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To: Herb Norwegian, Grand Chief; DFN Leadership
From: Michael Nadli, Chief Negotiator
Date: Wednesday, August 23, 2023
Subject: August 14 to 16, 2023 Dehcho Self-Government Main Table Negotiations

Dehcho Process main table negotiations are occurring monthly. Some main table sessions are held in person and virtually. The three parties at the main table negotiating sessions are the Dehcho First Nations (DFN), the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT), and Canada.

Between negotiation sessions, regular negotiator calls address the logistics and operations of the main table negotiating sessions. There was a virtual main table session on August 14 to 16, 2023. Outlined below are the highlights of the sessions.

Virtual Town Hall Forums

There will be a series of online virtual town hall information forums on Dehcho Negotiations. Previous town hall sessions were on July 4, 2023 (update on negotiations), July 18, 2023 (Agreement in Principal), and August 9, 2023 (Dehcho Land Use Planning). We plan to host future virtual town halls. The next one scheduled has yet to be set. We hope to see leaders and DFN Members engaging in these forums to discuss the progress of negotiations.

Postponed Days

Due to the wildfires affecting communications across the internet, the August 14 and August 15, 2023, main table sessions have been postponed. Cell phone and internet service were restored for all members of the DFN Negotiations team during the afternoon on Tuesday, August 15, 2023. Though service was restored, technical challenges were present and managed effectively. Items not addressed on the originating agenda will be moved to a future main table session.

August 16, 2023, Main Table Session

On August 16, 2023, we held a one-day main table virtual session. Dehcho Negotiations Teams, the Government of Northwest Territories, and Canada were present. The following modified agenda was the focus of this one-day session:

- Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee Update
- Meits Term of Reference Update from James
- Metis Working Group
- DCMRA Update

Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee Update

Heidi Wiebe, Executive Director and Senior planner, joined the main table session to provide an update from the DLUPC. Below are the highlights from the updates shared.

- Susan Fleck retired at the end of March 2023. Heidi Wiebe assumed the role of Executive director on April 1, 2023, with Susan available for questions and a smooth transition.
- In June 2023, Joachim Bonnetrouge, the DLUPC's chair since 2012, resigned. The DLUPC is discussing with a potential candidate to fill the DLUPC Chair role.
- DLUPC 2022 – 2023 Audit was approved on July 13, 2023
- CIRNAC approved the DLUPC's 4-year work plan and budget as submitted
- DLUPC is preparing to launch a new website with regularly updated content
- DLUPC and Technical Working group continue to work through the technical and editorial comments from the 2019 internal review
- Key revisions the DLUPC and working group are working through are:
 - Adding a new zone designation for Edézhíe
 - Integrating conditional land uses
 - Refining definitions and consensus on key phrases
 - Implementation questions
 - Decisions to move zone descriptions into the plan

DCMRA Update

Based on the meeting with the Premier of the Northwest Territories and Grand Chief Herb Norwegian, the focus point of the meeting was to look at the interim agreement and how to examine the decision-making process and steps to ensure Indigenous People are at the table when it comes to land with shared decision-making model and stewardship.

Interim Lands Working Group

The termination clause in the Interim lands working group is a mechanism to terminate the interim plan to a final plan. The termination clause is to be viewed more as a transition into a final plan when parties are prepared for the execution of a final plan.

There have been numerous discussions around the lands working group at the Government of Northwest Territories level. The conversations have been happening with various political leaders.

Shannon Lyman (GNWT Negotiator) has been working with colleagues and the Department of ECC. The GNWT believes the land working group's scope is nebulous and would like to review the goals and scope.

The Government of Northwest Territories would like to move forward with the working group, but a single working group may only be able to capture some of the interests that have been heard and expressed by DFN in recent months. Further discussions around the Interim Lands Working Group will continue to answer parties' questions or give more direction and clarification as needed.

West Point First Nations Update

Michael talked with Chief Cayen and explained the options for moving forward on the terms of reference. Draft 3 is a condensed version of their fourteen-page TOR back in January. The tripartite draft memo was also shared with WPFN. The draft letter sent to West Point First Nations will include in the final version, "We need agreements on the WPFN Terms of Reference for a working group before funds are appropriated."

Metis Terms of Reference and Working Groups

James Christie joined the main table session from Fort Providence to provide an update on the Metis Terms of Reference. The terms of reference supplied had been brought forth by the Fort Providence Metis, as the Fort Simpson Metis has not provided any feedback or input. James advised that the Fort Providence Metis Nation is going off the last direction received from Fort Simpson Metis Nation after a unanimously approved resolution.

Dehcho First Nations sees the importance of having a Metis working group and agreeable terms of reference. There has been discussion at the table from other parties that a Metis working group is not required.

CIRNAC Minister

Robert Butt, Canada's Negotiator, announced that the new Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada Minister is Gary Anadasangaree. Minister Gary began his new appointment on July 26, 2023.

Next Steps

Dehcho First Nations will draft one memo at a time for each of the five outstanding issues to the DLUPC. The first memo will focus on the zoning of areas 41 and 42.

Upcoming Meeting Main Table Meetings:

September 12, 2023 Negotiators Call

September 18 to 20, 2023 Virtual Main Table Session

Week of October 16, three days in person in Ottawa