



P.O. Box 553
108 Mile Ranch,
B.C. V0K 2Z0
tel: 250.791.7267
fax: 250.791.7297

April 2020 Newsletter

1. The Coronavirus COVIT-19 Hiatus

As reported in our March 2020 Newsletter, all of our activities have ground to a halt, and the hiatus is continuing as we prepare this edition. Victims to the situation are the Esk'etemc Band Council's consideration of our funding request that had been slated for March 24th, Chief Janice George's presentation to the NStQ Leadership Council slated for April 2nd, and our update to the Cariboo Regional District's Board slated for one of its May meetings. Fortunately our ongoing relationship with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture regarding possible additional funding sources did stay alive with a highly productive April 8th phone conversation with Brian Jonker, the Ministry's Executive Director, Corporate Initiatives and Strategic Policy Branch. Brian was able to direct us to a specific program in the federal Department of Canadian Heritage that may have funding available for us. We'll be following up soon.

2. The Exhibit Design Process

We have made several funding applications, two of which we know are under active consideration. As reported previously, we hope in early May to learn the outcome of our application to the *Investment Readiness Program* for the funding that would allow David Jensen and his team to undertake the next phase of their design development work at Canim Lake. If we are successful with this application, it will be necessary to work out a protocol with the Band for the safe conduct of this work that would ideally entail close personal contact between David's team and Band members. That protocol may result in a decision to postpone the work to a later, safer time, although steps are being taken to explore the possibility of using videoconferencing to manage the dialogue. In any event the safety of all concerned will be the priority.

Another of our funding applications that is under active consideration, was made to the McConnell Foundation which, prior to the coronavirus outbreak, had intended to make its decision in June. Again, if successful, we will hope to be able to engage David Jensen to carry out similar work with the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem and Esk'etemc communities later in the Fall of this year.



3. A Little History of the Project in the Interim

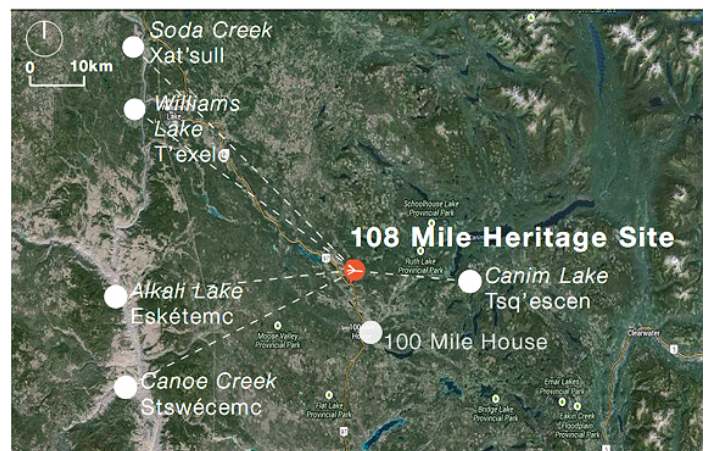
Assuming that many of our readers will have some spare time on their hands during the course of the coronavirus pandemic, we thought it might be of interest to you to be reminded of the key events that have occurred during our 16 year journey, and of the Band members who have been involved.

We start this account in 2003 when the Board of Directors of the 100 Mile House & District Historical Society issued an invitation to the five Northern Secwepemc Bands to consider ways in which their language, history and culture might be featured at its 108 Mile Lake historical site. That Society assigned to your editor the task of following up on its written invitation, and with the encouragement of **Sister Marianne Reid** who had resided in the Canim Lake Reserve and who along with the beloved **Sister Mary Alice Danaher** had served that community for many years prior to her retirement, he met **Elizabeth Pete** and opened a discussion about the possibility of creating a partnership between the Historical Society and the Bands. Liz Pete's immediate reaction was extremely positive, and led to a meeting later that year with **Amy Sandy** and **Chris Wycotte, Jr.** at Sugarcane.

In February 2004 the initial meeting of what became known as the *Informal Working Group* was held at Clancy's Restaurant in Lac La Hache. It was attended by Liz Pete, Amy Sandy, **Charlotte Gilbert** and **Treena Harry** from the Canoe Creek Indian Band, and your Editor.

Minutes were kept of these early meetings, and from the outset it was decided that copies of those minutes should be – and they were – circulated to representatives of the Soda Creek (**Gordon Keener**) and Esk'etemc (**Norma Sure**) Bands, and to the Executive Director (**Yvonne Smith**) of what was then known as the Cariboo Tribal Council (now NStQ). Standing invitations were extended to the Soda Creek Band and to the Esk'etemc First Nation to join the venture, and were renewed at regular intervals.

Location of Site Relative to the five Northern Secwepemc First Nations





The February 2004 meeting saw affirmation by the representatives from Canim Lake and Williams Lake of their support for the formal establishment of this Informal Working Group, and the undertaking by the Canoe Creek representatives to seek support from their Band Council and to report back at the next meeting. It was agreed that there was merit in pursuing the idea of constructing a pit house or some other suitable building on vacant land at the 108 Heritage Site **in order to exhibit**



First Nations artifacts, to sell First Nations handicrafts, and to establish a centre for the education of the public regarding First Nations language, culture and history. It was agreed that another meeting should be held in March at a location in close proximity to the 108 Heritage Site so that members might inspect the Site and the vacant land that that could support a building.

The March 2004 meeting was held as planned, and included a site inspection of the vacant land at the 108 Heritage Site. It was agreed that at an appropriate future time it would be desirable to seek the formal support of the respective Band Councils, and that a well defined business case should be prepared for that purpose. It was also agreed that in addition to the purposes set out at the February meeting, **the objectives should include an interpretation centre, a forum for the telling of stories and for the presentation of dancing, and – most importantly – an information centre drawing the attention of visitors to other locations within the Bands' traditional territory where they could discover information about the history and culture of the individual Northern Secwepemc Bands.**

Others who were involved, and who attended these early meetings, included **Floyd Dick** who at that time was working with Liz Pete at Canim Lake, **Alberta Charlie** and **Irvine Johnson**, and without in any way minimizing the contributions of the other two, it must be recorded that Irvine continued to make an exceptional and positive contribution to the project during the ensuing years.

A third meeting was held in May 2004 at which Amy Sandy, Liz Pete and Charlotte Gilbert reported that their respective Band Councils were aware of the work the



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Group was carrying out, and that the reactions of those Band Council members were in principle favourable to the project. Plans were made to prepare a formal written proposal for Amy, Charlotte and Liz to submit for the approval of their respective Band Councils, and it was agreed that a draft should be prepared for consideration by the following week that would include an amount to fund a preliminary feasibility study.

In June 2004, a proposal was drafted and approved by Amy Sandy, Charlotte Gilbert and Elizabeth Pete for submission to their three Band Councils. and by later in the year it had been approved by all three Band Councils and by the Board of Directors of the Historical Society. Each of the three Band Councils agreed to contribute \$1,033 towards the cost of the proposed preliminary feasibility study, as did the Board of Directors of the Historical Society.

This account takes us to the end of 2004. In next month's edition we'll resume our story in early 2005.



Notes to the Reader

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