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Doig River First Nation and Government Sign Agreement

The Doig River First Nation and the Provincial Government signed an oil and gas consultation Agreement, March 20, 2002.

Joining Chief Garry Oker and Councillor Trevor Makadahay to celebrate the Doig River First Nation signing were Honourable Richard Neufeld, Minister of Energy and Mines; Derek Doyle, OGC Commissioner; Tom Ouellette, OGC Director of Aboriginal Affairs and Land Use; and Tamara Connell, Aboriginal Liaison Communication Officer. The meeting was preceded by a luncheon hosted by the Doig River First Nation.

This five-year Agreement establishes a specific process for dialogue and application review timeframes. The agreement is a living document and evolves based on the needs of Doig River First Nation, industry and the province.

The Oil and Gas Commission now has collaborative

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Chief Garry Oker, (from left to right), Derek Doyle, OGC Commissioner; Councillor Trevor Makadahay and Honourable Richard Neufeld, Minister of Energy and Mines, celebrate the signing of the Agreement March 20.

Improved Application Submission Process

The Oil and Gas Commission is streamlining the application submission process. This initiative is part of the Provincial Government's commitment to provide efficiencies and reduce unnecessary regulatory burden on clients and stakeholders. Sharon Rosie, Application Review Manager with the OGC, completed a review of the checklists currently used when submitting applications to the Commission's Application and Approvals Branch. Ms. Rosie was able to reduce the checklists and forms from 67 to 18 by eliminating duplications and unnecessary information. These efficiencies include elimination of the:

- Pipeline and access road questionnaires
- Duplication of information in the Operations Engineering Technical Review package for

pipeline and facility applications

- Requirement for submission of Woodlot Tenure Holder Agreements and Range Tenure Agreements prior to permit approval
- Unnecessary information on Crown Land Application and Campsite Questionnaire
- Notification letters for pipelines, power lines and road crossings

The overall effect was to reduce the number of regulatory instructions by one-third. The updated forms and consolidated checklists are on the OGC website. The OGC will continue to review its processes and information requirements and provide updates of further efficiencies in future issues of the Commissioner's Update.

Vision of the Oil and Gas Commission:

"To be an innovative regulatory leader, respected by stakeholders, First Nations and clients."

Coalbed Methane Drilling Update

Drilling of the first coalbed methane (CBM) natural gas well site on Vancouver Island commenced on March 15, 2002. The OGC is responsible for the regulation of CBM exploration, development and production.

In February, 2002 the OGC authorized Priority Ventures Ltd. to drill the first exploratory coalbed methane natural gas well on Vancouver Island. Prior to approving the project, the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), the OGC and Priority Ventures held public open house information sessions.

The permit included several specific conditions including testing of adjacent water wells before drilling and adhering to Regional District noise restrictions. OGC representatives Ben Mitchell-Banks, Director of Compliance and Enforcement; Bruce Cazes, Manager of Exploration and Development Inspection; Richard Slocomb, Production Engineer; and Les Glenn, Operations Inspector, were on site during the construction and drilling phases of the well site to guide regulatory and stakeholder interests. Priority

Ventures are now in the final stages of drilling operations and evaluation.

The OGC approved 27 CBM well sites to date in areas including Elkford Valley and Tumbler Ridge.

As part of the Provincial Energy Policy, MEM and the OGC are preparing guidelines to help operators in planning and conducting CBM development. Educational materials for stakeholders are also being prepared by the OGC.

Additional information on CBM in BC may be found at <http://www.em.gov.bc.ca/em>



Coalbed methane (CBM) is the natural gas contained within coal deposits. By drilling into the coal deposits, the resource can be recovered.

For questions or concerns about the Commission's Emergency Management Plan or conflicting tenures, contact:

Joyce Beaudry
Deputy Commissioner

(250) 261-5700

joyce.beaudry@
gems3.gov.bc.ca

OGC Acting Deputy Commissioner Appointed

Joyce Beaudry joins the Oil and Gas Commission as Deputy Commissioner. As a registered professional forester, her experience includes natural resource management and 15 years of service in the public sector.

In her career, Ms. Beaudry worked with the Ministry of Forests in both technical and professional positions. Most recently, she worked with Forest Renewal BC. As Regional Director of the Omineca-Peace Region, Ms.

Beaudry worked in partnership with government agencies, industry, local associations, First Nations, environmental groups and other stakeholders. This partnership was developed to facilitate the planning and delivery of forest and environmental investments in the region.

Ms. Beaudry's immediate assignments include enhancing the Commission's Emergency Management Plan and leading the conflicting tenures initiative.

How to reach us

The Oil and Gas Commission
has a 24 hour
emergency response number:
(250) 261-5700

Doig River Agreement continued from page 1

processes with seven of the Treaty 8 First Nations through a consultation Agreement or a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). A MOU with Blueberry River First Nation, West Moberly First Nations, and Prophet River First Nation was signed on October 26, 2001. Halfway River First Nation and Sauteau First Nation also reached agreements on January 14, 2002. Fort Nelson First Nation signed an agreement with the Province on January 18, 2002.

Release of Fish-stream Crossing Guidebook

The Government of British Columbia released the "Fish-stream Crossing Guidebook" under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*. The Guidebook was developed collaboratively between the Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Council of Forest Industries and the OGC.

The purpose of the Guidebook is to assist resource managers to plan, prescribe and implement sound forest practices for fish-stream crossings to comply with both the *Forest Practices Code Act* and the federal *Fisheries Act*.

The OGC authorizes construction of petroleum roads and other petroleum related access structures through the *Petroleum and Natural Gas Act*. The construction, maintenance and deactivation of petroleum roads are subject to the provisions of the *Forest Practices Code Act*. The Commission has no authority with respect to the administration of the federal *Fisheries Act*.

Proponents are encouraged to become familiar with the Guidebook prior to submitting applications to the OGC.

Copies of the Guidebook may be obtained through the Ministry of Forests website at: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/legsregs/comptoc.htm>

OGC Backs Study of Sour Gas Effects on Health

A multi-year study to determine how sour gas emissions affect health and the environment, is expected to complete its data collection stage by June 2002. The report will be finalized by 2004. Officially known as the *Western Canada Study on Animal and Human Health Effects Associated with Exposure to Emissions from Oil and Natural Gas Field Facilities*, the study is being coordinated by the Western Interprovincial Scientific Studies Association (WISSA).

WISSA, a not-for-profit association, is supported by contributions from government, Canadian

Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), and the livestock industry.

A total of \$16.6 million was given to finance the current study. The Government of British Columbia contributed \$600,000 through the OGC's Environmental Fund. The Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, as well as the Government of Canada also contributed.

The OGC established the Environmental Fund in 1998 to financially support and facilitate research on environmental issues related to oil and gas exploration and development in BC.

For more information on WISSA or the Study, contact:

Mike O'Connell
Study Manager,
WISSA

(403) 503-0794

wissa@
telusplanet.net



OGC participates in Trade Show

The OGC was among 200 exhibitors at the 30th Annual CKNL Trade Show in Fort St. John, April 19 - 21. Approximately 10,000 people were in attendance.

As part of its Service Plan, the OGC strives to strengthen relationships with its stakeholders. The OGC booth provided an opportunity for the public to ask questions, voice concerns and receive related educational materials.

The OGC would like to thank staff members from all branches who volunteered at the booth.

Shown here (left to right) are Larry London, Harleen Price, Frank Schneider and Corey Jonsson.

Meetings & Events

To make recommendations to the Oil and Gas Practice Advisory Committee, please write to:

Richard Caesar
Chairperson,
Oil and Gas
Practice Advisory
Committee

or e-mail:
richard.caesar@
gems3.gov.bc.ca

Buick Creek Community Meeting

Oct. 28, '02
7:00 p.m.
Buick Creek
Community Hall

**For more
information,
contact:**

Frank Schneider
Operations Inspector
(250) 261-1277

Oil and Gas Practice Advisory Committee Launched

The OGC launched an Oil and Gas Practice Advisory Committee in January 2002. This committee includes representatives from government, industry, and OGC clients.

"The Practice Advisory Committee is an opportunity for industry and stakeholders to address general oil and gas industry concerns," Richard Caesar, Committee Chairperson, said. "The group will be an effective feedback mechanism. The OGC will benefit from the many suggestions and recommendations we receive from the committee." The OGC commits to implement 80% of the recommendations.

There are 70 member volunteers on the committee. The committee's structure consists of a steering committee and a number of operational work teams. The work teams are responsible for addressing specific concerns, suggestions and recommendations made to the committee. The work teams focus on issues surrounding drilling, operations, maintenance, design, safety, construction and public involvement procedures.

To submit oil and gas industry practice issues and recommendations, please write to Richard Caesar, Chairperson of the Oil and Gas Practice Advisory Committee.

Synergy in Buick Creek

The OGC participated in a Buick Creek Advisory Committee meeting at the Buick Creek Community Hall on Thursday, March 21, 2002. The Committee, comprised of Buick Creek residents and representatives from industry and the OGC, was created in 1998 to discuss

issues and solutions surrounding oil and gas operations in the area. The meeting was facilitated by Frank Schneider, OGC Operations Inspector. Residents agreed that there were significant improvements over the past three years, most notably:

- Improved air quality due to reduced flaring and increased operator effort
- Enhanced communications between residents and operators
- Concerns handled more efficiently

Ben Mitchell-Banks, Director of Compliance and Enforcement, spoke about the OGC's enhanced compliance and enforcement strategy, performance-based delivery, single-window enhancement and collaborative initiatives.

Following a question and answer exchange, the OGC concluded the meeting by committing to continue to work with residents and operators to reduce air quality concerns and to resolve issues around water wells and seismic operations.

On the Website

www.ogc.gov.bc.ca

Note the information letter on the release of the *Forest Practices Code Fish-stream Crossing Guidebook*:

<http://www.ogc.gov.bc.ca/informationletters.asp>

Also check out the new forms and checklists resulting from the OGC's streamlining of the application submission process:

<http://www.ogc.gov.bc.ca/formschecklists.asp>

The Maximum Disturbance Review Criteria Operational Code and Guideline may be found at:

<http://www.ogc.gov.bc.ca/documents/guidelines>

If you have questions or require further information, please contact:

Corey Jonsson, Stakeholder Relations Advisor: (250) 261-5789 corey.jonsson@gems4.gov.bc.ca

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