



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blueberry River First Nations Launches Treaty Rights Case Information Campaign in the Northeast

September 6, 2022 - Fort St. John, B.C. - Today, Blueberry River First Nations launched an information campaign to provide British Columbians with information about the Supreme Court of B.C.'s *Yahey v. British Columbia (2021)* decision and educational resources about Treaty 8 and honouring the Treaty relationship.

The information campaign is anchored by an animated two and a half minute video that can be found on the campaign information page WhereHappinessDwells.ca. The campaign will include newspaper, radio, TV, social and digital ads starting now and continuing over the next few months.

"The Treaty always contemplated balance," said Blueberry River First Nations Chief Judy Desjarlais. "But, after decades upon decades of industrial development occurring without Blueberry River's input or consent, there is no longer a place free from impact, no way to practice our culture and traditional way of life. The Court decision confirmed Treaty 8 protects our way of life and changes to how the land is used must be made."

Implementing the court decision requires establishing protected areas, stronger environmental standards for future development, wildlife protection, and extensive restoration, so the land can heal. The Province of B.C. and Blueberry River First Nations are working together to find a path to sustainable development that respects Treaty rights and strikes a balance between the environment, economy and local jobs.

"Before we can move forward, we must start with information and education," said Chief Desjarlais. "The purpose of this information campaign is to provide British Columbians with facts about what Treaty 8 means, what honouring Treaty 8 promises look like and how we can work together to ensure we can move forward together in a sustainable way."

Negotiations between the Province of B.C. and Blueberry River First Nations are ongoing. When new information becomes available, the general public will be able to find more information on the campaign webpage WhereHappinessDwells.ca.

Background: the Supreme Court of B.C.'s *Yahey v. British Columbia* (2021) decision

On June 29, 2021, the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that the B.C. Government breached Blueberry River First Nation's Treaty 8 rights by allowing over-development in its territory. The Court ordered the Government to stop allowing new development that infringed Blueberry River's Treaty rights, and ordered Blueberry River and the B.C. Government to work out land management rules that protect Blueberry River's Treaty rights and address cumulative impacts.

About Blueberry River First Nations

Blueberry River First Nations (Blueberry) is a self-governing nation located in northern BC near Fort St. John. Through transparent and accountable leadership, Blueberry asserts the right to self-governance for the benefit of all current and future generations of our people. We exercise this right by building competent governing institutions and economics that align with our values and culture. By working together to establish an enhanced quality of life for people, we've built a supportive, vibrant community that is built upon traditional and forward thinking values. Blueberry is a Treaty 8 Nation whose traditional territory covers 38,000 square kilometers in the upper Peace River region of British Columbia.