

Tobique First Nation, NB July 2014

# Wulustuk Times

Wulustuk - Indigenous name for St. John River

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## **Table of Contents: July 2014**

**FIRST NATION PLANS SYMBOLIC BLOCKADE ON DOUGLAS CHANNEL AGAINST ENBRIDGE NORTHERN GATEWAY PIPELINE AND SUPERTANKERS PROJECT**

**FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES FACING AN INVISIBLE BUT DEADLY ENEMY**

**TRAIN DERAILMENT CREATES DESPERATION FOR REMOTE FIRST NATION**

**BC MÉTIS FEDERATION AND MÉTIS FEDERATION OF CANADA REACH AGREEMENT**

**DAVID COON, GREEN PARTY MLA OF NEW BRUNSWICK SEEKING SUPPORT**

**CHESTER NEZ LAST OF NAVAJO CODE TALKERS DIES**

**INDIGENOUS HEALTH-CARE RESEARCH GETS \$10M FROM TORONTO DOCTOR**

**DAN'S CORNER : THIS IS AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF CANADA DAY CELEBRATIONS AND INDIAN PEOPLE BEING PART OF SUCH CELEBRATIONS.**

Wulustuk Times:

Each month we gather and publish the latest, most current and relevant native information for our readers. Proceeding with this concept, we feel that a well informed person is better able to see, relate with, and assess a situation more accurately when equipped with the right tools. Our aim is to provide you with the precise tools and the best information possible.

### **Contact:**

We can be reached at Box 3226, Perth-Andover, NB. Canada, E7H 5K3, or at Box 603, Ft. Fairfield, ME 04742. Call us at 506-273-6737. Net [pesun@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:pesun@nbnet.nb.ca)

## **TOBIQUE BRIDGE CLOSING JUNE 23**

**Bridge repairs will fully close the Tobique Bridge for 8-10 weeks on June 23, 2014. Alternate routes into Tobique will be 1) the Arthurette Bridge 14 miles north of Tobique towards Plaster Rock. 2) the Brooks Bridge located 12-13 miles west of the reserve through Tilley, NB via the St. John River road to Brooks Bridge. After the crossing Brooks Bridge is an access onto the Trans Canada Highway located about 4mi s/e of the bridge.**

## **FIRST NATION PLANS SYMBOLIC BLOCKADE ON DOUGLAS CHANNEL AGAINST ENBRIDGE NORTHERN GATEWAY PIPELINE AND SUPERTANKERS PROJECT**

Gitga'at First Nation will stretch a crochet "Chain of Hope" across the Douglas Channel to show solidarity against oil tanker traffic in BC's narrow coastal waters

HARTLEY BAY, BRITISH COLUMBIA--(June 16, 2014) – The women of the Gitga'at First Nation will lead a symbolic blockade against the Northern Gateway pipeline on June 20, 2014, by stretching a crochet "Chain of Hope" across Douglas Channel to show their deep opposition to oil tankers and oil spills in BC's narrow coastal waters.

Made of multicolour yarn and decorated with family keepsakes and mementos including baby pictures and fishing floats with written messages on them, the chain will stretch from Hawkesbury Island to Hartley Bay, a distance of 11,544 feet.

British Columbians are encouraged to join the Chain of Hope online ([www.chainofhope.ca](http://www.chainofhope.ca)) and via Facebook to build a chain of opposition across BC.

"I rolled my eyes at my mom when she first talked of 'crocheting' a line to stop oil tankers," said Jodi Hill, a member of the Gitga'at First Nation and Chain of Hope participant. "She said that she would 'protest with what she had' and it was 'symbolic.' ...The community came together and everyone crocheted, to show our full support for the Gitga'at way of life, to stand up for our coast, the whales, our traditions, our food and for the future Gitga'at that will use our territory for generations to come. We stand today to take care for generations we will never meet, just as our ancestors stood up for us. The crochet line means something to us all now. We won't stand for Enbridge or the government that supports them."

This isn't the first time the Gitga'at have used chains on the water to stop threats against their people. Hundreds of years ago, the Gitga'at strung a chain made of tree branches across a narrow channel. The chain was used to keep watch at night by alerting the Gitga'at to any intruders passing over it.

In 1977 the Gitga'at joined with other fishermen, the United Church and environmentalists to present a united front against the Kitimat Pipeline Company's proposal to build a supertanker terminal in Kitimat. Thanks to widespread public opposition, the terminal was never built.

"The Gitga'at people will do whatever is necessary to protect our territory from the danger of oil tankers and oil spills," said Arnold Clifton, Chief Councillor of the Gitga'at First Nation. "This blockade by the women of our community is clear evidence of that. We are proud and unified by their leadership and we will protect the Great Bear Rainforest and BC's coastal waters for all British Columbians."

Beginning in early April, the women quickly exceeded the length needed to cross the channel and created a chain over 20,382 feet long. More photos and accounts of this incredible show of solidarity and opposition are available at [www.chainofhope.ca](http://www.chainofhope.ca)

Gitga'at territory encompasses approximately 7,500 square kilometres of land and water, including a major portion of Douglas Channel, which is the proposed route oil tankers would have to travel to get to and from Kitimat.

#### Contact Information

Andrew Frank  
Communications Officer  
Gitga'at First Nation  
604-367-2112  
[andrew@andrewfrank.com](mailto:andrew@andrewfrank.com)

### **FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES FACING AN INVISIBLE BUT DEADLY ENEMY - RADON GAS**

It's a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that can be deadly. Now imagine your children playing in it, or community Elders sitting and visiting in it.

It is radon, and, unbeknownst to the residents of the Tobique First Nation, a Maliseet community located in northwestern New Brunswick, some of them had been exposed to it.

Of Tobique's approximately 2,000 members, close to 1,500 live on-reserve. As part of Health Canada's National Radon Program testing, six public buildings on the First Nation community were tested for indoor radon gas a year ago. Five of them – including the community's daycare, healing lodge and wellness centre – showed elevated levels of radon.

Health Canada and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada worked with the community to address the high radon exposure in the buildings. Given the anxiety residents felt over Health Canada's test results, a survey of homes was also initiated (home testing is not part of the National Strategy). According to the Tobique First Nation Residential Radon Report (posted below), many homes had high radon levels.

Debra Bear-Brideau's home had Tobique's highest level of indoor radon gas. Although her home got the work needed to fix the radon levels, she continues to worry about her family's safety.

"We live in such an area with so much radon, that there's always the possibility of it building back up again during winter," says Bear-Brideau. "It's kinda scary this invisible gas can come in your house and hurt your kids and family."

Radon gas is an invisible, colourless and tasteless gas formed by the breakdown of uranium in rocks and soil.

"Within the province, areas that have certain types of rock (shale and granite) and soil can have higher levels of uranium in the ground, leading to more radon," says Dr. Mariane Paquet, medical officer of health for northern New Brunswick.

Radon gas is measured in becquerels per cubic metre (Bq/m<sup>3</sup>). Higher numbers of becquerels mean higher levels of radon gas in the air.

"Since it is a gas, it can move freely through the soil enabling it to escape into the atmosphere or seep into buildings," says Dr. Paquet.

Health Canada says remedial measures should be taken in a home or building when the radon concentration exceeds 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>.

Bear-Brideau's home – like so many others in New Brunswick – had among the highest indoor radon concentrations in the country.

A cross-Canada project by the National Radon Program surveyed 14,000 homes over a two-year period (2009-2011). Among those New Brunswick homes tested, 18.7 per cent had between 200-600 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> of radon, 6.1 per cent had levels above 600 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>.

Nova Scotia had the second highest percentages of indoor radon, followed by Newfoundland and Labrador and PEI.

When broken down by health region, Tobique First Nation — which is located within the Fredericton area (Health Region 3) — had a whopping 16.5 per cent of houses with radon levels above 600Bq/m<sup>3</sup>.

Despite work being done to raise awareness about radon and radon testing, it seems there still a long way to go. "I don't think a lot of First Nations communities do radon testing," says Sterling Perley, executive director of programs for the Tobique First Nation.

Simon Osmond, senior policy analyst with the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs agrees. "I know Health Canada and CMHC at different times have provided some information," says Osmond. "The thing is, information can only go so far, especially for cash stricken communities already trying to address other issues."

Through an environmental survey, Statistics Canada asked Canadians how aware they were of radon and radon testing. In New Brunswick, most knew radon was a health hazard and could describe the radioactive gas, but ninety-five per cent had not tested for radon.

Bear-Brideau says she knew what radon was, but never knew it was in her house.

“My mother Pauline Bear asked a specialist about radon in the early 1980's, but was told there wasn't any radon around this area,” she says. “When I was in university I also inquired about radon in this area and was told the same thing. I had an inkling there was more to my fatigue and feeling unwell.”

Bear-Brideau explains that she often has sinus problems while her daughter has had pneumonia several times – leaving her to now wonder if it is related to the radon.

She is curious about another potential radon link. Recently, Health Canada reported that more than 3000 lung cancer deaths may be linked to indoor radon exposure. That doesn't sit well with Bear-Brideau, whose family lost their ferret to lung cancer.

“It hit her really quick,” says Bear-Brideau. “All of a sudden she was coughing funny. I took her to the vet and the vet said she died of lung cancer. I'm concerned eventually I'll go to the hospital one of these days and they'll say ‘You have lung cancer.’”

To reduce radon gas in Bear-Brideau's home, a radon mitigation system was installed. A vent pipe system and fan were placed within her home to pull the radon out of her house, and all cracks and other openings were properly sealed.

Kelley Bush, head of radon education and awareness for Health Canada, says the federal government is doing everything it can to raise awareness about radon and radon testing. “In the Atlantic region, we're have partners with the Lung Association. They sell test kits for thirty-five dollars that includes the analysis too,” says Bush.

Roshini Kassie, manager at the New Brunswick Lung Association, has even gone as far as mailing test kits across the country. “It doesn't prevent someone calling from PEI to call the New Brunswick Association to order a test kit,” says Kassie. “Or they can go on our Facebook page and order them.”

Although close to 200 radon tests are waiting to be collected for analysis at the Tobique First Nation, the community is taking the lead on raising awareness about radon and radon testing.

Health Canada is currently testing federal workplaces until the end of March 2013. A report is expected to be released at this time.

But in the meantime, Bear-Brideau says she will continue to leave her windows open as a precaution – even in winter.

## **TRAIN DERAILMENT CREATES DESPERATION IN REMOTE FIRST NATION**

CBC News

It's been four days since the only rail line to Churchill was shut down due to a derailment and the situation is getting desperate for one First Nation.

People from the remote War Lake First Nation, located along the Omnitrac Canada rail line about 690 kilometres north of Winnipeg, rely on a four-hour train ride to Thompson for groceries.

Chief Betsy Kennedy said the community of 244 people has had to charter a plane because they're running out of food.

"Well, we don't have no formula, I mean baby formula, and you know fresh milk, we don't have any and the necessities — bread, eggs," she said, adding a number of her community members are stranded in Thompson.

Thirteen grain cars of a 50-car load derailed Monday en route to the grain storage facility at the Port of Churchill.

Kennedy said derailments are a regular problem because much of the track is built across northern bog.

She's been told the rail line could be closed for another week before the derailment is cleaned up. VIA tells CBC it is still unclear as to when the line will re-open.

"This is more than an inconvenience. I have band members stuck in Thompson who need to get home to take care of loved ones and to earn their living," Kennedy added in a press release issued Friday by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Keewatin Tribal Council Inc.

"It's expensive any way you look at it; whether they wait it out, or pay for a charter flight home as there is also no regular scheduled air service to the community."

The derailments are also worrying to First Nations because Omnitrac Canada hopes to eventually use the same rail line to transport millions of litres of light sweet crude oil a year up to Churchill where it can be loaded onto tankers.

"This is a serious safety and environmental risk above all. Community residents are very concerned and have come out to community meetings to demand upgrades to the line and increased standards and monitoring," said Chief Walter Spence of Fox Lake Cree Nation, chair of Keewatin Tribal Council.

Churchill, known as the "polar bear capital of the world," is an ecotourism destination for polar bear, beluga whale and bird watching.

Figures from the Transportation Safety Board of Canada show there have been 63 accidents on the rail line between 2003 and 2012 (not including Monday's crash). All but 10 were derailments.

"As northerners, we cannot afford to just accept that this rail line may potentially be the catalyst in causing irreversible damage to our environment, health and safety, and potentially every aspect of our lives."

## **BC MÉTIS FEDERATION AND MÉTIS FEDERATION OF CANADA REACH AGREEMENT**

(Ottawa, Ont.) BC Metis Federation leadership travelled to Ottawa this week to meet with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). In addition to the meet with the Government of Canada a meeting was arranged with the Métis Federation of Canada (MFC).

BC Métis Federation and MFC have been on discussions for some time to try and reach agreement in defining how the organizations can work together to address the interests and concerns of their respective Métis constituents. Métis Federation of Canada has been forming a new National Métis representative organization for the past few years and has been reaching “treaty” agreements with Métis organization from across the country. Yesterday the organizations reached agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which created a framework for the organizations to work together now and in the future.

BC Métis Federation President Keith Henry stated; “I am pleased to have signed the MOU to work together. There is a lot of work on a national scale which BC Métis Federation cannot do. However we recognize the importance of working together with organizations who are founded on the right ideas including addressing Métis culture, supporting grassroots communities and members, and standing up and taking positions on issues that matter.”

Métis Federation of Canada Interim President Robert Pilon; “I am very pleased to have the agreement. Métis Federation of Canada has been working with many organizations from coast to coast to coast. We need to find ways to bring all Métis people in Canada back together and inspire us to want a better future. Our leadership at the Métis Federation of Canada is honoured to work with the BC Métis Federation.”

BC Métis Federation President Henry concluded, “BC Métis Federation will continue to advocate and work together for our members in British Columbia. While the meetings with the Government of Canada were challenging, it is plainly obvious that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada knows there are serious issues of Métis governance and the delivery of programs and services to benefit Métis people. We hope the Government of Canada comes to better understand the solutions the Métis people are creating for new relationships and options for governance and service delivery. Thank you to the strength of the Métis Federation of Canada for your volunteer work across Canada and together we can make a difference.”

## **DAVID COON, MLA FOR GREEN PARTY OF NEW BRUNSWICK SEEKS SUPPORT**

Friday June 6, 2014

Dear Friend:

I am writing to ask you to help me win a seat in the New Brunswick Legislature on September 22nd. You can help me make history as the first leader of a provincial Green Party to win a seat anywhere in Canada, and of course as a Green MLA in New Brunswick.

I have been canvassing door-to door in Fredericton with a team of volunteers since last fall, and have been well received. People are saying they want my voice in the Legislative Assembly.

You know me as a person of principle with strong values who has been standing up for people, communities and nature for my entire adult life. Now it is time for me to do the same thing in the political realm, from a seat in the Legislative Assembly.

Will you help me with the seat for Fredericton South with a donation to my election campaign? Remember you can get up to 75% of your donation back at tax time if you are a resident of New Brunswick.

With your financial contribution, we can afford to have a storefront campaign office, pay for the advertizing we need, hire a campaign manager, and ensure my election signs are everywhere.

Thank you for your support. I look forward to winning a seat to represent the people of Fredericton South, and work for a green and just New Brunswick.

Sincerely,  
David Coon, Leader Green Party of New Brunswick

## **CHESTER NEZ LAST OF THE ORIGINAL 29 NAVAJO CODE TALKERS DIES**

Chester Nez, the last of a group of Navajos who went to war as “Code Talkers”, has died at the age of 93. Nez lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His death is being called the end of an era by the Marine Corps. He joined the Marines as a young man in the 10th grade, lying about his age. He is the last of 29 men recruited to create a code based on the Navajo language.

Chester Nez recalled being recruited at the boarding school he was attending. He saw the mission as his chance to get out of there. Though many showed up at the recruiting station, only 29 were picked for the original group, Nez among them. The Marines recruited Navajos to create an unbreakable code because their language is almost impossible to learn. Along with syntax and tonal issues that are difficult for non-Navajos, until this point the Navajo language had never been written down. The Code talkers were deployed to the Pacific, where their codes baffled the Japanese, who had previously broken American codes. Nez saw action at Guadalcanal and Peleliu, and the Code Talkers were involved in every engagement the Marines fought in the Pacific. The Japanese never broke the code.

The code was based on common, everyday words in the Navajo language. This made it easy for the Code Talkers to memorize the code. Chester Nez said that Code Talkers could not hide when the bombs started falling, because they were the ones who had to relay the information needed to report to command. To do their jobs the best, they had to be out in the thick of things, and Nez was always proud of that. There was occasionally backlash from other, non-Navajo soldiers. Some attitudes was racist in

nature, but mostly the soldiers did not understand what the Code Talkers were doing. Once the magnitude of their mission became clear, the non-Navajo soldiers were invested in the Code Talkers mission.

By the end of the war the Code Talkers numbered 300. Nez was discharged, but volunteered for two years of service during the Korean War. Nez was forbidden to talk about his time as a Code Talker until 1968. He went to work as a painter for the Veteran's Administration until 1974. Then, his mission was declassified. The Code Talker's fame grew, and they were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2001. In 2002, director John Woo made *Windtalkers*, a dramatization of the Code Talker's story starring Adam Beach as one of the Navajos and Nicholas Cage as a white soldier whose mission it is to protect the Code Talker. Chester Nez was pleased to see his story on the big screen. In 2012, he graduated from college.

Chester Nez, the last of the Navajo Code Talkers, died at the age of 93. He was proud to be able to serve his country, and was pleased with the attention his service brought to the Navajo people, though he wished his children had learned to speak Navajo. The Navajo nation's flags will fly at half staff in his honor.

## **INDIGENOUS HEALTH-CARE RESEARCH GETS \$10M FROM TORONTO DOCTOR**

University of Toronto announces donation for National Aboriginal Day

CBC News

A Toronto neurosurgeon has donated \$10 million toward improving the health of Canada's indigenous people.

The donation was announced by the University of Toronto as part of the recognition and celebration of National Aboriginal Day on Saturday.

Dr. Michael Dan and his wife Amira Dan gave the money to the Dalla Lana School of Public Health for the creation of an institute that will research and come up with solutions to health issues within the aboriginal population.

"I am excited and honoured to take part in an initiative that will improve the health and well-being of one of Canada's most marginalized peoples," said Dan in a release.

"The institute will be based at Canada's leading university and will provide innovative solutions designed to narrow the much too large gap between the health status of indigenous and non-indigenous populations."

The proceeds stem from the sale of Novopharm Ltd., a generic drug company founded by Dan's father, Leslie.

The university says an advisory committee will be assembled to ensure that key voices from across the indigenous community are involved.

"The actual creation of an institute that merges traditional and contemporary experience in health is a truly exciting development for Indigenous peoples the world over," said Elder Fred Kelly, a member of the Ojibways of Onigaming and a citizen of the Anishinaabe Nation. "It is noble in vision and bold in mission. Its spirit of innovativeness is a dream coming true."

**DAN'S CORNER : THIS IS AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF CANADA DAY  
CELEBRATIONS AND INDIAN PEOPLE BEING PART OF SUCH CELEBRATIONS.**

Canada's birthday. What does it mean to me as an Indian, as a Beothuk, as a Micmac, as a Maliseet, as a Mohawk, etc. I can say in all sincerity that it doesn't mean anything to me and it doesn't do anything for me except conjure up thoughts of the loss of our spiritual homeland along with the loss of our birthright to live as our ancestors lived for thousands of generations - free, happy, healthy and in peace.

Having lived on this portion of our Earth Mother known as Turtle Island (North America to the Euro-Canadians) for the last five hundred million years, can I now celebrate with the invaders; the taking of our homeland in order for them to build their nation?

Having been considered an outsider, a stranger in my own land for last five hundred years, can I now celebrate with white invaders who stole our land simply because these white invaders now say that we should forget what happened in the past and let bygones be bygones.

But I have to say to you - How can you ask that of me, when from my vantage point, the basement of this nation, I can see just how unstable and shaky your country's foundation really is. The instability is present due to what the foundation is made from. Which is the blood, flesh, bones and lives of some one hundred million of my people. Also included in the make-up of that foundation are things like violence, genocide, racism, greed, lies, deceit, fraud and stolen lands.

So I must say to you, that you don't know what you ask of me when you ask me to celebrate your Canada Day. Maybe if it were to be renamed the Theft of Canada Day, maybe then.

Maybe it would be easier for me today, to celebrate your Canada Day if back five hundred years ago your ancestors had the respect, the love, the compassion, and the spirituality to sit down and talk with my people as equals, as fellow human beings and speak to them about your dreams, your aspirations, your humanity, and your spirituality. Maybe now there would be reason to celebrate. Maybe if one hundred and thirty years ago, your ancestors would have asked our ancestors to sit down and talk together as equals about building your nation upon our nation. Maybe now it would be some thing to celebrate.

Maybe if you had recognized our spirituality and our humanity.

Maybe if you had acknowledged our rights as nations and our rights to the land.

Maybe if you had accepted my people as equals, as a people worthy of your love, respect, compassion and understanding.

Maybe if you had reconciled with my people back one hundred and thirty years ago, maybe today we could live in mutual respect, peace, harmony and unity in this land we know as Turtle Island.

Our respected and wise Elders feel that even after all of the violence, the genocide, the racism, and all of the destruction which has been inflicted upon our people, that the possibility of our living together in unity and peace within the sacred circle of life in love and mutual respect can still be accomplished, in fact they say it must happen if we are all to survive, provided that these four steps (recognize, acknowledge, accept and reconcile) are taken by the descendants of those European invaders.

All My Relations,  
Dan Ennis, June 21, 2014