



Message from the Chief

September 13, 2022

Ja haan e'cha?

As we move past summer and into the fall, I wanted to provide all Members once again with an update.

New Staff Highlight

We would like to welcome new staff members of our Nation;

Band Manager - Devrey Crossley. Some of you may recognize her as the wife of Citizen from our Nation Mr. Daniel Crossley, the mother of two beautiful children, and the owner of the local restaurant in Fort St John, Whole Wheat and Honey Cafe. She comes with a depth of business and management experience and brings great energy to the office.

Regulatory & Policy Manager/Lands Department - Mr. Kelly deCaux, who was hired to bring his expertise and support to our Nations Lands Department, his background of regulatory planning and government policies will be an asset to our Nations Mandate of formalizing Reclamation Policies in light of our Cumulative Impact Win.

BC Hydro Project Officer/Lands Department- Mrs. Patricia Appanah, proud citizen from our Nation, has been hired as Project Officer for BC Hydro to manage current, ongoing and proposed projects within SITE C. Patricia is Dunne'Za and her humour, great people skills, and commitment to family will be a great addition to our nation.

Lands Assistant/ Lands Department- Mrs. Dolly Apsassin, proud citizen from our Nation, has been hired as Lands Assistant to our Lands Department, she is Dunne'Za and proud mother of Two beautiful children. Dolly brings great people skills, traditional knowledge of our culture and traditional values.

Lands Coordinator/Lands Department- Mr. Matthew Dodwell, he is married to a First Nation Lady from Loon Lake Cree Nation, in Northern Alberta his family of 2 Girls, 1 Boy, and 1 Grandchild, has happily relocated to our Province. Mr. Dodwell's extensive experience in working with a First Nations Community, Oil and Gas Producers, will be an asset to our Nation as we bring structure, and growth within our lands department which is growing to better manage our Territory based on the Cumulative Impacts Win.



Cultural Protection Manager/Lands Department- Mr. Jared Davis, Proud Citizen of our Nation. Jared brings extensive professional knowledge and educational knowledge to assist our Nations plans to build and develop Land Management Process based on our cumulative impacts win.

Community Improvements

One of the priorities we are working, that I know many of you will be excited about, is our plans to improve upon the community infrastructure. This includes paving and home improvements. More information on this will be shared in the coming months.

Governance

In my May letter to Members, I focused on Council's initial efforts to understand historically our Nation's governance and look at a path forward. Since then, we have learned a lot, but we still have a long way to go. When we took our seats as leaders, there were several corporate entities related to the Nation that needed to be understood and organized. To do this, we retained a new separate law firm to reset those entities. This has taken some time, but we just recently consolidated all the entities to learn more about the historical documentation and liabilities for the Nation. I am happy to say, that we now have a view as to what we need to create going forward to provide a sustainable and strong foundation for our current leadership and those leaders to follow.

As the Nation turns a corner, there will be many opportunities for Band members and Band owned entities to prosper. We are currently working on the best way to approach this and will be creating some new entities to help drive the economic growth of the Nation.

Trust Accounts

What leadership has discovered, and a big surprise to many of us, is that Blueberry has no money left in trust. This may come as a shock to some of you – it was to me. As your Chief, myself and Council are all unified in committing this will not happen again under our leadership. As you all know, the Band is getting an infusion of new monies and we are committed to protecting the future of the Band for my grandchildren, your grandchildren and for many generations to come. We have brought in a new trust specialist; Legacy Tax and Trust Law Firm, to help design a trust to achieve this. This is a top priority for the Band and there will be much more information about this effort in the coming months.

Accountability

As you can see from the above summaries on the trust and corporate matters, the Nation has decided to engage with new legal teams. Another of the new law firms is DLA Piper. This decision reflects the Nation taking control of its future and not relying on one lawyer or law firm for representation or counsel. We are protecting our Nation's best interests by having different legal specialists work on specific tasks. As I have received several inquiries regarding the Nation's prior legal work, I have personally committed to overseeing the management of all legal work. By bringing in various legal advisers it will prevent any one firm or person from having too much power. The five key legal specialists will focus in the following areas:

1. Governance; 2. Trust creation and management; 3. Corporate and operational engagement; 4. Economic Development; 5. Treaty, Land and Provincial negotiations.

These new legal teams will oversee all the areas for the Nation, with the exception of Ratcliff, who will remain part of the finalization of the Treaty, Land and Provincial negotiations due to their knowledge on this file.

Many of you also know that I have also retained separate counsel to advise me to help oversee these matters. In the past, we have not had adequate oversight of the Nation's complex legal matters, so this change is intended to minimize risk and deliver value to the Nation.

TLE

So far everything seems to be on track with the process for executing on the TLE agreement and getting the money transferred to our Nation;

- BC has confirmed that Minister Rankin (Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation) has signed the TLE agreements.
- Canada has also confirmed their Treasury Board approval process is complete.
- The next step is for Minister Conroy (BC Ministry of Forests) needs to sign the TLE agreements (expected by mid-September).
- Once the final signatures are on the agreement, the TLE funds need to be approved at the next parliamentary budget cycle (anticipated by end of 2022), and finally Minister Miller (Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada) signs the agreements (anticipated early spring 2023).

I want to give a big thank you to the Family Coordinators. Together with CMR Consulting, family meetings are still ongoing, and I understand that the first-round of individual family meetings hope to wrap up by the end of September, with all future meetings held jointly together for all Members. An Elders luncheon took place at Charlie Lake and we look forward to more engagement collectively with our Elders. In addition, a financial literacy workshop was held. Please ensure you talk to your Family Coordinators to get handouts, fill out survey's, copies of presentations and recordings, and share your questions and concerns with them so we can provide you with the information you need.

Cultural Camp at Pink Mountain

We enjoyed a good turn out and beautiful weather for our cultural camp this year. It was fun together, sharing meals, playing games, etc. and plan to make some improvements to make it even better next year. For those of you unable to attend, we look forward to having you join us 2023!



Culture Camp at *Pink Mountain*



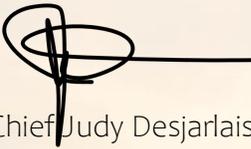
In wrap up, we have a lot of things on the go...To help you stay informed I will continue to provide regular updates by way of these personal messages, and keep in mind that Band Council Meetings have an open invitation to ALL community Members to attend. This is an opportunity for you to hear what is happening, but also for you to put forward your questions, concerns, and comments.

As Chief and Council we are all committed to transparency and accountability and will continue to demonstrate this each step along the way until trust is built that will allow healing for our community. Future Band Council Meetings for 2022 are as follows:

- September 12
- September 23
- October 11
- October 31
- November 14
- November 28
- December 12
- December 23 (*subject to further discussion)

I look forward to sharing our progress and exciting news as we work together to build our Nation stronger, together.

Ujoh Saan'elah,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, circular flourish followed by a horizontal line extending to the right and a vertical line extending downwards.

Chief Judy Desjarlais