North-Island plan concluded in 2023.

The draft FLP, project details, and past engagement is available on:

- [TFL 37 FLP project details page](#)
- [TFL 37 FLP documents page](#)

WFP has produced detailed maps that reflect the proposed FLP. They have drafted a Forest Operations Plan (FOP), which is still subject to change based on the establishment of the FLP. A draft FOP is available for the public to view and comment on:

- [View the TFL 37 FLP maps and FOP](#)

Q: Where can I learn more or ask questions?

A: Please visit the following resources:

- ['Namgis First Nation website](#)
- [Forest Landscape Planning website](#)
- [Making Decisions Together](#)