



News release

For immediate release

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WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council and District of Saanich sign ÁTOL,NEUEL MOU

Saanich, BC – The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council (WLC) and the District of Saanich formalized their commitment to reconciliation and are pursuing opportunities for collaboration with the signing of an ÁTOL,NEUEL (“Respecting One Another”) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

“The District of Saanich get their name from our people, and they make decisions about our lands and water without our participation. This MOU is a first step toward changing this relationship and creating a welcoming feeling for WSÁNEĆ people in our homelands,” said Tsartlip First Nation Chief Don Tom. “We look forward to the exciting and difficult conversations ahead knowing that the District of Saanich is working, in good faith, toward our shared goals of reconciliation.”

The MOU represents a commitment by the WLC and Saanich to develop a strong and fair government-to-government relationship based on respect, co-operation, and partnership to address shared interests and priorities.

“As part of Saanich’s commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, it’s essential we build government-to-government relationships,” said Saanich Mayor Fred Haynes. “We’re taking the first steps by establishing this MOU in support of ongoing, positive and mutually respectful discussions.”

Building from the rich dialogue that arose through the Cordova Bay local area planning process, the MOU outlines key areas of interest and priority for the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council and Saanich within the following themes:

- Recognition of WSÁNEĆ rights, history, and culture;
- Governance and implementation of MOU;
- Environmental concerns;
- Protection of ancestral sites;
- Public art and education projects;
- Economic development opportunities, including housing; and
- Parks management.

In addition, priorities identified by the WLC include Saanich Recognition of Douglas Treaty Rights and Oral History of the Douglas Treaties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Saanich Council and staff will work toward these outcomes through dialogue and education.

The MOU is a living document and starting point that reflects generations of continuing work. The WLC and Saanich will develop protocol agreements, committees and working groups, and meet Council to Council regularly and where appropriate to review work plans and progress.

Learn more

The MOU and a questions and answers document with more information are available at wsanec.com and saanich.ca.

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About W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council

W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council Society is a unified, legal governing body comprised of three W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations: Tsartlip, Tseycum, and Tsawout. It aims to promote the interests of the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations by enhancing recognition of, and respect for, W̱SÁNEĆ Douglas Treaty rights and W̱SÁNEĆ Aboriginal rights and title. The W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council promotes the W̱SÁNEĆ culture, traditional practices, and language, including the original W̱SÁNEĆ management of the environment as it was meant to be. The WLC also seeks to promote sustainable and equitable development of resources within W̱SÁNEĆ Territory.

About District of Saanich

The District of Saanich is an urban, rural and coastal municipality on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. It is the largest municipality in the Capital Regional District with an area of 103 square kilometres and the most populated with more than 114,000 residents. Saanich aims to enhance the quality of life for citizens, visitors and future generations in the municipality and the region and to further Saanich citizens' economic, physical and social well-being.