



News Release

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CRD and Northern Secwepemc sign milestone agreement

108 Mile Ranch, B.C. - The Cariboo Regional District (CRD) and the Northern Secwepemc First Nations signed a milestone agreement today as part of the journey towards building and operating a cultural centre and museum. The Centre will be located near the 108 Mile Heritage site along Highway 97.

The signing today is the culmination of more than ten years of work that has involved:

- Topographic surveys;
- Archaeological and environmental impact assessments;
- Feasibility Studies;
- Architectural schematic design; and
- Business plan development

The building site was acquired through generous donations from TELUS, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and through a lease of the land with the Cariboo Regional District.

Significant funding for the work to date has been provided by the CRD, Northern Development Initiative Trust, Heritage Canada, Western Economic Development Canada, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition. More than \$125,000 has been contributed by the five participating Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society Bands.

The next steps in 2014 include commitments from the five Northern Secwepemc Bands to subsidize the centre's operations. In 2015/2016 applications for funding the construction will be made as well as the final architectural drawings and tendering of all work. Construction of the complex will begin in 2016 and a tentative opening has been scheduled for May 2017.

"On behalf of the Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society and its five member Bands, I am both pleased and proud to be signing this long-term lease agreement with the Cariboo Regional District," states Irene Gilbert, President of the Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society. "The signing marks the culmination of many years of hard work by numerous Band members as well as many dedicated and talented professional consultants. Our Society wishes to thank those people and all the Chiefs and Band Councillors who have supported our project throughout our long journey to this point. We look forward to the next steps and are hoping that we will be operating our cultural centre and museum by the spring of 2017."

"As the Chair of the Cariboo Regional District and on behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, I am proud to be signing this agreement today with the Northern Secwepemc First Nations," says CRD Chair Al Richmond. "Projects of this nature show what can truly be accomplished when all levels of government, societies and residents work together in collaboration. This is what *building communities together* is truly about."

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