

Stepping Stone

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Putting Words into Action: British Columbia's New Relationship with Aboriginal People By the Editorial Board, Stepping Stone

For the third issue of *Stepping Stone*, we have decided to focus on the theme of putting words into action.

British Columbia's mineral exploration and mining sector frequently finds itself on the forefront of issues associated with the unique relationship between First Nations, government, industry, and local communities. Of course, these relationships are often highly complex, with many different people and groups having a stake in how mining is proposed, planned and carried out in this province. Distrust and misunderstandings have sometimes been the unfortunate outcome of these complexities.

Last year's introduction of British Columbia's New Relationship with Aboriginal People created excitement and heightened expectations within British Columbia's First Nations communities in terms of government's new approach to dealing with these important issues. Some say that it is taking a long time to translate the positive words of the New Relationship document into operational reality. It is likely that there will be challenges in finding the new partnerships, ventures, and processes that will truly embody the principles and tone of the New Relationship.

Leaders in the First Nations community and industry will often be the ones who take up the challenge of implementing the New Relationship: proposing new ways of doing things and creating new approaches that embody Aboriginal values, customs, and aspirations. The desired long-term outcome is one of mutual understanding and benefit to all parties involved.

How do we ensure that mineral exploration and mining truly benefit communities? Efforts such as educational programs and outreach to First Nations communities (both addressed in the Northwest Community College new initiatives article), First Nations business development, and utilizing new technologies have enormous potential.

However, every new effort needs to be balanced with the need to properly address on-the-ground issues such as unemployment, the need for community involvement in decision-making (as discussed in the article on the New Relationship Conference), limited access to high-speed Internet (as highlighted in the MTO article), and making tangible steps toward conserving and improving the natural environment. Finding the right path presents a challenge, but the rewards are likely to outweigh any of the misunderstandings along the way.



Stream sampling in Northwest Community College's Tumbler Ridge Mining Exploration Field Assistant Program. Educational programs and outreach present opportunities for mineral exploration and mining to benefit communities.

Photo: Mark Edwards.

Throughout this entire process, the need for open and honest communication will remain of highest importance. Airing and discussing these complex issues in a thoughtful and respectful manner is a key to finding and developing the kinds of solutions that will truly embody the spirit of the New Relationship.

We are aware that the issues brought forward within these pages are ones on which people have many different perspectives and positions. We encourage your feedback, article submissions, and letters to the editor in this regard.

Finally, we truly hope that this issue of *Stepping Stone* provides a platform for the further discussion of some of these important issues between First Nations and industry, so that these relationships can develop in the spirit of respect and cooperation.

Mailbag



Update from Deanna Sebastian, McLeod Lake Indian Band

Verne Solonas submitted a photograph of me and a rock truck for the Fall 2006 issue of *Stepping Stone*. I was hired July 3, 2006. Training took place immediately and I received "my wings" within a month of working. I work for the Ledcor company at the Perry Creek Mine. The mine is located in Tumbler Ridge BC.

In the photograph, I'm standing beside a co-worker's rock truck. Currently, I am driving the No.427 rock truck. The truck in the photograph is a 785, and the truck I drive is a 789. The mine also owns triple-sevens (777s). I am not sure what these numbers mean exactly, but the bigger the number the bigger the truck.

Tumbler Ridge is about three hours away from where I live. I found a room to rent and work seven days on and seven days off, and travelling home on days off. It's a nice little town and has everything you may need. The mine is continuing to hire and has four crews. The plant has opened now also.

My name is Deanna Sebastian. I am in my early thirties. I found out about this job opportunity through the coal forum that was held in McLeod Lake during Spring 2006. I submitted my resume and was working within a couple of weeks. I previously worked at the daycare in McLeod Lake. Knowing that the daycare will always be there I decided that I could always try something new. I was nervous in the beginning leaving a job and a community that was most comfortable for me, and going some place far away, doing something I never knew. It was overwhelming

at first. But I'm extremely happy that I took this opportunity and I thank the McLeod Lake Band and Verne Solonas and Cheryl Chingee for helping make this happen.

Deanna Sebastian, McLeod Lake Indian Band

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Looking for Partners in Mineral Exploration

The wholly owned companies of the Laxgalts'ap Village Government and community aspire to mineral exploration especially within the Nisga'a core lands. Little or no extensive exploration has occurred in the said lands. We do anticipate that there are valuable resources present in these lands and are anxious to undertake a process to find them.

In the meantime, we have begun in earnest to prepare for the mining of high grade gravel aggregates and rock quarry in our area. We are very optimistic about this project.

The main purpose for this writing is to establish a relationship in the interest of keeping abreast of related industries and to continually receive useful guiding information by way of your publication.

*Willard Martin, Chief Councillor,
Laxgalts'ap Village Government*



Fay Masear and Cheryl Chingee of the McLeod Lake Indian Band tour the Wolverine-Perry Creek Mine in Tumbler Ridge, BC.

Photo: Verne Solonas.

MINERAL TITLES ONLINE – The More Some Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

By Bill McIntosh and Ryan Stuart

When BC's Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources opened its new Internet-based system for registering mineral claims on January 12, 2005, there were no fireworks or balloons released to mark the event. No need —the long-anticipated start-up of Mineral Titles Online (MTO) created its own fireworks. By the time MTO was formally launched eight days later, the new website at www.mtonline.gov.bc.ca had attracted more than two and a half million hits, and had processed 3,110 claims — representing 1.2 million hectares. As the Vancouver Sun noted on January 25, 2005, "By comparison, in 2004, the best year for exploration in the last 13, the industry laid claim to 1.1 million hectares." The hot pace continued through 2006 with 5.9 million hectares claimed, bringing the total claimed land base to 11 million hectares or 12 per cent of the 96 million hectares available for MTO filing.

The launch of MTO and the accompanying wave of mineral claims activity have sparked unease in a number of BC's First Nations communities. Eleven million hectares is a lot of ground after all, but let's put it in context.

"Thinking there will be a DC Cat digging a hole in the ground on every centimetre of that land is just plain wrong," says Rick Conte, Director of Mineral Titles for the BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. "Less than one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) of the 11-million hectares will actually see any surface disturbance."

The idea of mineral exploration is to start big. Companies claim all around a likely looking area, just to be safe. Then they do the preliminary exploration work, fly geophysical surveys and put geologists armed with rock picks on the ground to narrow the target down. The vast majority of claims are left with nothing more than footprints. For instance, only 1 in 5000 metal properties, collections of claims owned by a company or a group of companies, will ever become a working mine, says Dave Lefebvre, BC's Chief Geologist.

In any case, First Nations interests and desires associated with the minerals and mining industry must be dealt with in a fair manner. First Nations concerns with MTO are important and need to be addressed with clear and useful information.

Over the next several issues of *Stepping Stone*, we'll dig into the key terms and principles of mineral tenure, and misconceptions like the one above. We'll note differences between subsurface and surface rights and address the com-

mon confusion of "mineral title" and "legal title". And, we'll try to shine a light through the fog surrounding some other commonly confused terms — like "reserve" under the provincial Mineral Tenure Act and "reserve" under the federal Indian Act, and "encumbrance" under both the mineral and land title systems. We'll also take a closer look at MTO and what it may mean to First Nations communities. We'll try to summarize some of the keys to understanding the history and policy of the old "stake and blaze" claiming system. We'll see if we can forecast the development of "Mining Online", considering MTO as the first piece of a future integrated electronic system for managing the huge amount of information created by and for BC's mineral exploration and mining industries. Finally, we'll explore some of the linkages between mineral tenure, Aboriginal title, and the treaty process.

In the space remaining for this article, let's focus on the transition itself, answering three basic questions: What's MTO?; What's changed?; What's stayed the same?

1] What's MTO?

Mineral Titles Online is an Internet-based information system for managing mineral claims registration and related business in BC. While other jurisdictions utilize a map selection process, some do not have an electronic mapping component, and none maintain as complete a system as MTO, with its secure front end and e-payment opportunities. Other map selection systems can be found in use in Alberta, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. In BC, MTO replaces a cumbersome and confusing paper-based bureaucracy with an online tool easily used by anyone with access to a computer and the Internet.

2] What's Changed?

Territorial Security — The biggest change is the abandonment of the intrusive practice of physically staking claims. Instead of tramping through Crown and private lands (including traditional territories) to stake claims with metal markers and posts, a prospector now records a claim by clicking his or her computer mouse on one or more adjacent cells on an online map of BC.

Levelled Playing Field — Another big change is that ease of access to the mineral-claiming process has been greatly improved. Most meaningful prospecting and exploration activity in BC takes place in remote, rugged areas often acces-

sible only by helicopter, and out of the financial reach of most people. Now, anybody with a Free Miner Certificate (FMC) and BC electronic identification (BCeID) (both easily obtained, as will be explained in our next MTO article) can register mineral claims online for a fee of 40 cents per hectare. First Nations and their members are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. More information can be obtained by contacting the Mineral Titles Branch of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (Ph 604.660.2672).

Real Time Registration Updating — Another significant change is the move to instantaneous electronic updating of registrations — virtually eliminating overlapping titles and staking disputes. As well, the digital registration of work or payments on existing claims, and of transfers of interests, will allow for immediate updating of mineral titles. This immediate and transparent provision of claiming information to the world via the Internet promotes fairness and reduces the time, cost, and uncertainty involved in mineral title searches and transactions for all participants.

Access to Information — MTO makes more information available to more clients and stakeholders, faster, and with reduced cost. Improved access to information allows clients to make more informed decisions prior to tenure acquisitions, and to compile information required for additional business planning. In addition, MTO provides stakeholder interest groups with access to real-time data regarding the mineral claim status of a given area of the province.

Operational Costs — The costs associated with registration of mineral claims, updating mineral title information, and accessing that information have been reduced for industry, government, stakeholders, and Aboriginal communities.

3] What's Stayed the Same?

The legal requirements for acquiring a claim or lease under BC's Mineral Tenure Act have not changed. The rights of existing holders of staked claims have not changed. The right to use the surface of mineral title for mining purposes has not changed. The legal rights and interests associated with

a mineral title have not changed. Holders of mineral claims registered under MTO will have no more or different rights than they would have had under the old physical staking system. Also, any MTO-registered mineral claims will be subject to Aboriginal rights and title, whether proven or agreed by treaty, now or in the future.

As Rick Conte put it, "the intent and purpose of MTO is not to change anybody's legal rights, but to create an open and current information system for mineral interests in BC, supporting and promoting fairness in dialogue based on current titles."

On the other hand, Hans Matthews, President of the Canadian Aboriginal Minerals Association, pointed out some challenges for MTO in First Nation communities in 2005. He noted that Internet access is a major infrastructure weakness of most remote Aboriginal communities, estimating a national Internet participation rate of 20 to 30 per cent for such communities. He said, "Even if they can get access, quality is usually slow, narrow-band and expensive. If BC is serious about honouring its commitment to consult appropriately with First Nations, it must recognize that most, if not all mineral exploration and mining takes place in or near the traditional territories of remote Aboriginal communities." Mr. Matthews called for consideration of "meaningful and realistic alternatives" to the Internet for providing timely mineral claim information to those communities.

Conte says his ministry is actively trying to educate the First Nation community in the ins and outs of MTO and the industry in general. The ministry is working with First Nation groups near Prince George. In Smithers, several First Nations are taking a prospecting course at the Northwest Community College. And likewise, interior First Nations are enrolled at BCIT's Osoyoos campus's prospecting course. Elsewhere, public computers (including those at Service BC Government Agent offices), high speed Internet and even satellite telephones are making it easier for anyone to access MTO, review, track, and stake claims from anywhere, even the most remote community.

"First Nations concerns with Mineral Titles Online are important and need to be addressed with clear and useful information."

In Conversation with Satsan Herb George By Julie Domville

Satsan Herb George is the Chair of the National Centre for First Nation Governance. He is a Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chief of the Frog Clan. He was a key figure and strategist in the Delgamuukw — Gisday'wa case, which was the subject of a successful judgment before the Supreme Court of Canada in 1997. He is trained in law and education and lives with his wife and three children in Smithers, BC. He took some time from his busy schedule to speak with *Stepping Stone*:

Q: Has the Delgamuukw ruling opened up opportunities for First Nations wishing to undertake mineral exploration and mining in their traditional territories?

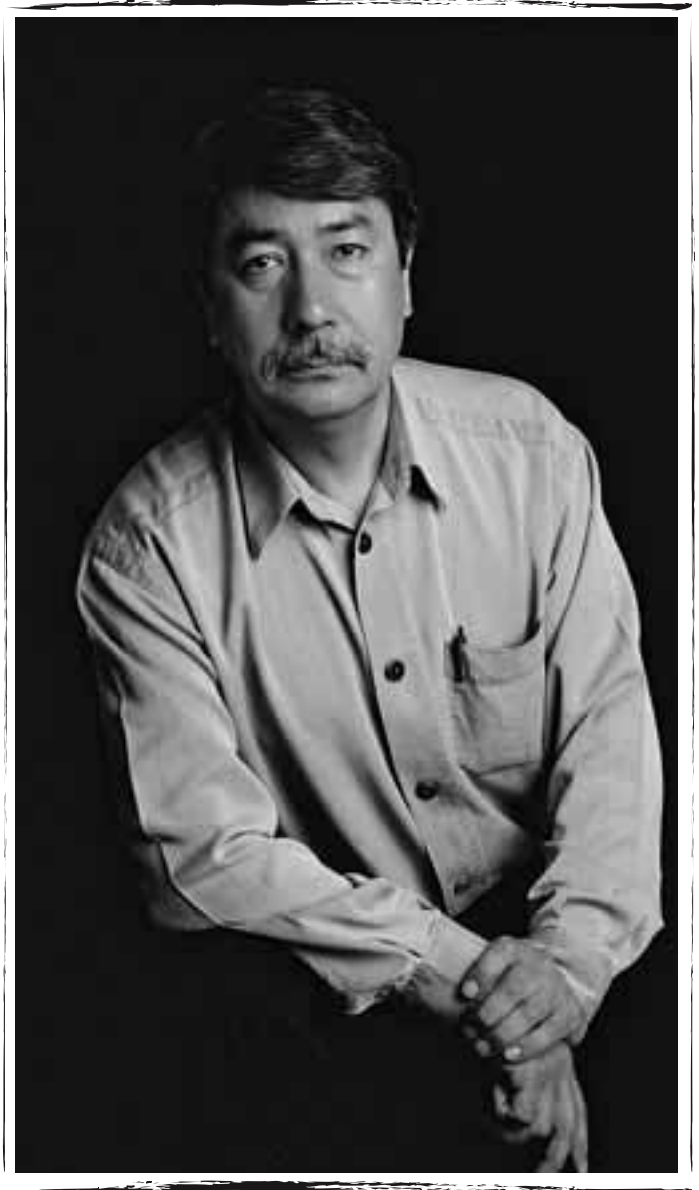
A: I question whether or not there is any opportunity left for First Nations in terms of mineral exploration on traditional lands because of the extensive staking that has gone on in the past and is going on now through the Internet. And that raises the question of whether or not proper consultation was undertaken by the provincial government before they introduced Internet staking. I think the government needs to step back and realize that they were legally obligated to engage in proper consultation with the Native people who have the legal right to those lands. The Supreme Court of Canada made it clear that there is an inescapable economic component as well as a legal right to the land, which means the resources on the land. So, there are significant challenges that need to be addressed before you can talk about exploration opportunities for First Nations.

Q: What are some important points for exploration companies to know in this regard?

A: The mineral exploration community is caught in a squeeze here. They need to do their due diligence and find out whether or not the Crown undertook their legal obligation to consult and accommodate First Nations whose territories are affected by internet staking. If the Crown didn't then it is in the best interests of the exploration companies who have staked on traditional territories to contact those First Nations and enter into meaningful dialogue. They have to make sure that if the Province hasn't undertaken their obligation properly, then they do because they stand to lose if there is a court challenge. It is in the best interest of the exploration and mining companies to build relationships with the First Nations in their respective areas.

Q: Is there more of a trend of exploration companies building relationships with First Nations?

A: Yes, there is. There are many good examples of companies coming to First Nations and saying we are on your land and we recognize that you have a legal right to the resources and we want to work together with you.



Q: Are you saying that industry understands their legal obligations to First Nations?

A: Some members of the mineral resource industry get it and some don't. Industry needs to work harder to ensure that everyone in the industry understands their legal obligations.

“There is a long road ahead, but if we all have a commitment to reconciliation built on the principles of recognition and respect then we can work it out.”

Satsan Herb George

Q: What do you see as the role of industry in bringing certainty to the investment climate?

A: The industry needs to ensure, for themselves, that the province has done what it is legally obligated to do and if it hasn't then industry needs to let the Minister of Mines know that they are concerned. It is the responsibility of the government to represent them, they are a constituent of the government, they are an important part of the economy and they have a right to know that proper consultation has taken place and if it has not taken place, then why not. This is the only way to bring certainty to the investment climate.

Q: Has there been an increase in the number of First Nations involved in mineral exploration on their traditional lands since the Delgamuukw decision came down?

A: No. You must remember that our people have been kept on reserves for a long, long time. We've been shut out of the

economy in all sectors. So, do First Nations have the expertise, the capital, the infrastructure, the machinery, the business development sense to take advantage of exploration opportunities? I think we are a bit away from that but it does not stand in the way of us forming partnerships and building the capacity to do so.

Q: In your opinion, has progress been made in developing constructive relationships between the government and First Nations and industry and First Nations?

A: Yes. I think we are seeing good, positive steps taken by the government, as evidenced by the draft of the New Relationship Agreement, by the mineral resource industry, and by the First Nations people. The Supreme Court said there needs to be reconciliation. There is no going back. It is a new era and it must be dealt with on all sides. There is a long road ahead, but if we all have a commitment to reconciliation built on the principles of recognition and respect then we can work it out.

“Delgamuukw”

The name resonates through our minds whenever Aboriginal rights and treaties are mentioned. But what does it mean?

Delgamuukw is a Gitxsan hereditary chief name. Delgamuukw was the traditional name of Gitxsan chief Earl Muldoe when he, on behalf of the House of Delgamuukw and fifty other hereditary houses of the Gitxsan and Gisday'wa, sued the province of British Columbia. Delgamuukw was alphabetically the first name on the list of appellants. This landmark case, which represented the claim of the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'un peoples to ownership and jurisdiction over 58,000 square kilometers of territory in northwestern BC, became known by this one name.

“We are all here to stay”

The New Relationship Conference: Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples

By Kristin Kozuback, C.S.P.

“We are all here to stay. We agree to a new government-to-government relationship based on respect, recognition and accommodation of Aboriginal title and rights,” stated Satsan Herb George in his opening address in Prince George, BC. He was quoting the opening lines of a document called “The New Relationship” published by the provincial government and endorsed by BC’s First Nations Leadership Council. Those opening lines of its Statement of Vision provide insight into the strong stance outlined in this framework document, a clear stance that reflects the Province’s solemn commitment toward a new common vision that includes all British Columbians.

Speaking at the “New Relationship: Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples” Conference on September 19 and 20, 2006, Satsan continued, “We are ALL here to stay. We all must work together to uphold that Statement of Vision”.

Satsan Herb George is a Hereditary Chief and a long-time Speaker for his Wet’suwet’en Nation. He explained how this conference and others like it across the province will provide intimate opportunities to bring business, industry, and First Nations communities directly together to turn vision into reality. “This New Relationship document will not be held by political bodies; it will be held by those on the ground, those of us who will implement the principles and keep it in place for future generations.”

Mayor Jim Davidson, who is from the neighbouring northern BC town of Smithers, shared stellar examples of implementing those principles of recognition, respect, and reconciliation into policy and actions. When asked to share his initial thoughts about the new relationship era, Mayor Davidson began eloquently and plainly, saying, “You probably don’t know why I’m here, and I probably don’t know either, but I’ve been honoured to be asked. Perhaps all I bring is my experience, my grey hair, the fact I may in fact be an elder, and my

passion.” Smiles of encouragement spread across the faces of participants. He continued, “I bring the good, the bad, and the ugly of my community to this gathering. The good, because I want to think it will be the best part, that there will be good things for our community forest. We have an application in right now to create a community forest, as it’s not just about cutting trees. It’s a living forest encompassing all things that should happen within. It includes the animals and berries and ash and rivers and pine beetles and recreational opportunities. A forest provides a place we will learn to get together.”

Mayor Davidson continued, “I was born and raised in Smithers, I lived there when we actually worked together and bunked together with First Nations. Although there was always a separation, we were considerate; we knew each other well and we knew we were all important.”

“And then the bad came. When into our community came apartheid, separation and rejection and no jobs for First Nations people.” He explained how that bad is still there, in that someone can say to you, “Do you have your Grade 12?” and if you say no, someone can say, “Sorry, then you can’t work here.”

He went on to explain, “Bad things happen to people without work, with no family connections. This is what we want to leave behind. This is why we have come here today, to be a part of change. We have come to discuss the future, but not ignore the past.”

So what is first? He proposed three words to consider, “Attitude. Attitude. Attitude.”

Mayor Davidson challenged us all to consider our attitude in facing this new relationship, to address these past and current issues. “When I say the words “inherent rights”, some people sit up straight, some jump. Isn’t that what you and I and every one of us insist is our first right as Canadians? The right to govern ourselves? Where is that right not what we say is a part of this country?”

“This New Relationship document will not be held by political bodies; it will be held by those on the ground, those of us who will implement the principles and keep it in place for future generations.”
Satsan Herb George

To change our attitude, he reiterated the words of Satsan's opening address - it requires that we meet, we be involved, that we discuss and talk, are at table with each other, that we be with one another. In the seven-member Smithers town council, everyone is given responsibility meeting members of the community, talking to others, and then again to each other.

Mayor Davidson finished with statements as simple as his opening statement, "Maybe I brought the wrong speech to the wrong people but what I brought is what I know. We need to do collectively what we cannot do individually. This speaks to what government of any kind should do; we do those things that we have to do corporately, that which we cannot do alone. To bring benefits to our people, collectively with a common interest - is that change?"

Mayor Davidson was asked if an economic region is defined by its resources, by its revenue. He answered the question with, "It may be all those things, but Chief Dan Michell, a Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chief from my community, taught me that it's the land. And we all live on this land, we want something to do together to support it and ourselves. Those beetles have given us every reason, as if we don't have other ones, as a common problem that we need to work together to overcome."

Mayor Davidson addressed the need to shift from short-term harvesting of devastated timber to consider long-term impacts of our actions today. "The present policy is cut what we can, and harvest it all. What about the wildlife, the water, the hydrology? It's not only about the beetles, it's about our future. What is our land going to look like in twenty years? Our wildlife, our birds? Where are we going to go? It's clear we go there together, or we don't get there at all."

He shared the personal story of his own handicapped son, and how at first there were challenges about how there were no resources or facilities to help his son "fit" into the rest of the community. But by identifying those challenges and addressing them, there are now accessible schools and buildings in the community, further supporting how when everyone gets involved there is change. Mayor Davidson said he liked the 4H motto of "learn by doing", and encouraged every one of us to deal with the hard issues, beginning with being at tables like the ones at the conference. He warned of the idea of setting some things aside for later, in that people never really talk through those issues...and that comes back to attitude again.

Mayor Davidson closed with a warning to the group, "If we are not careful, money and revenue sharing and change may set us apart. Money should not separate us, but let's be careful, as every one of us knows what a blessing and a curse it can be. I hope we'll take the opportunities in front of us to deal with our problems and work with the attitude to share our future."

The positive attitude and courage of people like Mayor Davidson will be needed to move the principles of respect, recognition and reconciliation forward as we strive to build mutually beneficial relationships for all Canadians. We are all here to stay, and we all will have to evaluate how to best apply these new framework guidelines for business, government and industry in BC during this new era in Aboriginal relations in Canada.

Kristin Kozuback is the owner of Spiritlink Communications and Editor of RedWAY BC News. The RedWAY BC News website is <http://www.imninc.com/spiritlink/>



***Taking a closer look:
a prospecting student
at the Northwest
Community College School
of Exploration and Mining
inspects a sample.***

Photo: Mark Edwards

NWCC School of Exploration and Mining Launches New Initiatives and Fundraising Campaign

By Christine Ogryzlo

The Northwest Community College School of Exploration and Mining is launching several important training initiatives in 2007. The first initiative is a new approach to training First Nations people for employment in the minerals sector, with a focus on basic reclamation skills. The second program offers training for employment at existing and proposed new mines.

The School is a partnership between Smithers Exploration Group and Northwest Community College. It is based in Smithers and operates in communities where training is needed.

Over the past two years, the School of Exploration and Mining has focused on preparing workers for employment in the exploration industry, with support from the BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. The Mining Exploration Field Assistant (MEFA) program has graduated more than 200 students, with an 85% employment record. Other programs include basic prospecting, camp manager,

and safety training. These programs will continue to be offered as the School expands its program delivery into reclamation and mine employment training.

Reclamation and Prospecting Initiative

The new Reclamation and Prospecting (RAP) initiative is a 3-year pilot project. It is jointly funded by the federal and provincial governments, through Human Resources and Social Development Canada and the BC ministries of Agriculture and Lands, and Advanced Education.

RAP will train First Nations students in basic reclamation and prospecting skills that will enable them to find employment in the minerals industry. The project targets First Nations people who may not be aware of the emerging skills shortages in the minerals sector. It will improve their ability to participate in the growing labour market.



Team leaders for the Reclamation and Prospecting project gather at Gonawka to check out a possible training site and hoping that the snow disappears by June. Photo credit: John Wilson, Instructor, Northwest Community College.

The project will build capacity among First Nations in two ways. First, it will train people in a supportive environment to increase the chances of employment in the minerals industry. The program will also build capacity in the students' home communities to interact with companies that hope to work in their traditional territory.

Companies benefit because RAP will incorporate traditional information from First Nations that will increase cross-cultural understanding of First Nations by the industry. The project can build a bridge between First Nations and the minerals sector. It will ensure there will be more northern people available with the skills to work safely in the industry.

The training ground will be at abandoned mine sites across northwest BC, where the students will do basic assessment and clean-up work. Most of the sites for 2007 work are clustered in two regions, one in the broad area southwest of Houston around Huckleberry Mine, and the other northwest of Smithers in the Babine Range.

One of the most accessible sites is the historic Emerald Glacier Mine site, north of Huckleberry Mine. The RAP teams will do baseline sampling as part of an assessment program, identify and secure any potentially dangerous locations such as old adits (hill or mountain-side mine entrances), and learn basic prospecting skills in a known mineralized area.

As the first step in RAP, the School of Exploration and Mining is training 21 First Nation team leaders in a wide variety of skills. In the second stage of the initiative, these team leaders will work with the First Nations youth over the summer, backed up by School instructors and a number of geology and environmental professionals.

The federal and provincial governments have allocated \$2.8 million to the RAP program for 2007. However, the pilot project will not be a permanent component of the School.

Ongoing Mine Training Program

In contrast, the mine training program will be a permanent program of the NWCC School of Exploration and Mining. The School has begun meeting with existing and proposed mines

in northern BC to develop a training program that meets their needs. Those early-stage consultations have already resulted in increased offerings of occupational first aid, H2S Alive, Radiation Safety Officer, and online courses. The next step will be development of a pre-employment package that will focus on safety, life skills, and an industry introduction. Fundraising is vital to the mine training program. Smithers Exploration Group has successfully applied for a \$100,000 grant from the Northern Development Initiative Trust. That grant must be leveraged at a 1:2.5 ratio. Smithers Exploration Group must raise \$250,000 in donations and in-kind contributions to access the Northern Trust grant. With that in mind, SEG began an aggressive fundraising drive at Mineral Exploration Roundup 2007 in Vancouver. The first company off the mark was Hy-Tech Drilling from Smithers. President Harvey Tremblay contributed \$5,000 to an endowment fund, which was matched by NWCC president Stephanie Forsyth. The next company to step up to the plate was New Cantech, with a \$6,000 contribution to the endowment fund. New Cantech has stipulated that half of its annual allocation from the fund will go to support First Nations students at the School. The next step in the fund-raising campaign is to approach other industry members. Smithers Exploration Group is developing a strategy to ensure that the companies with past and future mining roots in this province have the opportunity to help train the future workers.

The ongoing exploration and mining training being carried out by the Northwest Community College School of Exploration and Mining is an investment in the future of the minerals industry. The 3-year reclamation training pilot project will help First Nations develop an understanding of the industry that will benefit both First Nations and the industry. Both initiatives ensure northern jobs for northern workers in our northern resources.

For further information, please contact School of Exploration and Mining Industry Training & Employment Officer Tracy Moore at tmoore@nwcc.bc.ca or call 250-847-4461.

The Reclamation and Prospecting Initiative will improve First Nations peoples' ability to participate in the growing labour market.

The Reclamation and Prospecting Initiative will improve First Nations peoples' ability to participate in the growing labour market.

What is Cultural Awareness?

By Francis Seymour, First Nations Forestry Consultant

Whenever diverse groups come together for discussions of importance that requires consensus, there may be disagreements that require some degree of mediation. One action of ensuring that mediation or litigation be kept to the minimum is to work within the principles of trust, respect and understanding.

Cultural awareness of each diverse group or entity can provide the means of reaching the goals of trust, respect and understanding. Cultural awareness can be of the societal and/or economic structure of a distinct race or nation, or it can be of the infrastructure of a business or company.

Trust is gained through the transparency and openness of any relationship, be it of a personal or business nature. Your individual actions are mirrored or transferred in part to your family, your community, your race, your business, or your place of work. Respect is not given freely but must be earned, and it is earned through your actions, the way you live, the way you treat others, the way you conduct your business and how you treat confidences. Understanding is what you gain by learning about a subject or people, what are their values, what are their beliefs, how do

they live, what does it do, how does it run, where do they come from, what is their culture and traditions?

Cultural awareness workshops can provide an avenue towards building the trust, respect and understanding that is required in not only working together, but in pursuing the building of working relationships, or better still building relationships that work. Cultural awareness can help with increasing the understanding of each individual or group culture, and it can be a tool that will assist in clarifying the needs or interests of the participants. Cultural awareness can help with the building, strengthening, or renewing of your relationships.

Remember the three principles that I mentioned at the onset,

TRUST, RESPECT and UNDERSTANDING. Who would not want to be in a relationship that ends in a WIN, WIN situation – a relationship that is beneficial to all participants whether in a personal or business sense?

Francis Seymour is a proud member of the Tsimshian and Wet'suweten First Nations from the northwest of the province. Francis has worked in, or has been associated with the forest industry for most of his life. He retired from the BC Ministry of Forests in July 1999 and now works part-time as a forestry consultant specializing in First Nations relations. He has five grown children and eight grandchildren, and has made Kamloops home for about 30 years.

“Cultural awareness of each diverse group or entity can provide the means of reaching the goals of trust, respect and understanding.”



Francis Seymour with daughter Cathy and granddaughter Janaye.

AME BC offers ***Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples: A Workshop for the Resource Sector.*** The workshop was developed in collaboration with the corporate sector and Aboriginal peoples, and it is designed to help individuals and organizations work more effectively with Aboriginal peoples. If you are interested in holding the workshop in your community, please contact Reesa Meltzer at AME BC at 604.689.5271 ext. 226 or rmeltzer@amebc.ca.

The Devil's Club – Strong Medicine

By Kahlee Keane, Save Our Species

Devil's Club (*Oplopanax horridum*) is a plant unique to the west coast of North America, being found in the dense coastal forests from Northern California to Alaska. Often reaching ten feet in height, with its oversized leaves gathering the dappled sunlight, a mature colony of Devil's Club is almost tropical in appearance. The whole plant, including the maple-like leaves, is armed with a multitude of large yellow spines. Gracefully swaying in the forest breezes, it is indeed formidable as well as beautiful.

For the past several years, a research team at the University of British Columbia has been analyzing the chemical constituents of the root and stem bark of Devil's Club. They are attempting to determine the source of the medicinal qualities associated with its traditional use by coastal First Nations. It is evident that the data support its use as a treatment for various respiratory complaints as well as other conditions.

For centuries, northwest coast First Nations have prepared a tea from the root and stem bark to treat a variety of lung problems, including tuberculosis. The tea was also used to treat adult-onset diabetes. Like other members of the ginseng family, the root of Devil's Club was made into a tonic to increase stamina and to help strengthen the body after a long illness. It was also used effectively on the skin to treat burns, sores and swollen glands.

Due to the anti-viral and antibacterial compounds found in the bark of its roots and stems, Devil's Club is becoming of interest to European, Asian and North American manufacturers of herbal formulas. As a result, commercial harvesters are increasing the pressure on the plant colonies of the coast; so much so, that it has all but been eradicated in parts of the northwestern US.

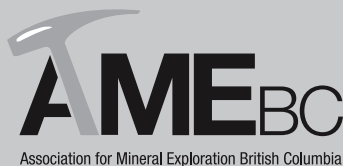
Nancy Turner, an ethnobotanist at the University of Victoria, told me, "Most people 'prune' Devil's Club branches from the mother stalk, then leave the plant to recover and regenerate for a few years before harvesting again. This is done in a lot of traditional medicine harvesting."

It is my belief that it is up to those people who understand the ways of the plants to point out these precautionary measures to commercial harvesters and loggers. In this way, we will be assured of a sustainable harvest and future medicine from this sacred traditional plant.


*Kahlee Keane is an herbal consultant and educator with a deep interest in the preservation and sustainable utilization of wild medicinal plants. Kahlee may be reached at kkeane@sasktel.net. **B.C.'s Medicinal Wild Plants**, a 72-page field guide covering over fifty of BC's wild medicines, is one of many field guides that Kahlee Keane has authored, and is available for \$18 (including \$3 postage and handling) from Kahlee Keane, Box 28035 Saskatoon, SK S7M 5V8.*



Photo credit: David Howarth



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- Increase respect and cooperation between First Nations and the mining sector.
- Share traditional forms of knowledge.
- Increase cultural understanding between First Nations and the mining sector.
- Increase First Nations awareness of mining.

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