

backgrounder

*The independent voice
of treaty making in
British Columbia*

2010

Public Information & Education

The Treaty Commission has had a major role to play in public information and education about the treaty process and treaty negotiations since 1997 when funding for the Tripartite Public Education Committee comprising the governments of Canada and British Columbia and the First Nations Summit was ended and re-allocated to the Treaty Commission.

A review of the Treaty Commission's efforts in public education and information over the past 13 years will confirm two things — much has been done and much still needs to be done to fully inform and engage British Columbians.

To keep people informed over the past 13 years the Treaty Commission has produced 12 special publications in addition to its annual report and newsletters; undertaken 6 major public information campaigns, co-produced 6 video productions including a prime time documentary; hosted or co-hosted 7 major conferences; co-produced a multimedia presentation now playing at the Royal BC Museum; and produced 2 sets of lesson plans, for grades 4 and 11, and 2 educational kits for schools.

Public Information

12 SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS

The first series of brochures produced by the Treaty Commission included:

- *Treaty Commission*;
- *A layperson's guide to Delgamuukw*;
- *After Delgamuukw, the Legal and Political Landscape*; and
- *Why Treaties?*

Those publications were followed by *Understanding the BC Treaty Process, An Opportunity for Dialogue* produced in concert with the BC Teacher's Federation and the First Nations Summit. More than 60,000 copies were distributed to teachers province-wide for use in the classroom.

Those successes were followed by the publication of *What's the deal with treaties?* now in its fifth edition (25,000 copies).

As well, the Treaty Commission has published:

- *Mission Statement*, which revisits the 19 recommendations of the BC Claims Task Force;
- *Developing Intergovernmental Relationships, the Sliammon-Powell River Experience*;
- *Rights & Responsibilities: Discussion Guide about Treaty Negotiations for First Nation Members*; and
- *What's in these treaties? A plain language guide to the Tsawwassen First Nation treaty and the Maa-nulth First Nations treaty*.

The Treaty Commission also publishes an annual report and periodic newsletter to report on the treaty process and treaty negotiations. Reprinted feature articles from the annual report include two booklets: *The Self Government Landscape* and *The Business Case for Treaties*.

In March 2000, the Treaty Commission published the *Media Handbook: a journalist's guide to treaty making between First Nations, Canada and BC*. The handbook was distributed at a workshop for journalists hosted by the Treaty Commission and featuring commissioners.

Public information campaigns have included touch-screen displays in a variety of venues including the Tsawwassen and Victoria ferry terminals, First People's Gallery at the Royal BC Museum, Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver Museum and Pacific Centre.

6 INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

Six major information campaigns were undertaken — in 1998, 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2007 and 2010.

In 1998, the focus was on the Supreme Court decision in *Delgamuukw* and the legal and political landscape after *Delgamuukw*.

In 2001, the Treaty Commission undertook its own review of the BC treaty process and launched a major initiative to highlight its recommendations.

In 2002, during the period of the province-wide referendum the Treaty Commission undertook a newspaper and television advertising campaign, which resulted in a flood of telephone calls and emails, thousands of website visits and requests for thousands of the most popular publications.

In 2004, the Treaty Commission undertook a campaign to promote the economic benefits of treaties backed by an independent economic analysis, a survey of BC businesses, a public opinion poll and anecdotal evidence from BC opinion leaders.

Then in 2007, the Treaty Commission launched an awareness campaign on radio and in newspapers around the time of the first treaty vote by Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. The ads were seen and heard by over 230,000 people or about 9% of the adult population in BC.

In 2009/2010, the Treaty Commission launched an awareness campaign on the economic benefits of completing treaties.

PricewaterhouseCoopers was commissioned to conduct an economic analysis on the economic benefits of treaties. The findings were promoted to media, government, First Nations and the public.

A sub-domain Unfinishedbusiness.bctreaty.net was created to hold all relevant information on the economic benefits of treaties including the PricewaterhouseCoopers report. Through a personal email to community newspaper editors, a series of articles was offered on treaty making including on the economic benefits of completing treaties. Advertising was purchased on radio and in community newspapers and speciality publications to drive people to Unfinishedbusiness.bctreaty.net. A high-profile location at the Aboriginal Business Showcase & Artisan Village was secured during the Olympic Games to tell our story.

6 VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

The Treaty Commission has been a partner in six videos and documentaries including:

- *Nisga'a Dancing in Both Worlds*;
- *What's the deal with treaties?*;
- *Making Treaties in British Columbia*, which aired on Global TV in prime time;
- *Our Sacred Strength, Talking Circles Among Aboriginal Women*;
- *Sharing the Experience, First Nations Reflections on the BC Treaty Process*; and
- *Sharing the Vision, Perspective on the Promise of Treaties*.

N.B. The latter two videos were produced by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in partnership with the Treaty Commission.

7 CONFERENCES

The Treaty Commission, with various partners including the Law Commission of Canada, Simon Fraser University and the Nisga'a Lisims Government, have hosted or co-hosted seven conferences since 2000 including:

- *Speaking Truth to Power: A Treaty Forum* in 2000 co-sponsored by the Law Commission of Canada;
- *Speaking Truth to Power II: What is the future for treaty making in BC?* in 2001;
- *Speaking Truth to Power III: Self Government Options and Opportunities* in 2002;
- *Planning for Prosperity: First Nations, Intergovernmental Cooperation and Treaties* in 2003 in concert with Simon Fraser University;
- *Venture into a Treaty World: Open the Door to New Business Opportunities*, also in 2003;
- *Preparing for the Day After Treaty* in 2007 in partnership with the Nisga'a Lisims Government; and
- *Forging Linkages and Finding Solutions for First Nations* in 2008.

Compilations of keynote speeches, presentations, panels and workshops from each of these seven conferences were published and posted to the Treaty Commission's website for the general public.

1 WEBSITE WWW.BCTREATY.NET; 1 SUB-DOMAIN UNFINISHEDBUSINESS.BCTREATY.NET

The website is a comprehensive repository of information on the BC treaty process and treaty negotiations. A website makeover completed in April 2009 provides the user with quicker access to key public information and education materials and additional treaty-related resources, for example, treaties and agreements in principle.

Users have access to contact information, a feedback mechanism, an order form for Treaty Commission information products, and for speaker requests, and a resource directory of related treaty information available from other sources.

1 UNIQUE MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION

First Peoples of British Columbia, a six-minute, large format multimedia presentation celebrating BC First Nations launched in December 2006. It now runs several times a day on the two-storey, three dimensional map in the Royal BC Museum lobby.

The presentation is the product of a partnership between the Treaty Commission and the Royal BC Museum. Produced by West Eagle Films, the project was supported financially by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Education

EDUCATIONAL KIT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In 2000, the Treaty Commission provided the *What's the Deal with Treaties?* educational kit to Social Studies 10 and First Nations 12 classes across BC. The kit contains a video, book and discussion guide.

LESSON PLANS FOR GRADE 4

The Treaty Commission worked with accomplished aboriginal author Diane Silvey and Pacific Edge Publishing to expand the Social Studies 4 Teachers Guide, *From Time Immemorial: the First People of the Pacific Northwest Coast* to include lesson plans and background information on treaty making and self government. In October 2002, one copy of the teacher's guide was provided to every elementary school in the province.

LESSON PLANS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES 11

Nisga'a Dancing in Both Worlds tells of the historic journey of the Nisga'a people to achieve a modern-day treaty. The ministry has approved the DVD as a provincially recommended resource for supplemental learning for Social Studies 8-11, BC First Nations Studies 12, Civic Studies 12 and Law 12. Each secondary school received two copies of the DVD paid for by the Treaty Commission through a purchase agreement with the filmmakers, while the ministry covered the distribution costs.

The Treaty Commission helped fund the film. Working with Surrey School District #36 Aboriginal Education Department an online educational resource was created to support use of the film in BC Social Studies 11 classrooms. The resource is accessible on the Internet and includes lesson plans, supporting lesson materials, video clips, images and a glossary of terms used in the film.

RESOURCE KIT

Exploring Aboriginal Culture: Then and Now is a learning resource kit approved for the classroom by both the BC Teacher's Federation and the BC Ministry of Education. The kit, produced through a partnership with FORED BC, contains Treaty Commission publications.

BOOKS

The Treaty Commission was a partner with UBC Press in publishing three editions of Chris McKee's book *Treaty Talks in British Columbia*, and a partner with the Laurier Institution in publishing *Prospering Together, the Economic Impact of the Aboriginal Title Settlements in B.C.*

COLONIAL DESPATCHES ONLINE

The correspondence that passed between the Colonial Office in London and the governors of Vancouver Island and British Columbia from 1846 to 1871 will be available online through the British Columbia Colonial Despatches Project.

The records include correspondence, clippings, legislation, maps and reports, and document the relationship between BC's First Nations and European settlers. It includes maps of First Nations' traditional territories and instructions on matters relating to treaties.

The project is an initiative of the History Department and Humanities Faculty at the University of Victoria. Microfilm copies of the original records — housed in British and Canadian archives — are slowly deteriorating, so a team of computer experts and historians began converting the files into a digital format.

The Treaty Commission is supporting the British Columbia Colonial Despatches Project as a valuable educational initiative in keeping with its public education mandate. Colonial Despatches is an online resource for teachers and students with lesson plans making it an important education initiative. Through this partnership project, Colonial Despatches can easily be incorporated into elementary and secondary school classes.

MINERVA FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP

The Treaty Commission-produced DVD *Our Sacred Strength: Talking Circles among Aboriginal Women* captures the voices of aboriginal women across British Columbia. The DVD and accompanying Facilitation Guide are available to BC aboriginal women to help them conduct their own talking circles.

To expand the reach of this important initiative, the Treaty Commission partnered with the Minerva Foundation. Their new program, *Combining Our Strength*, is intended to build capacity and empowerment within the aboriginal women's community in BC. As part of the program, *Our Sacred Strength* was used to enhance leadership development for aboriginal girls and women across BC and raise awareness of the challenges they face.

The partnership project saw Talking Circles convened in five regions of the province. Minerva-trained facilitators organized the Talking Circles, convened the event, and screened the Treaty Commission DVD *Our Sacred Strength*. At its leadership conference in June 2009, the Minerva Foundation distributed copies of the DVD and Facilitation Guide to participants.

The Minerva Foundation aims to inspire and empower women and girls to reach their full potential by creating opportunities and offering programs in the areas of education, leadership development, economic security and safety.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As our record shows, a significant number of information and education resources have been produced over the past 13 years by the Treaty Commission and are available for those interested in seeking them out. However, we know those keenly interested in treaty making comprise only a small percentage of the BC population.

A well informed public is important to the overall success of the treaty process. If we are to succeed in treaty making, a new relationship which recognizes the unique place of aboriginal people and First Nations in Canada must be developed and nurtured. Education and information must be available to ensure the public understands and supports the emerging new relationship.

The Treaty Commission shoulders a significant share of the responsibility for province-wide communication about the treaty process and treaty negotiations. However, the federal and provincial governments share a major responsibility for public information and education which the Treaty Commission cannot replace and which should be expanded. The three parties at each treaty table also have a responsibility to keep people in their region informed and engaged.

Going forward, it will be important for the Treaty Commission to underscore that progress is being made in treaty negotiations.

It will be important, too, for the Treaty Commission to emphasize the economic benefits of treaties. Treaties are a significant and unprecedented opportunity to create a better quality of life for First Nations while creating jobs and a stronger economy for all Canadians.

