

Wulustuk Times

Wulustuk - Indigenous name for St John River
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Wulustuk Times:

Each month we try to gather and publish the latest, most current and relevant native news events and top stories for our readership. Proceeding with this concept, we feel that a well informed person is better able to see, relate with, and assess a situation more readily when equipped with the right tools. Through our articles we hope to provide an accurate and a reliable solid background behind every story. That is our policy and commitment.

Contact:

You can reach us by postal mail at P.O. Box 3226, Perth-Andover, NB. Canada E7H 5K3, or at our US postal location, P.O. Box 603, Fort Fairfield, ME 04742. By telephone we're at 506-273-6737 in NB, Canada, and via Internet at pesun@nbnet.nb.ca

MOS-SOS-IEL , (Fiddleheads) NATIVE FOOD AND MEDICINE

Again the mighty native Mos-sos (Fiddlehead) makes its annual appearance in the warming river valleys and moist fertile lands along waterways and lakes of New Brunswick and neighboring territories.

It is also the time when countless numbers and truly dedicated 'pickers or gatherers' of the traditional native plant come out in droves and forces to gather their first taste of the native delight that has captivated and won them over since birth.

There is an old adage that roughly says, "Without sitting down to chow down on an amazing Mas-sos dinner, you haven't passed the test as a genuine easterner". This could be a fact, in fact.

Long before the arrival of Europeans to this land, native people of this north-eastern hemisphere had found and enjoyed many natural foods that delighted them and sustained their populations for centuries untold. One of these foods was the mighty Fiddlehead. To the aboriginal peoples, Mos-sos provided them not only a unique food of survival but more importantly, an annual medicinal food to balance their inner dietary tract after a winter-long intake and consuming rough protein and other 'heavy' natural products.

In fact the plant was eaten by all native inhabitants in nominal proportions for its remarkably unique flavour and its traditional accent, but when digested in more generous proportions the medicinal properties kicked in and provided them the internal cleansing properties needed for the body.

In more recent times, the Fiddleheads (Mos-sos-iel) are now a worldwide gourmet and a taster's delicacy as a result of well-coordinated global publicity and fast-distribution of the Fiddlehead by some food processors who wash and parboil the product for several minutes and fast-freeze it. From there its delivered to the consumers around the world.

For the universal consumer, the product is now featured in colorful and attractive packages and sold universally to the common consumer as well as to the distinguished well-versed clientele from Lisbon to New York.

In researching where the plant is found, it grows in many states and provinces along the Atlantic seaboard and westward to the northern regions of the Great Lakes.

WINDPOWER PROJECT GIVEN NOD BY COUNCIL AT TOBIQUE

p.paul

Tobique FN (Special) - At a Band Council meeting convened on June 4, 2008, Tobique members of council signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) allowing Skypower

Corporation of Toronto, Ont. to build a wind farm along a 1500-foot elevation of hills that stretch along the Tobique River's eastern shoreline of the reserve.

The high and remote location can roughly accommodate a dozen or more wind turbines that would generate well beyond the volume of electrical energy needed to power all homes and public facilities on the reserve.

The excess power generated by the wind farm would be sold and channeled directly to the NB Power grid complex of the Tobique Dam, which happens to be located directly on the eastern shores of the reserve.

No official information was available at press time regarding the pros and cons, and/or the technical details regarding the project, but it is estimated that Skypower Corporation and Tobique First Nation have entered into a long range agreement to co-manage and co-labourate in a joint partnership.

Further details on this project will be forthcoming in our future issues as more information is released by either band officials or by Skypower Corporation.

NATIVES MAY VISIT ABORIGINAL PLACE NAMES IN NB

p.paul

TOBIQUE, FN - In recent months a traditional group of 'prayer keepers' on Tobique in collaboration with neighbouring groups who are committed to the same interests and principles have been discussing plans of taking a journey around the province that would visit many places that carry native names.

The visits would primarily be taken for two reasons, one, to re-identify the particular area's native identity, roots and history, and secondly to restore and re-strengthen native ties and functional relationship to those places while sharing specific ceremonial rites within them, and leaving some form of native memorabilia in those places for posterity.

At the early planning stage there would possibly be around 20-25 sites to be visited which would entail the group to set up tentative tour routes, dates and ceremony times for each location.

The visits would likely be taken during early summer months while the climate is fairly comfortable and accommodating and hosting communities could participate if they so wished join the proceedings.

For anyone interested or needing information about these visits please contact either pat paul or Dan Ennis of the Tobique First Nation, Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 4:pm. . Dan's phone number is 506-273-2212 and pat is at 273-6737.

BC FIRST NATION GOING GREEN IN HYDRO PRODUCTION

Times Colonist

TOFINO -- The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation expects to begin construction next year on a green power project on Canoe Creek, just south of Cats Ears Creek along Highway 4.

"The project is consistent with the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation's vision for economic development that does not deplete or degrade natural resources," said band councillor Saya Masso in a release.

The 5.5-megawatt project is capable of producing electricity for 1,700 homes.

The band is working with the Nanaimo-based Barkley Project Group to build the run-of-river power project.

Run-of-river projects divert part of a river's flow during the spring runoff season to turn a turbine in a generating unit and produce electricity. The generating unit is connected through transmission lines to the provincial power grid, allowing the electricity to be sold to B.C. Hydro.

The Canoe Creek project would sell power to B.C. Hydro under the corporation's Standing Offer Program.

ABORIGINAL PROTESTERS FREED FROM JAIL

The Canadian Press

TORONTO -- Moments after the Ontario Court of Appeal decided he'd served enough time behind bars, the last of seven aboriginal protesters jailed over disputes with mining exploration companies walked out of court saying he planned to stroll barefoot in the grass. The overcrowded courtroom, filled mostly with aboriginal supporters, burst into applause and even a court police officer shook the hand of Ardoch Algonquin First Nation's Bob Lovelace who spent 3 ½ months in jail.

"It feels really good. It feels like justice is on our side," Lovelace said on the front steps of the courthouse, his wife by his side.

"I think I'm going to go out and put my feet in the grass. It's been a long time."

The eastern Ontario aboriginal leader was jailed in February for breaching an injunction that allowed Frontenac Ventures to conduct uranium exploration activities on his community's traditional territory unhindered.

While the ruling does nothing to resolve the dispute, Lovelace said he hoped this "exercise" would prompt the Ontario government to engage in "meaningful" discussion and consultation on the matter which ultimately comes down to an archaic Mining Act that allows companies to stake land anywhere they like.

But Lovelace cautioned he must "continue to protect our land," meaning he may be forced to occupy the disputed territory again if the company decides to proceed with exploration activities -- a situation that could land him back in jail.

The court also decided six leaders from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation had served enough time and ought to maintain their freedom.

They had breached a similar injunction involving the company Platinex Inc., which sought to drill on their land some 600 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Ont.

Chief Donny Morris, deputy KI chief Jack McKay and members Sam McKay, Darryl Sainnawap, Cecilia Begg and Bruce Sakakeep were granted a temporary release last Friday pending the outcome of Wednesday's sentence appeal.

Chris Reid, a lawyer representing the two aboriginal groups, argued aboriginal law dictates the leadership must uphold the wishes of their community, which in this case, is to stop companies from engaging in mining exploration on their land.

"This is not an isolated case," Reid said. "It's something that's going to occur again and again."

He suggested the aboriginal groups are prepared to discuss the matter, but want the right to say no if they don't like what they hear.

The Appeal Court judges ruled that all seven would have their sentences reduced to time served but reserved their reasons for the ruling.

While lawyers representing the two companies supported the release of the KI 6, they contested Lovelace's release, suggesting he had only to agree to abide by the rules of the injunction.

Lawyer Neal Smitheman argued Lovelace's non-status band had a weak claim to the contested land in the first place which makes it a much different case than that of the KI 6. Another group of Algonquins have been negotiating a land claim that includes the Ardoch territory for more than a decade but negotiations have "failed miserably," he added. He suggested it's really a matter for the province to resolve, not the mining companies. "This is not Frontenac's fight. We are not the villains. We are the victim," he said.

"We're just obeying the law."

As for the KI-6 appeal, Smitheman told the court he was "instructed" by Platinex not to oppose it.

"It does not serve any purpose to keep the leaders of KI incarcerated," he argued.

The groups have repeatedly slammed the province for doing nothing on the matter. Aboriginal Affairs Minister Michael Bryant even walked out of a meeting Tuesday with the KI-6 when the conversation turned to Lovelace's fate, Reid said.

Still, the province's lawyer Malliha Wilson, surprised everyone when she spoke out in support of freeing all seven protesters.

She also sparked a wave of laughter and much confusion among the three-judge panel when she suggested a more appropriate punishment than jail would have been to fine them and direct the money to a trust fund to support their communities.

One judge noted the province's original position was to "impose a fine that hurts," and questioned the sudden change in language which was now promoting reconciliation.

"The words 'hurt' and 'reconciliation' are total opposites," Justice James MacPherson said.

MP's APPROVE CONTENTIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS BILL

CBC News

A controversial bill to extend Canadian human rights protections to people living on First Nations reserves has passed the House of Commons.

The Conservative bill, which MPs voted in favour of on Wednesday, now heads to the Senate for approval.

The legislation calls for First Nation members to be allowed to make formal human rights complaints against band councils or Ottawa, something they were largely barred from doing under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

When the act passed in 1977, reserves were exempt to give bands time to prepare for the complaints process. The exemption was supposed to be temporary, but it was never removed.

More than 30 years later, the new Conservative bill is attempting to close the loophole.

The legislation, which was first announced in December 2006, was put on hold until the Conservatives agreed to several opposition changes, including a three-year phase-in period and clauses to protect collective native rights.

The government originally wanted the legislation to take effect in six months, stating that it was important to shield people on reserves against discrimination, and give them full human rights protections.

But native leaders from across Canada said the bill in its original form gave cash-strapped First Nations too little time to prepare for potentially costly complaints. They also said the government failed to consult them.

WORLD FAILING HUMAN RIGHTS

World leaders are failing to tackle human rights abuses around the globe, Amnesty International says.

In an annual report, the group says people are still being tortured or ill-treated in at least 81 countries.

In at least 54 states they face unfair trial and cannot speak freely in at least 77 nations, the group adds.

It says world leaders should apologise for 60 years of human rights failures since the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

The group also challenges them "to re-commit themselves to deliver concrete improvements".
US 'defiance'

The report - which covers 150 countries - was published ahead of the 60th anniversary of the human rights declaration, which was adopted on 10 December 1948.

Mary Robinson, who was from 1997 to 2002 the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said recognising the declaration was a very different matter from implementing it.

"I think we have an opportunity during the 60th anniversary year to redress some of the problems since the terrible attacks on the United States, what we now call 911," she said. But Amnesty's document accuses the US of failing to provide a moral compass for its international peers.

"As the world's most powerful state, the USA sets the standard for government behaviour globally," the report says.

It notes that Washington "had distinguished itself in recent years through its defiance of international law".

'Ban all torture'

The report says the US must close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp for terror suspects and either prosecute the inmates under fair trials or free them.

It also urges Washington to ban all forms of torture and stop propping authoritarian regimes.

It singles out the support of President George W Bush's administration for Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf when he imposed a state of emergency, clamped down on media and sacked judges.

The report also says other leading nations must act to improve their human rights records: China is urged to adhere to its human rights promises and allow free speech and end "re-education through labour"

Russia is encouraged to show greater tolerance for political dissent, and none for impunity on human rights abuses in Chechnya

The EU is being asked to investigate the complicity of its member states in "renditions" of terror suspects.

'Impotence'

Leaders are failing to protect human rights and all for the reason of money and power
Brandon, Berlin

Launching the document, Amnesty International's Secretary General Irene Khan said:

"Injustice, inequality and impunity are the hallmarks of our world today.

"The human rights flashpoints in [Sudan's] Darfur, Zimbabwe, Gaza, Iraq and Myanmar [Burma] demand immediate action.

"2007 was characterised by the impotence of Western governments and the ambivalence or reluctance of emerging powers to tackle some of the world's worst human rights crises."

Ms Khan stressed that "governments must act now to close the yawning gap between promise and performance".

She said: "2008 presents an unprecedented opportunity for new leaders coming to power and countries emerging on the world stage to set a new direction and reject the myopic policies and practices that in recent years have made the world a more dangerous and divided place."

NEWFOUNDLAND BOOTS NATIVE FAMILIES FROM HOMES TO BUILD HYDRO DAMS RHÉAL SÉGUIN

The Canadian Press

QUEBEC -- More than 100 Innu families from Quebec occupying land in Labrador are being evicted by the Newfoundland and Labrador government as part of an escalating confrontation over land rights involving resource development and hydroelectric projects.

A lawyer for the Innu said yesterday the people of the Uashat-Maliotenam reserve in northeastern Quebec will take matters into their own hands if they are forced off the land.

"I've heard people saying that if they tear down our cabins, there won't be a single cabin standing, whether it's Innu or a non-Innu cabin, in Labrador," Armand MacKenzie said.

"We're going to call it 'Labrador Burning.'

"If [Newfoundland Premier] Danny Williams wants to pick a fight with the Quebec Innu, he'll get it. He'll get it and we'll have a social crisis in Labrador."

The government posted the eviction notices late last month, and have given the families 60 days to demolish and remove "cabins located at or near Nairn Bay" in western Labrador.

The Innu face fines of \$1,000 and up to three months in jail if they refuse to comply. They've been ordered to restore the site to its original condition or face an additional \$25 fine for each day the cabins and other structures remain on Crown land. If they don't remove the structures, the province will do it at the occupants' expense, the eviction notice stated.

Mr. Williams told reporters in St. John's yesterday that the Quebec Innu recently erected the cabins in the region, and government lawyers are questioning whether the action is legal. Mr. Williams said he isn't sure why the cabins were built, but added that they appeared after discussions intensified on the development of the Lower Churchill hydroelectric project. He believes the Innu moved in to assert their land claim over the territory, which would be affected if the hydro project goes ahead.

Mr. MacKenzie pledged to challenge the eviction notice in court. He said that some of the structures were built many years ago on the land, and that the Innu occupied it long before Newfoundland and Labrador was formed.

"This is our homeland. We have sacred sites here. They are recognized by all the residents of Labrador. This is where we hunt. Hold ceremonies and bury our relatives. Even the game wardens and other provincial authorities saw us build structures here 20-25 years ago and recognized that the Innu had the right to do so," Mr. MacKenzie said in a telephone interview yesterday.

The Innu accused the Williams government of harassing their community because a claim to the land was before the Federal Court yesterday in Montreal. More than 20 Innu have filed a claim to establish native ownership over the site.

The Innu argue that their traditional homeland, which also cuts across part of Quebec, belongs to them under aboriginal title, and that resource development, especially hydroelectric projects, cannot proceed without their consent. In 1998, the Innu blocked the

announcement of the Lower Churchill project by then-Quebec-premier Lucien Bouchard and his Newfoundland and Labrador counterpart at the time, Brian Tobin.

"No one has the right to evict us," Mr. MacKenzie said yesterday. "It is a total disgrace in the international community for the provincial government to attempt to bully us into giving up our land so that it can construct hydroelectric dams and make money off our resources."

DAN'S CORNER - Elders and Traditional Medicine Elders

Much confusion surrounds the term "Elder" since our traditional teachings and spiritual ways are now being revived, renewed, rediscovered and reestablished. This is due primarily to over 500 years of exposure to a foreign and alien culture which persists in imposing its culture, its religion, its values and its laws on us.

All of our Elders are loved, respected, revered and listened to, but there are distinctions that should be clarified.

I fall into the category of "Elder" or an older Indian person, with another distinction which needs clarification. I also consider myself as a traditionalist, or to be more accurate, a "transitional traditionalist". This means one who was born of Indian parents and Indian ancestors, born on an Indian reserve, but who was raised in a white culture as a white person, and who is now returning to the ways of our ancestors and to the traditional teachings.

These are the four distinctions among types of Elders:

1. Traditional Medicine or spiritual Elder - prior to contact.
2. Transitional Traditional Medicine Elder - since contact, who were forced to lay aside their spiritual ways, ceremonies, teachings and understanding during a period of five or four or three or two hundred years and who is now returning to those spiritual ways and the traditional teachings.
3. Transitional Traditional Layperson - one like myself, who is returning to the spiritual ways of our ancestors, but who needs time, understanding, acceptance, teachers, self-respect, self-knowledge, perseverance, dedication, clarity of vision and unconditional love on his or her journey back to the sacred ways of our ancestors, and possibly a journey to becoming a Traditional Medicine Elder.
4. Elders, or older Indian people, or Indian senior citizens - who do not practice, understand, follow or accept the sacred ways, ceremonies, understandings and teaching of our ancestors, but who, as I have already mentioned, are very much loved, respected, revered and listened to.

The Medicine Elders prior to contact were much respected and sought after for their knowledge, understanding, teaching and wisdom, which had been accumulated through life experience, through ceremonies, through self-awareness and through forgiveness.

To my understanding the Medicine Elders prior to contact could achieve their Medicine Elder status through different routes. One could be born to it and the family and/or community knew this at the time of birth; or at birth someone, such as an Elder or an immediate family member, would see something different or special in the newborn and begin almost immediately to prepare the child for his or her life's work. As an example of both of the above situations, the Kogi people of South America begin the preparation for the "training" of a Medicine Elder at birth by placing the newborn and his or her mother in a specially-prepared cave where the child will remain for the first nine years of his or her life receiving teaching from other Medicine Elders. Upon completion of the initial nine years the choice of whether to

remain for another nine years is left with the child. Either way, the individual is considered to be a full-fledged Medicine Elder and a teacher of the way.

In my "research" of our traditional spiritual ways over the past 25 years, nowhere have I found teachings of our ways that restrict or otherwise show disrespect to the Life-Givers, our grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, daughters or granddaughters, with regard to their being "allowed" to conduct a ceremony or to participate in ceremonies, or to hold certain positions, or to otherwise be put into a lower position to men simply because they are women. We should all keep in mind that the sacred pipe was brought to our people by White Buffalo Calf Woman, a woman, and that she killed the first man that she came across. We refer to earth as our Mother and to the sweatlodge as the womb of our Sacred Earth Mother. We also refer to Grandmother Moon. This is as the Creator intended it to be - that Medicine Elders should be of both genders. There is no imposing by males of laws, rules, regulations, criteria, etc. which serves to restrict or otherwise limit the powers of Life-Givers.

For one to be considered a Traditional Medicine Elder, he or she must know the language, the culture, the traditional teachings and the sacred ceremonies. He or she walks in balance and is in harmony with all things. He or she is free of all baggage that small and weak human beings are prone to carry during their brief earthwalk - things like ego, fear, violence, negativity, anger, hatred, greed, guilt, resentment and bitterness.

In this time of "newageism" and a renewed interest in exotic Hollywood red Indians we are presented with a modern problem that serves to prostitute and profane our ancient traditional ways and teachings. This is the making of instant Indian medicine men/women.

In the days prior to contact our people respected our traditional spiritual teachings and our spiritual ceremonies and would never think of taking "short cuts" in order to become instant Medicine Elders. We just had too much self-respect and respect for our traditional teachings, unlike what we have today.

To our people being a Medicine Elder required a lifetime of commitment and the required training meant anywhere from nine to twenty years for the chosen individual. It meant long intense and rigorous training, teaching and sacrifice.

As for non-Indians today conducting any of our ceremonies, where the public is to participate, that cannot and should not happen. In addition to the required time and intense training our people lived a life of spirituality on a moment by moment basis. It has been this way for thousands of generations for our people, except for that brief period of time since contact when we were forced to set aside our traditional spiritual teachings and ceremonies.

Those traditional teachings are in our genes, our blood and so we can now return to them quickly and easily which is what is happening. But this is not so for our non-Indian brothers, our Creator-given ways is not in their genes, in their blood, nor are they passed on from generation to generation, therefore they cannot possess the depth of understanding, love and respect for our traditional spiritual teachings.

For any non-Indian who is attempting to learn the ways of our people and has participated in any of our ceremonies and feels that he is walking on the red road way of our people, if he has acquired that depth of love, understanding and respect for our spiritual ways that will be one of the very first understandings that will appear to him. It will take on the form of...I will not prostitute nor profane these sacred traditional spiritual teachings and ceremonies.

When one of our non-Indian brothers presumes to take on the sacred role of conductor of our sacred ceremonies, after participating in a few of those ceremonies, it demonstrates so much disrespect and lack of understanding of our traditional teachings. It is akin to my having participated in or witnessing a funeral, wedding or any other church service and then having the audacity to think that with this one church experience I can now be a priest, minister, preacher, etc. and that I am now able to conduct a religious church service.

I write this so as to share what little knowledge that I have acquired in my 25 years of walking my spiritual red road and in the hopes of helping others like myself who are groping around for knowledge and understanding. Maybe in this way others may avoid some of the pitfalls that I experienced, some of the confusion and dilemmas that I experienced, some of the misunderstanding that I experienced and some of the resentment that I experienced. I also write this so that there will be better understanding, respect and acceptance of our ways by our people and all other people.

All My Relations, Dan Ennis

DEAN'S DEN - Thirst

May your troubles be trifles
May your tensions be few
May you come out on top
When trials test you,
May your mishaps be minor
And your worries - no more
When dilemmas delay you
May you come to the fore,
When struggles surround you
And you feel your heart bleed
May hard knocks and bad luck
Leave you still in the lead,
May your burden be light
And may you stay far ahead
Of upsets and afflictions
On the path that you tread,
May you better your battles
And be able to blunt
The thorns that torment you
And yet finish in front,
May your sorrows be scattered
Your concerns be dispersed
Through hurts, aches, and sadness
May your faith ... quench your thirst!
D.C. Butterfield