



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blueberry River First Nations and the BC Energy Regulator Celebrate Restoration Project

July 16, 2025 - Buick, B.C. — Blueberry River First Nations (Blueberry) and the BC Energy Regulator (BCER) are pleased to announce the first large-scale, Blueberry-led restoration project under the 2023 Implementation Agreement between Blueberry River First Nations and the Province of B.C. This restoration project is also the recipient of the first restoration permit granted since the Province delegated authority to the BCER for restoration permitting for legacy energy activities in the Northeast.

“This is a milestone worth celebrating and an important step toward healing the land together,” said Michelle Carr, Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer of the BCER. “I am looking forward to seeing how our shared learnings can support and ensure timely and efficient permitting and encourage increased restoration on the ground.”

The project — to restore approximately 93 hectares of seismic line disturbance — started this spring and will be completed this fall. The restoration work is being done near the Sikanni Chief River, an area of cultural significance to Blueberry, and in the homelands of the Southern Mountain caribou herds. The project focuses specifically on restoring habitat and connectivity between the Pink Mountain and Chinchaga caribou herds, whose habitat has been impacted by industrial development. Restoration activities include tree planting, the construction of brush fences and the construction of tree piles. Almost 100,000 seedlings will be planted, including Lodgepole Pine, Black Spruce, White Spruce, Sub-Alpine Fir, Sitka Alder and Speckled Alder.

“I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to the Restoration and Lands Departments for their constructive engagement with the BCER, and for building new paths together in relation to permitting for this and future restoration activities in Blueberry’s territory,” said Blueberry Councillor, Shelley Gauthier. “This project is a symbol of new beginnings — generations from now our Members will be able to use this land again to practice our Treaty rights. And until that time comes, Blueberry Members will be involved in caring for it.”

“Around 20 Blueberry Members are working on this project, including Member-owned contractors,” said Interim Restoration Program Manager, Dolly Apsassin. “A year after the restoration activities have been completed, Blueberry monitors will return to the restoration sites to assess the impact of the restoration activities.”

This project builds on the success of a similar, smaller-scale Blueberry-led restoration project conducted in 2022. Blueberry began planning this larger project in 2023, and secured funding for a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) review, background analysis and field work. In 2024, Blueberry began the permit applications, which included consultation with Blueberry

Members, trapline holders, other Treaty 8 First Nations, as well as engagement with oil and gas companies and other stakeholders.

Together, Blueberry and the BCER are building a foundation for lasting restoration that reflects our mutual commitment to finding a balance between industrial development and economic stability, and respect for Blueberry Members' Treaty rights by healing the land. Through this process, both parties are gaining valuable experience and are preparing to accelerate the approval and implementation of future restoration projects across the region.

In addition to advancing restoration projects on Blueberry's traditional territory, the Province has committed to restoration funding for Indigenous-led projects by all Treaty 8 Nations that focus on restoring land across Northeast B.C.

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About Blueberry River First Nations:

Blueberry River First Nations (BRFN or Blueberry) is a Treaty 8 Nation with a traditional territory that extends over 3.8 million hectares of the Peace River region of Northeast British Columbia, whose main reserve is located 80 km northwest of Fort St. John. Blueberry has both Dane-zaa (Beaver) and Cree cultural groups that exist together, forming one community. With a commitment to change and progress, the Nation is dedicated to collaborating with industries, partners, and governments to create an approach to land management that balances responsible development with the protection and practice of its Members' Treaty rights. Guided by its cultural and traditional values, the Nation is working to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations, and to build a sustainable, self-sufficient, and vibrant community.

About the BC Energy Regulator:

The British Columbia Energy Regulator (BCER) oversees the full life cycle of energy resource activities in B.C., from site planning to final restoration. The BCER's role includes the regulation of natural gas, oil, hydrogen, ammonia, methanol and renewable energy sources such as geothermal, solar and wind power.

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