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January, February, March 2022 Newsletter

1. Momentous News and an Explanation for Our Recent Silence

The start of 2022 has been a tumultuous period for our Society, as demonstrated by the accounts that follow. As events moved so quickly, it was impossible to report on them in a fashion that would have made sense to our readers. Our explanation now follows.

2. The Exhibit Design Project

David Jensen's final report covering his many months of work with the Canim Lake Band, was issued at the end of March, paving the way for his team to start work with the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (SXFN) in the near future. COVID 19 restrictions limited David's team to a single series of in person meetings with Band members last August, but in place of follow up visits to the community, the team engaged in a large number of Zoom interviews with individuals and groups within the community, and those sessions produced a wealth of stories and recollections that have informed the final report that was approved by Band leadership prior to being finalized. An interim progress report has been filed with the *Museums Assistance Program* of the *Department of Canadian Heritage* which contributed most of the funding for the project, and the actual report has been made available to the Society and to the Band. David Jensen's SXFN report is due to be completed by March 31, 2023.

3. The Path Ahead for our Project

After 18 years of sustained effort on the part of numerous Northern Secwepemc First Nations people, it is now possible to envisage the construction of our cultural centre and its opening as early as spring 2024. That has been made possible by a \$4 million grant from the *Department of Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada* (CIRNAC). accompanied by a \$300,000 grant from the *Northern Development Initiative Trust* (NDIT). Many other organizations have contributed financially and in other ways to the place in which we now find ourselves. We have acknowledged them all on many previous occasions and will do so again in due course.

Moving very fast, we have already started the process for engaging a Construction Manager, and as soon as that has been accomplished, we will set about making minor revisions to the construction documents that will reflect the needs of our



exhibit design consultants; preparing an up-to-date budget for the project; going out to tender for the site preparation and site development work that will be undertaken during the 2022/2023 fiscal year; and making preparations for the construction of the Centre building that will be carried out in the following 2023/2024 fiscal year.

It is understood by the funding agencies that we will need to find a substantial amount of additional funding for the exhibit design work, but everyone concerned is optimistic that we are well positioned to succeed in that endeavour.

By the time this edition of our Newsletter is published, our building site at the 108 Mile Lake will have hosted the Federal Minister Mark Miller in an event to mark CIRNAC's financial grant. It will have taken place on March 31st, and will hopefully generate a fresh bout of enthusiasm among Northern Secwepemc First Nations people who have waited for so long for this happy time to arrive. We plan to publish a special edition in the near future, covering the remarkable event that took place that day.



Notes to the Reader

1. If you would prefer not to receive future monthly Newsletters, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.
2. If you are not on our direct emailing list, but would like to be added to it, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.