

MEDIA RELEASE

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SHUSWAP LOCAL AND SECWÉPEMC GOVERNMENTS CELEBRATE THE SIGNING OF COMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT

Shuswap local and Secwépe mc governments have come together in the spirit of cooperation to formally endorse a communications agreement between all parties.

A celebration of the agreement was held at the Adams Lake Indian Band Recreation and Conference Centre on Friday, September 28, including a welcome song, drumming, speeches and the official signing of the document.

The signatories included representatives of the Splatsin, Neskonlith and Adams Lake Indian Bands, as well as the local governments of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, the Regional District of North Okanagan, the Village of Chase, City of Salmon Arm, City of Enderby and Village of Lumby. It was also signed by First Nations Elders.

The signatories to the agreement are:

- Cst'el nec (Adams Lake Indian Band) Chief/Kukpi7 Clifford Arnouse
- Columbia Shuswap Regional District Chair Rhona Martin
- Salmon Arm Mayor Nancy Cooper
- Sk'atsin (Neskonlith) Councillor Louis Thomas
- Regional District of North Okanagan Chair Bob Fleming
- Splatsin Chief Wayne Christian
- Village of Chase Mayor Rick Berrigan
- Village of Lumby Mayor Kevin Acton
- City of Enderby Councillor Brian Schreiner
- Elder – Ronnie Jules

The purpose of the agreement is to establish and maintain long-term, cooperative government-to-government relationships and open communication across the Shuswap watershed.

Goals of the agreement include incorporating regular communication and joint initiatives among the signatories, providing a collective voice to the provincial and federal governments, raising awareness of Secwépe mc'ulecw and Secwépe mc traditions and offering joint education opportunities for citizens in the region.

“It is overwhelming to see how we have met over the years and talked of coming together and now we are here. It's been quite a journey. I'm grateful for the opportunity to participate and I'm grateful for the learning along this journey,” said Columbia Shuswap Regional District Board Chair Rhona Martin.

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“Signing this agreement is a commitment by all of us to work together to improve the quality of life for all our people,” Martin added.

A commitment is also being made for elected officials to meet formally with each other at least once per year. It also recognizes the importance of in-person meetings as the most desirable way to build relationships.

“It is important for us to communicate together, so that we can understand one another,” stated Adams Lake Chief Clifford Arnouse. “We welcome this opportunity to work together, and move forward together.”

Photo caption: Representatives from both Shuswap and Secwépemc governments gather together at the Adams Lake Conference and Recreation Centre Sept. 28 to sign an agreement ensuring transparent communications between governments. Photo by Rock Deneault.

For further information, please contact:

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