Tsay Keh Dene

Peace River Regional District

Fraser-Fort George Regional District

City of Prince George

Community to Community Forum
April 3, 2006

Power of Friendship Hall
Prince George Native Friendship Centre
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Final Report prepared by Kerry Pateman, MCIP
Forum Objectives and Background

On April 3, 2006, Tsay Keh Dene members and the Peace River Regional District, Fraser-Fort George Regional District and the City of Prince George came together in a Community to Community Forum held at the Power of Friendship Hall in the Prince George Native Friendship Centre. This was intended to be the first step, an informal meeting to build relationships, open lines of communication and discuss matters of mutual interest and opportunity.

The Tsay Keh Dene were very interested in informing governments and the public that they are an equal and legitimate government that has interest in their land. They want to be part of any discussion around future development in their traditional territory. They want to build relationships based on respect and trust to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for their community and their traditional territory.

During event planning meetings, it was decided that the event would include a local government session during the day, and an open, advertised, public forum in the evening.

Invited Participants

This initial forum was for the members of the Tsay Keh Dene to meet with representatives from the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, Peace River Regional District, District of Mackenzie and the City of Prince George. Unfortunately, due to scheduling, the District of Mackenzie was unable to send any representatives.
Community to Community Forum

Local Government Meeting

This forum was held in the Power of Friendship Hall in the Native Friendship Centre in Prince George. Karen Goodings, Chair, Peace River Regional District chaired the event.

Everyone was welcomed to the event, grace was said and a buffet lunch social was enjoyed.

Opening Remarks – Karen Goodings thanked everyone for attending and indicated that this forum is the beginning – an opportunity for improved communication and a chance to get to know each other. Grand Chief Gordon Pierre spoke on behalf of Tsay Keh Dene, thanking all those in attendance for coming and indicating that this is the first time they have sat down with the local governments in attendance. He further spoke of “reaching out in friendship”.

Introductions – all in attendance introduced themselves.

    Tsay Keh Dene – 25 participants
    Peace River Regional District – 3 participants
    Fraser-Fort George Regional District – 6 participants
    City of Prince George – 4 participants

Presentations were invited from each of the governments represented, commencing with the Tsay Keh Dene.
**Tsay Keh Dene Presentations**

A community profile was distributed outlining details about the Tsay Keh Dene and a map showing the location of their village. Also, a photo album was available for viewing showing numerous historical photos of people, homes and the land.

Tsay Keh Dene band members spoke from the heart, introducing themselves and talking about issues that are of importance and significance to them. Virtually all in attendance presented some aspect of their story and the notes here only capture a fraction of the information presented.

Deana Poole spoke of her community and how education is a challenge. The school on the reserve only goes to Grade 9 and then the youth must leave home to continue. The youth that do leave and move to a larger community find it more difficult to succeed as they are faced with challenges and presented with opportunities that they have not been taught to deal with. Deana herself has brought several young people to live with her in Prince George to attend high school. She provides a supportive home; allowing them to complete their high school education, yet remain strongly tied to their community and traditional values. More support such as this is the only way young people can complete their high school and consider post secondary education. Deana believes that “doors of opportunity” are needed – not “windows of opportunity”.

Several youth were in attendance at the forum to listen and contribute.

Liz Davies spoke of employment. There is currently an unemployment rate of 85% in the Village. For those that can find employment, it is often with industry where the employees must mine or cut trees which goes against everything they are taught. The internal conflict this creates is a problem. Also employees don’t just need job training, they also should be trained in the social aspects of the workplace.

While members of the community want to succeed, it is hard on reserve. Once they leave, the reality is that they find themselves faced with many social issues that are hard to overcome. Also, off reserve, they face discrimination and stereotyping that make it more difficult to be successful.

In answer to enquiries regarding the health supports in the community, it was noted that a nurse comes to the community two days a week and a doctor, once a month for about 4 hours. If someone from the reserve sees a doctor off the reserve, they must pay. There is a noted lack of cultural sensitivity apparent by outside workers that come to the community.
Erica Poole discussed her plans to develop a website for the Tsay Keh Dene. She would like to have more information and some history and stories.

Ray Izoni spoke of the Sekani history, explaining how important the past is to the Sekani people. They have many traditional stories that go back to times when their territory was a grassland. The ties to the land are so important. Families still hunt and fish and dry berries. The territory is covered with traditional trails and ‘places’ that have historical significance.

Since the 1950’s the Tsay Keh Dene have faced considerable change. Along with the increase in mining and forestry, the largest impact was caused by the development of the WAC Bennet Dam and the creation of the Williston Reservoir. This resulted in flooding of their territory and relocation of the village. Amazingly, this massive hydroelectric power facility does not supply power to the village. Instead the village must rely on a diesel generator.

Development within the Tsay Keh Dene territory has resulted in huge physical changes to the landscape destroying travel corridors, wildlife habitats, hunting grounds and trap lines. They have had to shift from traditional to non-traditional food sources because of the fear of contaminants in the plants, fish and wildlife. They feel no one is listening.

It was stated that there is significant concern about the environmental impact of the proposed Kemess North mine and the proposal to dispose of waste in Amazay Lake (Duncan Lake). There are creeks in and out of the lake that flow right through Sekani communities. The Tsay Keh Dene want to work to find an alternative, they wish to be a part of the discussion around finding the best solution. There was some concern raised because of a letter written by the City of Prince George in which it was believed the City supported the Kemess North project.

Mayor Colin Kinsley explained that the City’s position was that they have given a qualified support to the project, subject to proper environmental review and subject to First Nations support.

Members of the Tsay Keh Dene stressed the desire to be involved in discussions involving their traditional territory and the need to have their experts listened to.

Jean Isaac spoke of the impact of so much change throughout the last several decades. This change has affected the mind, body and soul. They are fragmented spiritually and have lost their way. They want to ensure that the land is left for the future. They do not have the right to destroy the land.

Bill Poole stated that they have talked about education – school education – but he outlined the need to provide traditional education. The young need to be taught traditional knowledge and wisdom. They want to see clean water, clean air.
and old growth. Everything is part of the ecosystem and it can sustain us if we look after it. It is vital that western science recognize this.

They have seen an increase in hunting and a decline in wildlife in the region. They would like to see limited entry hunting introduced.

**City of Prince George/Regional District of Fraser-Fort George**

Mayor Colin Kinsley (RDFFG Chair) spoke of the commitment of the local governments to build strong relationships with the local first nations. He spoke of the success of their relationship with the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation. Two Community to Community Forums were held, one in 2001 and another in 2002. A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation and Communication was signed between the Lheidli T’enneh and both local governments in 2002. (a copy of this was circulated for information) Treaty settlement lands are within the city and the regional district and both governments have worked to bring treaty negotiations to a local level. The Comprehensive Master Agreement is underway at this time.

The City and Regional District are available to assist Tsay Keh Dene in many ways, from job shadowing and capacity building to assistance with treaty talks.

Board member and City Councillor Don Basserman outlined ways in which the Regional District could help improve future relations:

- Assist with administrative, staff, political matters in constructive capacity
- Future Community to Community Forum
- Invitation to PGTAC to observe
- Share information from PGTAC
- Relationship building

**Peace River Regional District**

Fred Banham provided information about the Peace River Regional District, outlining the land area they encompass and the communities within the regional district. It is a vast area with services such as fire protection, solid waste, emergency response, water, sewer, land use planning, building inspection, parks, recreation facilities and economic development provided to some of the area. While the Tsay Keh traditional territory falls largely within this regional district, the transportation routes and economic ties from the community lead south to Mackenzie and Prince George. This Regional District is interested in keeping the lines of communication open and discussing ways in which they can assist the band.
Summary

The forum was successful in providing an opportunity for members from Tsay Keh Dene, Peace River Regional District, Fraser-Fort George Regional District and the City of Prince George to sit together in an informal meeting and learn about each other. All in attendance agreed that the forum was worthwhile and that it is important to keep these lines of communication open and to continue to meet to discuss issues and matters of mutual interest. Follow up discussions need to be set in the very near future.

Key issues for follow-up discussions

1. Communication – neighbour to neighbour – another Forum involving the same governments and the District of Mackenzie and other Sekani nations
2. Health – support needed for improved local health care
3. Transportation issues
4. Education challenges
5. Economic development
6. Environmental issues – a specific meeting to discuss Kemess North is warranted
7. Emergency Planning
8. Over hunting in the region

An informal buffet dinner was available from 5:30 to 6:30
This was a casual, informal dinner that allowed participants to talk and get to know one another better.
Public Open Forum

The evening session involved an open forum; a casual setting where participants were invited to speak. Karl Sturmanis and Kerry Pateman chaired this portion of the event.

All attendees were welcomed and a round robin introduction took place.

Vera Poole spoke about the changes that the Tsay Keh Dene have experienced including the residential schools, flooding of Williston Reservoir, the opening of the Kemess South mine, and logging. All of these impacted their way of life. They used to be so self sufficient, gathering, hunting and fishing for their food. The Tsay Keh Dene are survivors but how much more can they survive.

In 1971 their own school was built, however there are still education challenges. The school has kindergarten to Grade 9, and then students have to leave the reserve to continue on. Luckily they have someone like Deana to encourage the teenagers to continue on with their schooling and to provide a home in Prince George for them to stay.

In 1990 there were more homes built and the village got power. They have never had any benefit from Williston Reservoir. The power to the village is by way of a generator. The village was served with telephone about 5 or 6 years ago, now they have the internet and TV. Life has changed.

The Tsay Keh Dene band has 362 members, with 197 living on reserve and 165 off reserve. The community has 58 residential houses and accommodation for up to 10 visitors. However the community is not actually located on reserve lands. This is an issue they are trying to sort out with the DIA.

The Williston Reservoir saw the flooding of Ingenika, Fort Graham and their cemeteries. They feel the flooding brought the loss of an entire way of life that had existed for thousands of years.

Now they must live beside a ‘lake’, a huge body of water that is useless to them. The banks of the reservoir are eroding and there are vast amounts of dust. They experience really bad dust storms, which create real health concerns. The water itself is contaminated so they can’t fish or swim in it. In answer to questions, it was stated that mercury from the vegetation in the water is the source of contamination.

The Tsay Keh Dene people have been devastated by the changes – their way of life depended on hunting and gathering food and now they believe the wildlife are becoming poisoned by pollution and being displaced by vast clear cuts and over hunting.
Ray Izoni, stated that his dad received $2700 compensation from BC Hydro for the loss of property when BC Hydro relocated the village. But how does that compensate for such changes. They used to be self sufficient - now everything has changed.

Deana stated that their people have been dealing with the impact of all the changes and in that process lost a lot of their traditional art and culture. More recently they have had to spend so much time learning how to sit at tables like this one. They need to bring back their traditional dances, art and culture.

Bill Poole explained how important traditional knowledge is to the First Nations. They would like to introduce traditional knowledge education to their young.

After the opening of the Kemess South mine, different wildlife species have become scarce and are disappearing

The First Nations have lifetimes of knowledge about the management of natural resources. Their knowledge about wildlife is practical and based on thousands of years.

One question was asked that made everyone stop and think. "How do grizzlies get such a huge reserve?"

**Summary comments**

Deana Poole – thanked everyone for coming and stated that today was an excellent start and they have made new friends.

Karen Goodings – stated that we have begun something today and have learned a lot. It is important that we not let it go.

Art Kaehn – noted that the Tsay Keh Dene are doing something right – they have turned the corner. “If the youth that were in attendance are any reflection, you have been doing something right.”
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gordon Pierre</td>
<td>Tsay Keh Dene</td>
<td>Grand Chief</td>
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<td>Liz Davies</td>
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<td>Francis Isaac Jr</td>
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<td>Vera Poole</td>
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<td>Karl Sturmanis</td>
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<td>Marlena Pierre</td>
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<td>Elizabeth M Charlie</td>
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<td>Farrah Pierre</td>
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<td>Howard Pierre</td>
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<td>Karen Goodings</td>
<td>PRRD</td>
<td>Board Chair - Northern TAC Rep</td>
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<td>Lenore Harwood</td>
<td>PRRD</td>
<td>Director - Mayor Hudson's Hope</td>
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<td>Fred Banham</td>
<td>PRRD</td>
<td>Deputy Administrator</td>
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<td>Christine Russell</td>
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<td>Communications - Lheidli T'enneh liaison</td>
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<td>Wendy Nordin</td>
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<td>Treaty</td>
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<td>Deborra Munoz</td>
<td>City of PG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Basserman</td>
<td>City of PG</td>
<td>Councillor - Lheidli T'enneh &amp; PGTAC rep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colin Kinsley</td>
<td>City of PG Mayor</td>
<td>RDFFG Board Chairperson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finlay Sinclair</td>
<td>RDFFG</td>
<td>Manager Projects and Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derek Bates</td>
<td>RDFFG</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
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<td>Shelly Zenzzen</td>
<td>RDFFG</td>
<td>Director - PGTAC rep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Kaehn</td>
<td>RDFFG</td>
<td>Vice Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerry Pateman</td>
<td>Planning Consultant</td>
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Tsay Keh Dene, formerly known as Ingenika, is a Sekani community located at the northern tip of the Williston Reservoir that is 520 km north of Prince George via road. The Tsay Keh Dene Band has 362 members in total with 197 in the Tsay Keh community and 165 residing off reserve, mostly in the Prince George area. The Band Council consists of a Chief, Grand Chief and six councillors.

The Tsay Keh community has 58 residential houses, accommodation for up to 10 visitors/service workers, RCMP station, school (K-9), health clinic, store/gas station, community church; land & resource office, treaty office, band office and attached recreational centre. Tsay Keh also has a band office in Prince George.

The Tsay Keh Dene traditional territory comprises the area within the Rocky Mountains and watersheds that flow into the Peace River, including the Ingenika, Finlay, Omineca, Ospika, Pesika, Finaly and Parsnip rivers. The total area is about 3,078,400 ha (12,000 sq mi) of which 135,600 ha are lakes and the Williston reservoir.

The Williston Reservoir is the largest body of water in BC. It has a surface area of 1,800 sq km (694 sq mi) and 1,770 km (1,099 mi) of shoreline. The reservoir was created by the construction in 1968 of the WAC Bennett dam across the Peace River. Within a few short years flooding brought the loss of an entire way of life of the Tsay Keh Dene that had existed for thousands of years.

Access

Presently the community is accessible by road or by air. The commute by road is approximately an eight hour drive from Prince George, the last 350 km is on logging roads used by heavy industrial traffic. Air access is via scheduled flights from Prince George and Mackenzie- a total of 1.5 hours from Prince George via small (8 seat) commuter planes.
**Economy**

Current economic activities include logging, trapping and some contract work in road snow removal and reservoir clean up with BC Hydro. Tsay Keh Dene has its own forest licence and a logging company (Ingenika Logging) as well as being one of four (others are Kwadacha, Abitibi, CANFOR) partners in Tsay Tay Forestry Ltd. A single band member is employed at Kemess South mine, and a number of people are employed in the Tsay Keh Dene Band office to provide administration and various community services (health, education, operations and maintenance, land & resource, treaty, etc).

Tsay Keh Dene members continue to hunt, fish and gather foods and medicines that grow within the Tsay Keh Dene territory and together form an integral part of their lifestyle.

**Treaty Negotiations**

Tsay Keh Dene submitted its Statement of Intent in May of 1994. The treaty talks are currently at Stage 4, where the three parties are working toward an Agreement in Principle that would form the basis for a Final Agreement.
What is the Peace River Regional District?

- A Service Provider
- An Administrative Agency
- A Federation of Local Governments

**Services**

- Solid Waste
- 911 Emergency Telephone
- Weed Management
- Land Use Planning
- Building Inspection
- Economic Development
- Fire Protection
- Emergency Response
- Raw Water Services
- Sewer Services
- Recreation Facilities
- Recreation & Culture Program Grants
- Regional Parks

**Administrative Support**

- Regional Governance
- Service Agreements
- Service Contracts
- Partnership Agreements
- 55 Service Functions
- Peace River Regional Hospital District

**Local Government Federation**

- Seven Member Municipalities and Four Electoral Areas Serving a total population of 62,967
  - Pouce Coupe, Taylor, Hudson's Hope, Chetwynd, Tumbler Ridge, Dawson Creek, Fort St John
  - Electoral Areas 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E'
- Lobbying Provincial Ministries
- Lobbying Federal Ministries
- UBCM
- NCMA

**Structure**

Appendix 4
The Peace River Regional District
119,336 sq. km.

Appendix 4
Community to Community Forum - April 3, 2006
Public Open Forum - Participants

Leonard Jarvis  BBFN
Michelle Lochhead  Takla First Nation
Jessica McGregor  Student, UNBC & Northern BC Mining Action Group
Art Kaehn  RDFFG, Vice Chair
Derek Bates  RDFFG, CAO
Shelley Zenzen  RDFFG, PG TAC Vice Chair
David Kim  Tsay Keh Dene
J.P. Laplante  Takla First Nation & Northern BC Mining Group
Karl Sturmanis  Tsay Keh Dene
Deana Poole  Tsay Keh Dene
Liz Davies  Tsay Keh Dene
Erica Poole  Tsay Keh Dene
Bill Poole  Tsay Keh Dene
Ray Izony  Tsay Keh Dene
Jean Isaac  Tsay Keh Dene
Francis Isaac Jr  Tsay Keh Dene
Tara Pierre  Tsay Keh Dene
Vera Poole  Tsay Keh Dene
Lenore Harwood  Peace River Regional District
Karen Goodings  Peace River Regional District
Fred Banham  Peace River Regional District
Karen Egnell  Tsay Keh Dene
Jeremy Lowley  Lake Babine Nation
Doug Larsen
Kerry Pateman  Planning Consultant

Appendix 5