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Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
Sts'ailes

STS'AILES SIGNS NEW FORESTRY REVENUE-SHARING AGREEMENT

STS'AILES – British Columbia has introduced a new type of agreement that provides First Nation communities with economic benefits returning directly to their community based on harvest activities in their traditional territory.

Barry Penner, the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and Willie Charlie, Chief of the Sts'ailes [St-hay-less] signed a new Forest Consultation and Revenue Sharing Agreement (FCRSA) at an event in the Sts'ailes community today. The agreement gives Sts'ailes a percentage of revenue from forestry activities in their traditional territory. Sts'ailes will use the money to support social programs in their community.

“This agreement will transform revenues from forestry activity into projects to build stronger First Nation communities,” said Penner. “It strengthens the relationship between B.C. and Sts'ailes. Over the coming year, we'll continue to work together to negotiate further agreements with Sts'ailes that will provide other economic opportunities.”

The agreement has a three-year term. Money is paid semi-annually and the amount changes each year depending on how much harvesting activity is going on. Sts'ailes will receive \$332,029 in the first year of the agreement, and as the forest industry rebounds, can receive greater amounts in the future.

“Sts'ailes is pleased to celebrate the signing of the FCRSA today that will provide us a share of the forestry revenues in our territory and ensure that we are adequately consulted on forest and range resource developments,” said Sts'ailes Chief Willie Charlie. “The benefits received in this agreement will contribute to Sts'ailes' goal of self governance and economic self-sufficiency. Sts'ailes has a strong relationship with Minister Penner and the signing of the FCRSA will prove to be a solid foundation for future agreements.”

“Since 2002, this government has been working to increase First Nations' participation in the forest sector,” said Forests, Mines and Lands Minister Pat Bell. “As British Columbia's forest sector starts to rebound, all those involved will see increased benefits.”

At part of the cultural gift exchange at the signing ceremony Penner gave a cash donation to the newly formed Sts'ailes Youth Council. The Youth Council will provide policy advice from the younger generation to Chief and Council and stimulate youth interest in Sts'ailes Governance.

The new FCRSA replaces the previous forest and range opportunity agreements, which based payments on a community's population rather than linking them directly to harvesting activity. Since September 2002, the provincial government has signed forestry agreements with 171 First Nations that have provided over \$243 million in revenue-sharing and access to nearly 54 million cubic metres of timber. The revenue-sharing model for these new agreements is based on input from First Nations throughout the province, and the Working Roundtable on Forestry's recommendations.

The Sts'ailes were previously known as the Chehalis Indian Band. They are actively working to reclaim their traditional name, Sts'ailes, which means the beating heart in the Halq'eméylem language. The Sts'ailes has approximately 1,000 members and is based in the Chilliwack area on the Harrison River. To learn more about Sts'ailes visit www.stsailes.com

To see a copy of the agreement and learn more about how the Province is building a New Relationship with First Nations visit www.gov.bc.ca/arr

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