



Fast Facts

on First Nations Consultation

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GOA Consultation Policy—A Quick History

SEPT. '00: In *Strengthening Relationships: The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework*, Alberta committed to consult with Aboriginal people when land management and resource development decisions may infringe their existing treaty or other constitutional rights.

MAY '02: Alberta started development of a made-in-Alberta consultation policy.

SEPT. - DEC. '03: First round of discussions about the policy with First Nations and industry.

JAN. - JULY '04: Second round of discussions with First Nations and industry.

AUG. '04: Draft consultation policy is refined based on input from First Nations and industry.

NOV. '04 - MAY '05: Discussions begin with First Nations and industry on developing Consultation Guidelines.

MAY 16, '05: *The Government of Alberta's First Nations Consultation Policy on Land Management and Resource Development* is approved.

NOV. '05: An *Interim Approach* is completed and posted at www.aand.gov.ab.ca/

AN UPDATE

Consultation Guidelines

Since approval of the Consultation Policy, we have been working with First Nations and industry to develop a Framework for Consultation Guidelines. To focus the discussions, the GOA engaged in dialogue with the following groups:

- Treaty 6 Perspectives Group
- Individual Treaty 7 First Nations
- Treaty 8 Technical Committee on Consultation and
- Industry Guidelines Advisory Group.

The Framework for Consultation Guidelines will identify the procedures, criteria or tests that will be common in each of the industry- or regulation-specific Guidelines. Once the Framework is completed, Alberta's resource development and land management departments will begin a process to develop the Guidelines themselves. The Guidelines will set out the detailed procedures for a specific regulated subject area.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback in the last few months. We are considering

all feedback collected and hope to complete a draft Framework for Consultation Guidelines by early December. In the new year, we will circulate the Framework and then begin to develop the Guidelines, with completion targeted for 2006.

Our objective is to build an effective and efficient consultation process together with our partners

Our objective is to build an effective and efficient consultation process together with our partners. For more information on development of the Guidelines, visit the Consultation section of our website at www.aand.gov.ab.ca/ ❖

An Interim Approach

We have developed an Interim Approach to be in place for the fall/winter 2005-06 season and until the Guidelines are completed. This approach, which has now been circulated

and posted on our website www.aand.gov.ab.ca, is intended to clarify expectations for the upcoming season. ❖

Building Capacity for Consultation

As part of the larger consultation initiative, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND) administers the Aboriginal consultation capacity program. This program assists First Nations in developing or enhancing the internal processes necessary to respond to consultation requests related to resource development and land management. It facilitates implementation of Alberta's Consultation Policy and Guidelines by providing First Nations with the means necessary to participate effectively in consultation. ❖

The program helps First Nations develop or enhance the internal processes necessary to respond to consultation requests

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Traditional Use Studies (TUS)

A traditional use study can identify where Aboriginal people hunt, fish, trap or gather on public land. Information contained in a TUS can also inform resource management decision-making and flag where potential conflicts might occur, including mapping where historical activities such as ceremonial or burial sites exist.

During consultation, a TUS can help avoid infringements of Aboriginal and treaty rights in Alberta, especially where the Aboriginal community shares the identity of significant sites with the province. TUS information can help resource management decision-making and help build positive relationships between the First Nation, government and industry that serve as the foundation to future consultation activities.

In 2003, Alberta developed its *Best Practices Handbook for Traditional Use Studies* through sponsorship under the Western Economic Partnership Agreement (federal and provincial funding). This handbook is available through Land and Resource Issues, and an electronic copy is available on the AAND website. A Traditional Use Directory is also available at www.aand.gov.ab.ca/PDFs/TUS0.pdf.

Currently, 29 traditional use studies, involving 39 First Nations communities, are underway in Alberta. For a complete and

current list of projects, or more information, please contact Jamie Honda-McNeil, Team Lead Traditional Use, at (780) 427-0368. ❖

A CONSULTATION CASE STUDY

Protecting Buffalo Ribstones

Alberta Community Development became aware through local enforcement efforts of vandalism to the Buffalo Ribstones site near Viking. The site is of great significance to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The good news is this: Through consultation, ACD and some First Nations Elders worked through some challenges of protecting this and other historic sites.

How so? The Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nation's Elders Council was asked to provide advice to ACD about protecting the Ribstones. Meetings were held with the representatives of the Elders Council to determine how best to protect them. The Elders, together with ACD, decided that two fences would prevent the Ribstones from being removed from the site. The Elders were happy that ACD worked with them respectfully to protect



Viking's Buffalo Ribstones.

an important part of their First Nation's history. And ACD was pleased to report an example of consultation that worked for everyone involved. ❖

GOA info sessions

Six First Nations communities have now attended an introductory information session on the Government of Alberta ministries involved in consultation. Other First Nations have confirmed attendance or expressed interest in upcoming sessions. If you would like us to present the GOA information session in your community, please call Marvin Yellow Horn at (403) 370-0272. ❖

First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative

The Government of Alberta's new First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative (FNEPI) focuses on developing effective partnerships between First

Nations, industry, governments and other stakeholders and on building greater economic capacity in First Nations communities. AAND's three new programs—and complementary programs of Alberta Economic Development and Alberta Human Resources and Employment—have been discussed with First Nations and industry groups since early spring. AAND's programs will be introduced this fall.

Program 1: AAND is working with interested First Nations Tribal Councils to pilot the *Regional Partnership Development (RPD) Program*, which would deploy a network of up to 10 regional partnership coordinators, with central support. Contact Janene Blenkhorn, Program Manager, at (780) 427-8407.

Program 2: Application information for the *Strategic Economic Initiatives (SEI) Program* is now available. SEI provides financial support for economic partnership initiatives and projects with significant strategic value. Contact Karen MacKenzie, Program Director, at (780) 427-8407.

Program 3: *The Economic Capacity-Building (ECB) Program* will support RPD and SEI by facilitating First Nations professional / learning networks; identifying and developing economic capacity-building tools, products and training modules; and identifying and disseminating best practices and current research. Contact Marnie Robb, Program Manager, at (780) 427-8407.

Information about FNEPI programs is available at www.aand.gov.ab.ca. ❖

What do you think of our new Consultation Fast Facts bulletin?

This new bulletin is one way for us to let you know the latest on Consultation. What do you think? And how would you like to hear from us in future? Some have asked for information by mail; others prefer email. **Please call us at (780) 644-4945 to tell us how you'd like to receive our bulletin and to give us your feedback.**



Alberta