Questions & Answers - May 29 - Treaty Information Session

Thank you to the Kitselas Members who joined us in person and via Zoom for our 31st Treaty Information Session community meeting on May 29, 2024.

The recording from the May 29 meeting is available in the Members' Area of the www.kitselastreaty.ca website.

Below, please find a summary of the Q&As from the meeting.

Q - After the Treaty, what would we call our leadership? The president? Mayor?
A *(Celeste Haldane, BC Treaty Commission)* - I'll share how Maa-Nulth approached their leadership. I think it's in their constitution. They have a Chief and Council, and Hereditary Leaders are part of the government. The Hereditary Leaders are the Ha'wiih.

Q - What will the relationship be with the RCMP after the Treaty? Will we have to pay for the RCMP services?
A *(Celeste, BCTC)* - There is a new chapter about the Enforcement of laws in your Treaty that talks about the enforcement of laws. There's also funding provided to continue and have police services after implementation and the Effective Date.

(Dr. David Try) Currently, any town of less than 5,000 people gets free policing services. The Kitselas community has about 300 people living here. So the RCMP will continue at no cost to Kistelas. Chief and I have met with the RCMP leadership several times over last few years, including speaking with them about the fact that Treaty is coming.

Q - Does the Enrolment Committee exist? Who made the decision to have particular people on the committee?
A *(Dr. David Try)* - We advertised for the committee extensively from November 2023 to April 2024. Everybody who expressed an interest in serving is on the committee. In fact, the only person who applied to be on the committee who is NOT on the committee was Roxanne, I asked her to sit on another committee, and she agreed. The committee received training about one month ago. Even now, anyone is welcome to join the committee but will have to take the same training. If you're interested, please let me know by email at sr.negotiator@kitselas.com or by phone at 250-615-2616.

Q - I have a question about the Tsawwassen Treaty generating $245 million in revenue. Good for them. But, you know, we have trees and rivers here in the north. Because of that geography, we won't be able to generate that kind of money.
A *(Celeste, BCTC)* - I do think there's a tremendous amount of opportunity to develop that kind of wealth in your territory. Watching the development in the north, you will be a part of it

and will prosper. Economic Development will help Kitselas prosper. There are many ways that

people will prosper, the Tsawwassen example was just one example. I think trees are very, very important, same with the river, and our fishery resources are integral to our cultural survival. I'll give you another example. The Huu-ay-at, which is a small nation on Vancouver Island, re-imagined Bamfield and re-developed it. They paved the road. There is a hotel that they own there. They have a 0% unemployment rate. They've rebuilt campgrounds and preserved all of the natural resources at Bamfield. They balance this with stewardship. And now they own sort of everything in the Bamfield region. They are a mighty nation that has been doing all the work, generating serious wealth for their community, and balancing that with the stewardship that all our communities, the First Nations communities, need to do.

There are many different examples of how Kitselas can develop your economic development options on your land. The land base is huge and will provide huge opportunities.

Q – Why is it that we talk about when the Treaty is settled, that there will still be no-tax for people on reserves? But, they are getting a lower rate living on reserve in terms of what they get paid at their jobs.
A *(Dr. David Try)* - We cannot speak for items beyond Treaty. However, Kitselas administration pays a fair wage compared to what you make in Terrace is doing similar work. Nowadays, I think it would be hard to convince somebody to work on reserve doing anything for less money than they could get in town. But ultimately, there's nothing we can do as Treaty or as a First Nations to compel people to pay any salary

Q – There are people from Kitsumkalum who are eligible to enrol. Will they be able to apply to enrol?
A *(Dr. David Try)* - Yes, but they must give up their Kitsumkalum membership to qualify

Q –The Treaty Team and community consultation are working to reach out to community members living outside of the community. I would like to hear more about the communications. As we've heard from other Treaty nations, like Nisga'a, for example, there have been problems with communicating with membership. As we heard from Chief Glenn, of our roughly 700 members, over half live off-reserve. Is there some way we can include something for them in the Constitution or elsewhere?
A (Celeste, BCTC) - I think that's a great idea to hear urban voices, and to hear that you will listen to the voices of the youth. As you move forward, it will be helpful to hear a variety of voices. It goes beyond the Implementation committees having a robust authority to make things happen. I think that it is really, really important as you continue through your journey here, post-Effective Date. Build out that capacity because there's going to be different perspectives that come from those regions.

Q - The tax exemption on current reserve lands. Should the Treaty pass, and the Kitselas Government decides that this will be extended to other parts of Treaty Lands, will this be possible after the Treaty is in place?
A *(Celeste, BCTC)* - Modern treaty nations want to have the ability to control taxation from all of their Treaty Settlement Lands (TSL). Those are hard discussions and negotiations that are happening right now. That's why the bi-annual meetings with the Prime Minister are so important. Once Kitselas ratifies their Treaty, they will have a seat at this table. Thirty years ago, the First Nations had Treaty loans in place and paid them off – they are now getting the money back from the government. All of these positive changes are in your Treaty.

Q – I was just looking at the numbers for ratifications. And David mentioned the last vote. And if everyone voted in the last election, 83 people could decide the future of Kitselas (50% plus

one of 164 voters). And it was only 18% of the eligible voters. And then if we look at the on-reserve voters, it was 23% of the eligible voters. I'm just thinking about the engagement aspect. No one knows what others are thinking and their questions. This includes on- and off-reserve. And because of those numbers and the off-reserve members, I would imagine leadership wants everyone to be involved and voting.

I think a live blog on the Kitselas website where people can comment and question because I see there are Q & A's, but there isn't anything modern. We could meet and come together to discuss concerns and questions and meet each other. I would love to see a live process, but in an up-to-date forum, that they can be part of. And the treaty team can gauge what information needs to be shared.
A *(Dr. David Try)* - Thanks for this. Great idea about the blog. We are always working on ways to get the word out to our (non-local) off-reserve Members. The numbers, if you want to know, the numbers are almost exactly 300 (adult) members living in the community or nearby (Terrace/Thornhill) and 250 living further away. Interestingly, other than Prince George, there is hardly any place that has more than 10 Members. There are only a couple of dozen people in the Vancouver area. There's no place where there is a huge collection of off-reserve Members. So that's a struggle to connect (at least in person).

We've hired Sara to coordinate outreach on Vancouver Island and build relationships with the 40ish people who live there. Jodie will soon start doing the same in the Vancouver area.

We're looking for someone around Prince George, Williams Lake, Kelowna, etc. If you're interested, please let us know!

The bottom line is that we are open to doing anything to get the word out. And we'll make voting as easy as possible - in person, advance polling, e-voting, etc. - so everybody who wishes to vote has the opportunity to vote. The Treaty Team's goal is for all vote-eligible Members to make an informed decision about Treay.

Q - Why do we have to enroll first before we can vote on the Treaty? Can't we just vote?
A *(Dr. David Try)* - There are four reasons why you need to enrol to vote on the Treaty and Constitution.

1. As a Status Indian, you currently have Rights that are enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. For Treaty, you give up those "Rights" under the Indian Act – no great loss we think – replaced by much stronger Treaty Rights. By signing your Enrolment Application, you legally acknowledge this change.
2. In addition to all individuals on our current Kitselas Band List, who are 'automatically' eligible for enrolment in Treaty, 'non-Kitselas' people excluded from membership by the Indian Act, but with Kitselas ancestry or who were adopted as children, may also be eligible for enrolment.
3. Ratification requires that 50% +1 of enrolled members vote. Using the existing Kitselas Band List would be challenging, as only 164 (30%) of approximately 550 voters voted in the last Chief and Council election.
4. Looking forward, as a Treaty Nation, we will decide who is and is not a Kitselas Member. Thus, limiting enrolment to those on an existing Band List restricts our right to choose.

We will make it easy to enrol and easy to vote on the Treaty. We hope that everyone who is eligible will enrol.

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Q - I see that Glenn's been posting some live videos recently down in the Copper River area showing the erosion that has happened there. I just wondered if there are other nations impacted by climate change. How does that reflect being a Treaty Nation?
A (Dr. David Try) - I can't state that the Treaty really addresses climate change directly, at least nothing comes to mind. However, we'll have control over how we use our territory

In terms of the Copper River erosion, we are going to sue the government in a specific claim against carbon in the next five years. We are going to pursue this claim, but it won't get the land back. That land is gone. And it wasn't climate change that did this, it was that BC poorly constructed the Highway 16 bridge back in 1962, especially because of the sandy soil.

If we want to mitigate climate change, the Treaty is our way to get a seat at the table where decisions are made - as a Treaty partner and a nation. I know Nisgaa has utilized its Treaty's environmental chapter to ensure informed consent to external development.

Q—We are getting regular updates and treaty information. What I find missing is our administration and council vision plan. How does that connect to the Treaty? At some point, I think there has to be one plan, whether it is the Treaty or not—one plan for the Nation, one plan for the People.
A *(Dr. David Try)* - Kitselas First Nation is working on a strategic plan under development.

(Linda Morven, CAO, Kitselas First Nation) We're looking at some of the priorities for this Nation. We have a draft and should roll out the new plan later this year. We're going to have our priorities, including Treaty by the way, and we're going to look at the opportunities. We're going to look at the funding that may be available. We're going to look at the staffing. And we'll also need to look at our asset management plan. We really need to assess our current and future needs. We need the administration building. If we're going to have X number of new employees, we need a place with them. Right now, we're struggling with space. Right now, as well, we're working on getting the lighthouse transferred back to Kitselas. So that will open up some office space. And with the end, new community hall, what are we going to do with this, right?

And with the daycare or the Head Start, they'll be moving into the community hall, so we also have that space. We also need to assess those buildings, but we're really looking ahead to what our needs are, water, wastewater, education. Just making those connections, the Treaty and some of the opportunities that are going to be available.

Q – Please help me understand with more information about this vote. This sounds so incredibly important. Are we voting to no longer have bands? I'm concerned. Or is it the importance of us becoming a free, governing, independent band?
A (*Dr. David Try*) - Yes, voting is very important. Enrol and make your voice heard in deciding what future Kitselas should have – continuing as an Indian Act band, or becoming a Treaty Nation. The choice is yours! Remember you'll always be a Status Indian no matter what the vote is, and no program or service would be reduced in Treaty.

Q - Can you send me the application to become a member? If allowed, I have a few friends who want to join.
A (*Dr. David Try*) - We would be happy to provide enrolment forms, and yes, everybody is welcome to apply! Those forms are on the Treaty website and will soon be available on our Treaty phone app, too. Paper forms are available in the office, or you can contact us with mailing info, and we'll mail one to you.