

Tobique First Nation, NB October 2010

Wulustuk Times

Wulustuk - Indigenous name for St. John River

This publication produced monthly at Tobique, NB, Canada E7H 5K3

Table Contents: October 2010

- SENIOR SUFFERS BECAUSE OF TOBIQUE CRISIS
- PASSMAQUODDY CHIEF WANTS POINT LEPREAU REMOVED
- NB NOT CHARGING ABORIGINAL HUNTERS
- ABORIGINAL LEADERS TAKE OIL CONCERNS TO WASHINGTON
- ARCHEOLOGICAL FIND HALTS NB ROADWORK
- FIRST NATIONS TAKE OTTAWA TO COURT OVER CARIBOU
- ABORIGINAL EDUCATION A PRIORITY, - MINISTERS SAY
- DAN'S CORNER: Native Spirituality
- DEAN'S DEN: Walking With My Dog

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:

You can reach us at Box 3226, Perth-Andover, NB, Canada, E7H 5K3, or at Box 603, Ft. Fairfield, ME 04742. Call us at 506-273-6737 (NB, Canada), and on the net we're at: pesun @nbnet.nb.ca

SENIOR SUFFERS BECAUSE OF TOBIQUE CRISIS

Telegraph-Journal

TOBIQUE FIRST NATION - It takes considerable effort for Lillian Deveau to slowly shuffle her way across her small kitchen. At 88, she has diabetes, a bad back and legs that often can be so stiff that she can barely walk. She lives alone and struggles to give herself insulin needles. She's forced to prop herself up using a cane to ensure she doesn't fall whenever she cooks.

Deveau is one of the casualties following a series of cutbacks implemented in the community since the federal government forced the band to rein in its spending and gain control of Tobique First Nation's debt, which now sits at about \$40 million.

With debt this high, the federal government intervened in August of 2007 and appointed third-party managers to take over the management of Tobique First Nation's finances. Currently, Campbellton-based Allen, Paquet and Arseneau chartered accountants are doing that job and have two employees working out of the band's fisheries building.

In the meantime, Deveau has lost her personal support worker, who arrived daily and spent two hours helping her with household chores and personal care.

"It's like they've said to heck with the older people," she said.

Once, in the middle of the night, Deveau fell in the bathroom and had to wait for help until 11 a.m. the next day when a neighbour dropped by and discovered her on the floor.

"I'm always afraid I'm going to fall again," she said.

Many community members are upset about the long history of financial problems on Tobique First Nation, located where the St. John and Tobique rivers converge near Perth-Andover.

Once a band's debt reaches eight per cent or more of the total federal spending in the community, Ottawa steps in to look at what's happening. In the winter of 2005, the federal government appointed co-managers to work with the band's administration and elected representatives to better manage finances for Tobique First Nation.

When that level of intervention didn't sort things out, Ottawa appointed third-party managers to essentially manage the books for the community.

As a result of efforts to control spending in recent years, band employees have been laid off and the unemployment rate in the community has soared to as much as 80 per cent.

Band councillor Dave Perley was so concerned about the community's growing debt that he was among those elected officials who asked for a forensic audit to be done on the community's finances to provide a clear picture of how the funding coming onto the reserve was being spent.

As a result of those requests, in July of 2008 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada hired Navigant Consulting, a business consulting firm in Ottawa, to probe the band's spending of roughly \$60 million in federal funding between 2002/03 and 2007/08, as well as to look into allegations of corruption and misuse of funds.

This month, the forensic auditors wrote a letter to the federal government explaining that the audit couldn't be completed because key financial documents had gone missing and the chief and council didn't co-operate. The document listed a handful of serious allegations brought forward to them relating to misuse of public funds and conflict of interest on the part of elected officials and band management.

Former chief Gerald Bear said such allegations are unsubstantiated.

The auditors recommended the band put into place improved record-keeping practices and to develop conflict of interest guidelines.

Perley is deeply disappointed the audit couldn't be completed and remains concerned about the debt and the allegations of corruption that continue to swirl around the community.

He says the debt has had a direct impact on peoples' lives with the resulting cutbacks to services.

"I can't sleep at night knowing that people are suffering because of this," he said.

But Dougal MacDonald, Indian and Northern Affairs' associate regional director general for the Atlantic region, disagreed that the appointment of third-party managers has meant that essential services such as home care are no longer being provided.

"Since we appointed the third-party manager in August of 2007, all the essential services continue to be provided in Tobique ... I would hope that all individuals who are eligible to receive INAC programs are indeed receiving those services," he said.

If there are eligible people who aren't receiving the services to which they are entitled, MacDonald urges people to come forward and report that information to the third-party managers and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

He also said that Tobique First Nation will remain under third-party management until the federal government is "comfortable that those essential services can be delivered to the community" by the local band office.

PASSAMAQUODDY CHIEF WANTS POINT LEPREAU REMOVED

CBC News

The Passamaquoddy Nation is calling for the removal of the Point Lepreau nuclear generating station.

Chief Hugh Akagi said the power plant is built on Passamaquoddy land.

"There are people today who still remember the Passamaquoddy village that was here — the summer village — and how natives from Sipayik, which is Pleasant Point in Maine, would paddle their canoes around our bay and up into Lepreau and camp there for the summer where they would do their hunting and fishing on a seasonal basis," said Akagi.

Akagi said he's presented documents to the federal government to back up that claim. He worries that future generations will be left to deal with nuclear waste. The Passamaquoddy have now joined a coalition lobbying for the plant to be decommissioned.

NB NOT CHARGING ABORIGINAL HUNTERS

CBC News

The province of New Brunswick has temporarily stopped charging First Nations hunters found outside their traditional territories.

The move will not help a Mi'kmaq man from Saint John, however, who was convicted last month of hunting illegally in 2005.

Steven Bernard was found guilty of hunting without a licence, but in his decision, Judge Alfred Brien did accept part of Bernard's argument that called into question the division of Maliseet and Mi'kmaq territory.

Bernard said he was told he was hunting in Maliseet territory when Department of Natural Resources rangers stopped him in a wooded area of Saint John.

Bernard said he's lived his entire life in the city, as did his father. His grandfather moved to Saint John from a reserve in Nova Scotia early in the last century.

That proud ancestry worked against Bernard, however. If his ties had been to a New Brunswick reserve, his case would likely not have pushed through the courts for five years.

In 2007, the province agreed to roundtable negotiations with native leaders to erase the Ganong line, an 1899 document that sets out the territories of New Brunswick's three native groups — the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy.

With the launch of those talks in 2007, the Department of Natural Resources stopped enforcing the rules. Ron Loughrey, assistant deputy minister of New Brunswick's Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, said no charges are being laid right now.

"We're not charging anybody for hunting or fishing in a different territory right now, as long as they're associated with a First Nation community within New Brunswick," he said Wednesday.

It is an arrangement Bernard finds hard to swallow.

"So, I don't understand how a person can be two or three generations here and they're saying my rights are only in Nova Scotia," he said. "I've never lived there, never resided there. I've always paid taxes here."

Despite the suspension of charges for members of New Brunswick First Nations, talks to remove the boundaries went nowhere. The provincial government hopes they will resume at some point in the future.

Bernard said he now faces a mandatory seven days in jail and a \$2,000 fine. He said he cannot afford a lawyer and will likely not appeal the provincial court decision.

ABORIGINAL LEADERS TAKE OILSAND CONCERNS TO WASHINGTON

ctv edmonton.ca

Two Canadian Aboriginal leaders have taken their concerns about the province's oilsands to decision makers in Washington, D.C.

Francois Paulette from the Northwest Territories and Albertan George Poitras met with White House Council on Environmental Quality, and the Department of the Interior. The leaders say the Washington officials were unaware about the environmental impact of the oilsands.

They say they expressed their concerns that oilsands production contributes to climate change, pollution, and it may be hurting humans, animals and fish.

"I just ask the American people to rethink your plan, to rethink what you are doing and what you are about to do -- you're going to enable the destruction of the environment and it's people," said Paulette.

Last week, three influential U.S. senators wrapped up a tour of Alberta's oilsands. The premier flew to Fort McMurray with the trio of senators who are all part of a senate committee with a stake in Alberta oil.

CTV News was the only media outlet to speak with all three senators Friday. South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham, Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss and North Carolina Senator Kay Hagan participated in the event, which included visits to Syncrude's oilsands facility, and Nexen's Long Lake in situ project and upgrader.

Hollywood director James Cameron is expected to take a tour of the oilsands next week. It is expected he will take time to meet with Aboriginal leaders as well.

ARCHEOLOGICAL FIND HALTS NB ROADWORK

CBC News

Road work in southwestern New Brunswick has been suspended in the Pennfield area after an unexpected archeological find.

The discovery of what are believed to be First Nations artifacts happened in Charlotte County after torrential rains during post-tropical storm Earl exposed the objects.

Fred Blaney, an assistant deputy minister of transportation, said department staff always do an extensive environmental review before they begin new highway construction.

When the Pennfield area was surveyed before the work on Route 1 began, the review produced no apparent archeological findings, Blaney said. But after the massive rainstorm, archeologists wanted to take a second look at the site because it held potential for a discovery, he said.

The discovery they made late last week included evidence of some tools.

"Anytime that you uncover artifacts of any significance within the province it's certainly exciting," Blaney said.

"We, from the road-building side, of course we have a schedule to meet and we want to make sure we do the right thing as far as investigation and recovery of the artifacts, and such that we can get on with our business."

Archeologists with the province's Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport are now on the site reviewing the artifacts. It will take up to three weeks before they decide the level of recovery needed to preserve the items.

The department has sent letters about the find to the Passamaquoddy Nation, the Maliseet Advisory Committee on Archaeology and the Union of New Brunswick Indians.

FIRST NATIONS TAKE OTTAWA TO COURT OVER CARIBOU

CBC News

Alberta First Nations and environmental groups are going to court to force the federal government to protect northern Alberta caribou herds.

Lawyers for the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Enoch Cree First Nation and the Beaver Lake Cree Nation filed an application for a judicial review Wednesday morning at the Federal Court in Edmonton.

"Today is kind of historic for us, because we have finally come to the realization that enough is enough," said Chief Al Lameman of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation. "Our animals are suffering because of the oil exploration that's going on."

The First Nations will argue that as federal minister of the environment, Jim Prentice is required to issue an emergency order to protect caribou habitat.

They will also claim that Prentice must file a recovery plan for the animals, as required under the Species at Risk Act, said Jack Woodward, the Victoria-based lawyer who is representing the First Nations.

"He hasn't done that," Woodward said. "He's three years out of date. He was supposed to do it by June 5, 2007. It says it right on the face of the statute."

Environmental legal group Ecojustice filed a similar application in the same court Wednesday on behalf of the Alberta Wilderness Association and the Pembina Institute.

Prentice's office told CBC News he won't comment on cases before the courts. The federal government has 60 days to respond to the applications.

The legal actions follow up on a warning that was made in late July when First Nations gave Ottawa a deadline of Aug. 27 to create an emergency plan to stop development in areas of northeastern Alberta they say are critical to the woodland caribou.

They sent a letter to Prentice on July 15 asking that no more development permits be issued for the area. If Ottawa didn't comply, the groups said they would go to court.

In the letter, the groups referred to research by Stan Boutin of the University of Alberta that suggests caribou herds have declined so dramatically, they are in danger of extinction.

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION A PRIORITY, -MINISTERS SAY

CBC

Aboriginal education "remains a priority," the provincial and territorial education ministers said Friday, adding more meetings are planned to follow up on a 2009 conference that focused on the education of native people.

Ministers continue to work collaboratively to eliminate the gap in academic achievement and education rates between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students," said a joint declaration at the end of the ministers' latest gathering in Winnipeg.

The communicate did not elaborate on what measures would be taken to address the gap, but noted it was a followup to last year's "summit" of education ministers focusing exclusively on aboriginal education.

Ministers underscored their commitment and interest in continued engagement with [national aboriginal organizations], the release said.

The meeting was chaired by Manitoba Education Minister Diane McGifford, who said meetings would be set up with officials from the federal government.

"We know that we have to discuss the aboriginal issues with them," McGifford said. "We know that aboriginal education has a long way to go." But we do know that progress is being made."

Further work is also to be done on funding native education and collecting data on aboriginal students to track their progress.

Our continuing dialogue on aboriginal education provides us with a better understanding of the needs of all First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples, and enriches our ongoing work with regional aboriginal organizations in each province and territory," stated Rob Morris, Saskatchewan's minister of Advanced Education, Employment and immigration.

DAN'S CORNER: -Native Spirituality

For our people spirituality comes directly from the one who created all thingsthe Creator. We are told we are to live a spiritual life from conception through to the completion of our earth walk. All our daily living is determined and is permeated by, and with, spirituality. Since we are to live in a spiritual way throughout our earth walk we have no need to intermediaries such as priests. We relate and communicate directly with the Creator.

If our people were to give a gender to the Creator it would be a woman. As the ones who have the sacred responsibility to bring forth life, we therefore refer to women as the Life givers. In the same way the Creator creates life or brings forth life, so does woman create life or brings forth life. To our people. Life givers create life just like Creator creates life.

She gave our people "Original Instructions" or traditional teachings, we are to live by on a moment to moment basis. We are to live in, and as light or light energy, we are to live life, live in love, in peace, in healing, we are to live in awareness, forgiveness, truth, honesty, compassion, humility, respect and wisdom.

In our spirituality, man had no part in its creation. His responsibility is to receive and accept those original instructions, to preserve those teachings, to share those teachings and to pass on those teachings. There is no hierarchical structure, dominated by man alone who makes up volumes of "good books" with lots and lots of rules that serve to control people, to keep women out and down, or serve to stigmatize "others" and exclude them.

Included in those original instructions on how we are to care for our Spiritual Earth Mother. As she is the one who provides for us, nurtures us, protects us and who demonstrates to us on a moment by moment basis her love for us, should we demonstrate the same to her by showing our love to her by respecting her, nurturing her, and protecting her. Since she was made perfect by the Creator in the first place., we do not try to change her, nor try to improve her in any way, that would be insulting and would demonstrate our complete lack of respect for both the Earth Mother and Creator.

The great Earth Mother is our spiritual connection to all things in Creation, to the Ancestors, to the Seventh generation, to the Light energy, to the universal Mind and to the Creator, as a way of communicating with Creator, as a way of purifying ourselves physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, and as a way of expressing our humility, thankfulness and gratefulness for all of the many gifts of the Creator.

For myself, the spiritual ways and teachings of our people was the last and the most difficult to return to, to embrace, understand, and recognize. When I discovered that I had an Indian identity some 35 years ago, I plunged into this Indian identity with almost total abandonment, save for the spiritual aspect. This was my personal hang-up because of the brainwashing I had received from the civilized Christian blackrobes who had forced on our people their teachings that included , among other things, that our peoples' spiritual way of relating to Creator was all wrong, sinful and was the way of the white devil. But almost without my being aware of how I was changing spiritually, and slowly moving toward our spiritual traditional teachings, I began to yearn in my heart and spirit to experience fully, our peoples' spiritual ways and ceremonies.

At first it was our sacred drum that awoke my heart and had such a deep and profound impact on my spirit. Then it was our sacred pipe ceremony that created a similar deep and profound impact on my spirit, and then it was our sacred sweat lodge ceremony with an even more intense impact on my whole being at all levels and at all dimensions. After all of these things happened to me I experienced a sense of deep and a profound sadness., loneliness and a deep sense of loss of something that once had and to which there was a deep and abiding spirit centered relationship and connection. It was my identity.

Someone had ripped out of my center, my spirit and my identity as a human being and left this empty shell without spirit, love, respect, or a future. It was at this time my life entered my angry and grieving stage. Over time I have managed to almost rid my life of the anger and rage but not completely. The grieving is still with me but my returning to my own identity I am now better able to recognize, acknowledge, accept and reconcile the source of my grief and grieving.

Through attending ceremonies and opening up to my Medicine Elders, I was able to begin my healing process, my healing path and journey. Through this process I discovered my purpose on my earth walk and was also able to recognize and better understand my task and responsibilities I had to fulfill during my earth walk

Though I still have a long way to go, I am at this time attempting to live our spiritual traditional teachings on a moment by moment basis. I am working at putting myself back in balance as well as working at making myself whole once again. I am also working at mending and healing my relationship to Creation, to the Ancestor, to the People and to the Seventh Generation.

Everything in Creation has a purpose. Everything in Creation has a task and responsibilities to fulfill during their earth walk. One of the most sacred of these responsibilities given to each of us is to recognize, acknowledge and accept our sacred relatedness to all things. This wisdom is the primary reason why our people were able to retain and maintain perfect balance and harmony and keep our sacred Turtle Island in balance and harmony, clean and beautiful for those millions of years prior to contact.

During this time, individuals and whole peoples lived a life that recognized, acknowledged, accept and respected our sacred responsibility...to know, respect, love and protect our Sacred Earth Mother and all of Creation. We today must do the same.

All My Relations, Dan Ennis

DEAN'S DEN: Walking With My Dog

They can talk about their medicines
And the relief that they may get
But there's nothing beats the "stress relief"
That a dog gives for a pet,
They can talk about "security"
The Alarm-System they installed
But there's nothing like dogs barking
For a burglary forestalled,
They can talk about companionship
The "blues" and those "mood swings"
But there's nothing like the comfort
That a good dog always brings,
They can talk about "the feelings"
That they get from "this or "that"
But there's nothing like a loving lick
Or a doggie's head to pat,
They can talk about their sidewalks
The asphalt streets on which they jog
But there's nothing more enjoying
Than going walking with my dog!

D.C. Butterfield

Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you can be successful or be happy.