



GITXSAN MET WITH MINISTER DOUG DONALDSON TO ADDRESS ACCESS TO GITXSAN FISHERIES TENURE, ANAAT

HAZELTON, B.C., June 12, 2019– On Monday June 10, 2019, members of the Crisis Management Team met with Minister Doug Donaldson to create a shared objective that respects and upholds the recreational fishing ban for the 2019 season.

The discussions focused on access by anglers to the Anaat in the 2020 season. Currently, fishing permits and licenses issued by government agents in the recreational fisheries do not allow trespass. Gitksan Hereditary Chiefs no longer allow the fishing permits and guide fishing licenses to trespass on Gitksan Fisheries Tenure, Anaat for the 2019 season.

“In this process, the Gitksan are demonstrating an authoritative approach as there has never been proper management of the fisheries in the Skeena Watershed,” said Gwiyeehl Brian Williams, Chair Person of Gitksan Government.

Minister Donaldson fully understands the issues and is committed to the Crisis Management process through appointments earlier of Paddy Hirshfield, Manager of Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and now the appointment of Troy Larden, Fish & Wildlife Section Head to the Crisis Management Team. The Minister cites the mandate set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as an important initiative of the Provincial government to engage with Gitksan Government.

“Our Simoogit are the decision makers and this is a government to government process with Minister Doug Donaldson. His commitment to the Gitksan Chiefs ensures consideration of the rights of anglers in at least the 2020 season,” stated Sakum Higookw Vernon Smith.

Another meeting between the Minister’s office and the Crisis Management Team is planned for September. Within the Gitksan proposed approach, all parties will look at how the permitting and licensing process works as well as management direction, prioritization, enhancement and restoration.

Updates about the Crisis Management Team activity can be found on www.gitxsan.ca.

ABOUT THE GITXSAN

The diverse Gitxsan Nation, in Northern BC, is made up of four clans and House Groups called Huwilp led by Simgiigyet who hold the governance authority (Daxgyet). The traditional society is governed by a system of laws (Ayook) and oral histories (Adaakw), all carried out in feast hall (Lilliget). The Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en people made history and headlines in 1997 when, on appeal, together they sought the first comprehensive account of aboriginal rights and title in Canada in the Delgamuukw court decision. The Gitxsan Nation covers 33,000 sq. km in Northwest BC; it is estimated that there are 14,000 people of Gitxsan heritage throughout the world.

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